

Vol. 20 No. 4 April 1997

# trc today

*An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission*

*Find out what they*

**THE EMPLOYERS**

*need and give them*

**OUR CUSTOMERS**

*what they want!*

**A DEPENDABLE EMPLOYEE**

*focus on . . . quality*

*rehabilitation*

*not on the numbers*

*meet Rick Turner,*

*VRC in Big Spring Field Office and one of TRC's secret weapons*



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An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission

Texas Rehabilitation  
Commission  
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, Texas 78751-2399  
Vol. 20 No. 4 April 1997

*... communication is an exchange of ideas, so listening is 50 percent of the process. Rick wants employers to know that TRC listens and responds.*



## Rehab - West Texas style!

**D**id you ever wish you had a recipe for success? Rick Turner, VRC in the Big Spring Field Office (BSFO), has discovered a recipe that works for him in a one-counselor office, and it just might work for you. Get out your pen and paper and start taking notes to get the best mix of ingredients west of the Mississippi.

In 1994, the BSFO - a one counselor/RST office, had 22 closures and 83 referrals. In 1996, Turner more than doubled his figures, finishing with 55 closures and 132 referrals. Additionally, the caseload was divided in 1996 with two out of every three referrals going to the new caseload.

Rick came to the BSFO in January 1994. Since then, he has turned this small West Texas town upside down. He has lots of energy, focuses on job placement, and is committed to putting TRC

clients to work. Rick says he has no problem getting client referrals. The challenge is that Big Spring's economy offers only 10-12 job openings a week, so Rick continuously searches and networks for work opportunities. "I keep business cards in my wallet all the time," said Rick. "If I am eating at a cafe or getting my oil changed, I think, 'maybe one of our clients could be working here.' I am always looking."

So how does he do it? "First, you've got to have a quality product or service to market," said Rick. "Our product is a qualified employee and follow-up to make sure you have a good

fit. Then you've got to nurture the resources you have. That means let the employer know how you can help them. We actively market job placement services, but it is no overnight project. Results come in increments." Rick makes regular visits to prospective employers, coordinates and participates in meetings of human service providers and community businesses to get information on how they can all work together.

Rick will be the first to tell you that he doesn't do it alone. He gives a lot of the credit to RST Renee Barraza and volunteer Violet Melton who hold things together in the office while he is out working in the community. "I couldn't do it without them," said Rick. "They are definitely the brains of this outfit. I'd be fired in a week without them here!" Renee and Violet cover the bases back at the office while Rick concentrates on his clients and personal relationship marketing in the community.

A long-term business relationship is critical to the success of our clients and ultimately our program — and that requires effective communication according to Rick. He expressed that communication is an exchange of ideas, so listening is 50 percent of the process. He wants employers to know that TRC listens and responds.

"We don't focus on 26s here. That is a natural outcome of quality rehabilitation," said Rick. "When you offer a quality product, people keep coming back for your services: that results in the 26s. We aim for service, not success. Success just follows."

## Legislative Update

At the time of this writing, we are just past the halfway mark of the state session. A lot of action is in the works.

The full House and Senate have voted on Appropriations/Finance Bills, and now it's on to Conference Committee. The Committee has yet to be named so we are a long way from over.

With appropriations behind them, legislators are moving on to other bills. According to the TRC External Affairs Office, there are currently 83 bills (out of over 400) that are labeled as high priority in possible impact (good or bad) to the Commission in areas such as employee benefits including retirement initiatives, assistive technology, contract monitoring, purchasing practices and disabled parking.

We will keep you posted as it unfolds.



The Big Spring Field Office Team: (left to right) RST Renee Barraza, Rick Turner and volunteer Violet Melton.

## Buyer Support Services

**A** key element of the new Rehabilitation Services system is a streamlined purchasing system that puts information and buying power at the fingertips of counselors. That hasn't happened by magic.

With thousands upon thousands of current active vendors and clients a year, it's been a BIG job to get



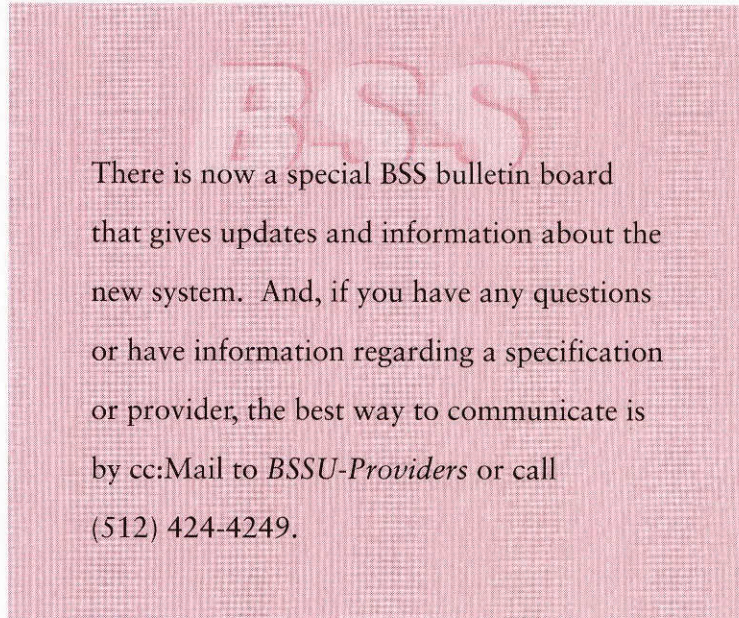
Judy Blackburn (left) and Cheryl Madewell of BSS - Buyer Technical Services are ready to answer your questions.

where, at a few clicks of a mouse, field staff can pull up the information they need to make the best possible purchase for clients. That's where TRC's new unit, Buyer Support Services (BSS) comes in.

Professionals in this unit provide support to the field in utilizing the new system. BSS staff have a variety of experience in areas such as Medical Services, Purchasing, Financial Services and Rehabilitation Services to offer the best possible service to their customers.

To be effective, this unit operates in a team approach - with each other and with field staff - to ensure that information is current and accurate.

"Our staff has been working diligently to get all the vendors, contracts and specifications loaded into the system," says David Henderson, director of Grants and Contracts and Client