

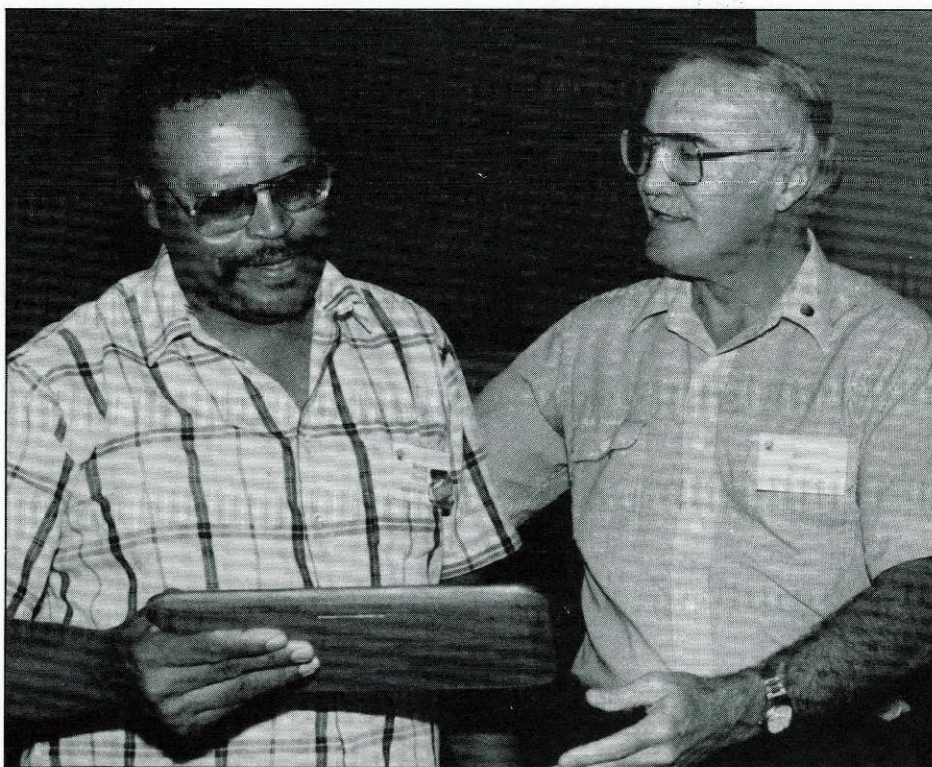
News & Views

★ Texas Rehabilitation Commission ★ A Human Energy Agency ★

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Commissioner Arrell calls for more employee participation



Commissioner Arrell congratulates Belvin Sneed, DDS supervisor in CDR Unit 60, for receiving the Kerrville Leadership Award, one of 11 awards given to managers at the Kerrville meeting for excellence and performance (see "Performance Awards," p. 2).

"I'm here to invite you as managers to work with me to create a climate and culture in which all employees will have a feeling of trust, respect and communication." With that, Commissioner Arrell opened the Kerrville Managers' Meeting August 21.

During the next session, Executive Deputy Commissioner James L. Jackson added to the Commissioner's remarks. "Do right, do your best, treat others as you want them to treat you . . . trust is the whole foundation," said Jackson. But he made the point that "trust" goes both ways.

Almost 300 TRC managers from all over the state gathered in Kerrville to hear top management discuss such issues as partnership and interactive planning.

Commissioner Arrell called for TRC managers, over the next two years, to develop their employees and involve them in the decision-making process. "We're going into a management style which will have more employee input than we've ever had," he said. The Commissioner went on to list three categories of action in developing this climate to be formulated while in Kerrville: things

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■ *We're going into a management style which will have more employee input than we've ever had.*

The Commissioner wraps up the Kerrville meeting

Editor's note: Several important issues surfaced at the Kerrville Managers' Meeting including respect for employees, employee participation in decision-making and interactive planning, among others. Commissioner Arrell's final address to the group served not only to focus these issues but to clarify his stance on them. Rather than interpret his words, we thought it best to bring you excerpts from his own words:

"We've taken a hard look at ourselves, folks. That's not easy.

"We, all managers in this room, need to make a genuine, concerted effort to deal with the issues laid out by our internal customers--the people who work for us--we owe them that.

"I was pleased with the number of people interested in doing quality work . . . that is the name of the game!

"The great thing about what we saw here is that the areas our employees thought we needed to improve the most were in management, decision-making, policy development and communications--every one of these are things we can do something about. Not one of these require a dime additional budget.

"I am wearing my partnership pin. I want to signify to you that I intend to create the climate that will allow trust, respect and communication to carry on throughout this Commission. When you feel, as a manager in this Commission, that the climate created by the individual you report to is such, then I would say wear it. If you wait until we achieve it, then we'll never achieve it. We'll never achieve it without you. I'll need your help, your support and your leadership.

"We have good managers . . . I need good leaders. We are in an era where we need people who will lead and step out!

"Deal with your people honestly, sincerely . . . deal with them

*We have good managers...
I need good leaders.*

as a manager . . . deal with them as a leader. They will respect you for it!

"Fight for everything you think you need, in the best interest of people with disabilities, but when that decision is made--for or against you--get behind it.

"Communication is the biggest problem we have in this Commission. If we can establish the kind of communication we need, then all these other problems will disappear . . . I guarantee it.

"I feel very strongly that the mark of a good organization is not that you have problems, but it's how you deal with them.

"I do appreciate you . . . I appreciate your attitude . . . but more than that, I appreciate everyday what you do for people with disabilities. After all, we work for them. Thank you."

Managers receive performance awards

For the first time, performance awards for managers were presented by Commissioner Arrell and Executive Deputy Commissioner James L. Jackson at the Kerrville Managers' Meeting.

A total of 55 nominees were submitted for 10 award categories ranging from "high achiever" to "creativity." Jackson noted that a full 20 percent of managers in attendance were nominated.

Here are the winners of awards presented during the August 22-23 sessions:

High Achiever Award:

Joanne Edge, manager of compensation/benefits
Jerry Hickman, area manager in the Wichita Falls Field Office

Leadership Award:

Belvin Sneed, DDS supervisor, CDR Unit 60

Communications Award:

Laura Banks, director of communications

Ethics Award:

Adrian Cervantez, area manager in the Amarillo Field Office

Mentoring Award:

Suzanne Diffen, budget analyst

Teamwork Award:

Rueben Perez, regional training officer in the San Antonio Regional Office

Public Image Award:

Kaye Beneke, assistant deputy commissioner for consumer affairs

Creativity Award:

David J. MacCabe, director of special services

Extra Mile Award:

Charles Tarver, director of lease administration

Management Award:

Reta Scott, DDS supervisor, Initial Unit 17.

Senate passes disability civil right

Houston hosts House ADA hearing

It is increasingly critical that we call upon disabled individuals to become an appropriate part of the American workforce.

It's being called landmark civil rights legislation for people with disabilities. With Senate approval September 5, the Americans with Disabilities Act came one step closer to becoming the law of the land.

The ADA, re-introduced in the current congressional session after stalling in committee last November, will combat discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodations, public services and communications barriers.

Prior to the Senate vote, the House Subcommittee on Select Education (of the Committee on Education and Labor), held its first ever field hearing on the ADA August 28 in Houston. Congressman Major Owens of New York, chairman of the subcommittee, presided at the hearing joined by Congressman Steve Bartlett of Texas and Congressman Don Payne of New Jersey.



Lex Frieden, executive director of TIRR Foundation (left), and Mary Faithfull, of Advocacy Inc. (center), discuss the outlook for the Americans with Disabilities Act in this congressional session with Congressman Steve Bartlett of Dallas. Bartlett is instrumental in other legislation for people with disabilities to eliminate work disincentives in the social security system which can make people who want to work less likely to seek jobs.

The panel's primary focus was the impact of the proposed ADA on employers of people with disabilities.

Several local business and government leaders who testified overwhelmingly favored the measure.

Robert Mosbacher, Jr., president of Mosbacher Energy Co. and chairman of the Board of the Texas Department of Human Services, said, "It is increasingly criti-

cal that we call upon disabled individuals to become an appropriate part of the American workforce."

Lex Frieden, former executive director of the National Council on Disability and co-author of the original ADA legislation, says the ADA is broader in scope than any previous legislation for people with disabilities.

"The ADA provides a clear and comprehensive national mandate

ts measure

to end discrimination for people with disabilities," Frieden says. "It sets up enforceable standards and ensures the federal government will play a central role in enforcing these standards."

Robert C. Lanier, chairman of the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, agreed with the ADA philosophy that accessible transportation is crucial for people with disabilities to be independent and productive in the community.

He announced to the panel plans to outfit all newly-purchased buses, vans and mini-buses with wheelchair lifts. "The controlling issue, as I see it, is an attempt to afford all our citizens the right to fully participate in the economic and political process," he said.

Skeptics cite cost factors as one of the ADA's most problematic issues.

But, Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health/Human Services and Education, quotes a 1987 Honeywell report which states that most accommodations provided to its employees with disabilities cost less than \$50. Harkin also points out that costs of making new structures accessible are estimated at less than 1 percent of total construction costs.

With ADA support from the White House as well as support from key senators and congressmen, consumers and advocates are optimistic that Sen. Harkin was on target with his March prediction that the ADA will become law this congressional session. House action on the bill is expected early this fall.

Partnership Committee reports in Kerrville

The push to get TRC employees into the decision-making process through interactive planning (see article p. 1) was highlighted at the Kerrville meeting in a presentation by the TRC Partnership Committee.

Employee representatives reported data gathered in a recent employee survey designed to see how valued and respected TRC employees feel.

TRC employee responses in eight categories were summarized by members of the Partnership Committee, headed up by Jim Tom Nichols, counselor in the Beeville Field Office.

Survey results were first shared with the TRC Executive Committee in July.

Nichols and the employee representatives believe interactive planning will help resolve many of the issues raised in the partnership survey.

"I feel like it can be a real answer to the problem," says Nichols. "I'm behind it; I'm positive about it; and I'm supporting it."

Putting people first in DDS

When people are willing to sacrifice valuable work space, the term "reasonable accommodation" takes on new meaning. In one instance, it means people helping people solve accessibility problems.

Unit 15 in Disability Determination Services is moving to a new building where space is at a premium. Increased workloads caused an increase in staff, further limiting space.

But, there was another hitch. One of the examiners, Elsie Reynolds, is severely disabled. Using a wheelchair for mobility, she needs two work spaces to get around in addition to a full-time clerical assistant.

The space in the new building was just not there.

To "reasonably accommodate" Reynolds' needs for work space, she would have to transfer to another unit.

This was a reasonable management decision. But, some of the people in Unit 15 had a better idea. They didn't want Reynolds to leave the unit. Fifteen DDS

employees felt strongly enough about her value to the unit that they volunteered to give up 12 inches of their personal space to keep Reynolds in their unit.

Citing the TRC mission statement, "to provide all employees the opportunity to perform well, the opportunity for challenging, satisfying and rewarding work, and opportunities to expand their potential," Unit 15 staff authored a memo to management asking to keep Elsie as a part of their unit.

Executive Deputy Commissioner Jackson responded to the unit request. He said he was touched by their response and told them their cooperative spirit was "what this commission is all about." Jackson also presented a plaque of appreciation from the Commissioner's Office to Unit Supervisor Dale Harper and his band of "good Samaritans."

By putting people first, TRC employees in DDS Unit 15 made the words in the mission statement come alive.

Employee participation

we can do right now, long range actions, and things requiring legislative decisions.

These actions will be woven into a newly-adopted management style called interactive planning. Introduced at Kerrville by Jackson and explained by Charles E. Harrison, TRC controller, interactive planning is an approach to gaining control of the Commission's future.

Interactive planning will set up "planning boards" comprised of employees on the same level and levels immediately above and below the planning board organizer to ensure clear communications in problem-solving and establishing policy. Planning boards will allow managers to manage more effectively.

"Many organizations experience two road blocks to employee participation: lack of trust and unwillingness to take risks," said Jackson. "One major indication of whether employees feel appreciated hinges on their participation in the decision-making process."

Interactive planning requires an organization to identify where it is and where it is going. Then it must create a way to get there. An idealized design must be formulated to give the system structure and direction.

The TRC Executive Committee adopted an idealized design for Commission interactive planning September 13. Copies of the design were distributed to each agency employee. After examining the design, TRC employees participated in a statewide conference call to discuss the plan with Commissioner Arrell and other top management.

"Over the next two years, we will make a concerted effort to develop employees and to deal with employee problems," said Commissioner Arrell. "This will be our job. I'm going to depend

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on you and your attitude to set the climate," he told the managers in Kerrville.

"We've always been sensitive to people with disabilities . . . I'd like us, over the next two years to develop a sensitivity to employees," he said.

"Only through true 'partnership' can we best serve people with disabilities," Commissioner Arrell said.

Washington Update

- In a matter of a few hours, both the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and full Appropriations Committee approved its version of appropriations for rehabilitation programs for FY 1990. For a majority of programs, the committees approved increases above the House's FY 1990 recommendations and the President's budget request. The Committee recommended that basic state vocational rehabilitation services, receive \$1,550 million (\$47.877 million above the House's recommendations).

MILESTONES

TRC Service

AUGUST 1989

Region I

10 years: Ruth Briscoe
20 years: Dorothy M. Cooke

Region II

15 years: Donald P. White
Patience B. Green

Region III

15 years: Carol Barbay
20 years: John G. Greening

Region IV

10 years: Josie R. McElreath
Carol A. Hoppens
15 years: Judith E. Taylor
Rod L. Sturman
Joan E. Bradbury

Region V

10 years: Ronald E. Lowe
15 years: Maria A. Dromgoole
Virginia E. Sicotte

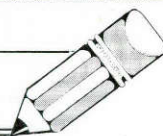
DDS

10 years: Pamela Jane Lodwick
Denise Whisenant
Michelle R. Baker
Amalia Lozano
Mark A. Rodriguez
Clarence J. Haney
15 years: Jeanette Sutherland
David H. League
Estella Villapando

Central Office

10 years: Arthur Santana, Jr.
15 years: Kelly Caudell

Commissioner's Message Box



Q: I reached Step 8 of the merit pay scale on 9-1-84, and have continued to perform meritoriously for the last five years. My position was recently reclassified to Salary Group 11, Step 4. Does the reclassification mean I may now not be eligible for the lump sum merit award, even though just prior to this reclassification I had been at Step 8 for five years? In order to be fair, I feel that employees affected by the recent reclassifications should still be eligible for this award. We should not be overlooked.

A: TRC policy on "lump sums" is still being formulated in terms of eligibility, procedures, etc. It is reasonably certain, however, that eligibility will not be restricted to Step 8 employees. The legislation regarding this program did NOT mandate such a restriction. When TRC's policy on this program is finalized, it will be communicated to TRC staff immediately, and will be published in the APPM. Ignoring for the moment the new "lump sum" program, it appears that you can now be awarded a merit increase under existing guidelines, as you are no longer "maxed out."

★ Applause

These TRC employees recently received press coverage for the Commission: **F. Javier Gonzales**, counselor in the Austin Field Office South; **Jeff T. Burns**, counselor in the Baytown Field Office; **Vicki Coles**, counselor in the Dallas Field Office Central; **Connie Hawes**, counselor in the Dallas Field Office Southwest; **Duane Mitchell**, program manager in the El Paso Field Office Central; **Wes Huerta**, area manager in the Harlingen Field Office; **Armando Garcia**, counselor in the Laredo Field Office; **Ann Green**, area manager in the Plano Field Office; **Letreva Jones**, counselor in the Sulphur Springs Field Office; and **Melvin Haisler**, counselor in the Temple Field Office; **Mary Valentini**, regional director in the Lubbock Regional Office; and **Bob Marx**, regional director in the Dallas Regional Office.

The following TRC employees from the McAllen Field Office received press coverage: **Harvey Mosmeyer**, area manager; **Marcial Zamora**, counselor; **Estella Salinas**, stenographer; and **Marilyn Zinsmeyer**, counselor. Midland Field Office employees receiving press coverage are: **Knobby Sanchez**, counselor; and **Dale Kennedy**,

counselor. Odessa Field Office Central employees recently mentioned in the press are: **Jolly Gonzales**, stenographer; **Jean Duafala**, area manager; and **William Clark**, counselor. From the Sherman Field Office, these TRC employees received press coverage: **Terry Carlton**, counselor; **Jean Wieser**, counselor; and **Thomas Metcalf**, counselor.

These Central Office employees also received press coverage: **Charles E. Harrison, Jr.**, controller; **Roger Webb**, executive director of the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities; **Ray Vaughn**, program specialist; **Vernon Dement**, information specialist; and **Commissioner Arrell**.

Deputy Commissioner John Fenoglio was recently awarded the National Rehabilitation Administration Association Guy F. Hubbard Award for Excellence in Rehabilitation Management. The award recognizes rehabilitation professionals who use, among other things, innovation and initiative in providing services to people with disabilities. Those nominating Fenoglio for the award (TRC employees directly under his supervision) say he teaches creativity and initiative

while challenging his employees to ask "Why not?" The award is named after the late Guy F. Hubbard, assistant director of the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Fenoglio received the award at the National Rehabilitation Association conference in Orlando, Florida, September 8. At the same conference, **Anna Marie Posey**, counselor in the Cuero Field Office, was selected as the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association Outstanding Counselor of the Year. Congratulations to these TRC professionals who have gained national recognition.

News & Views

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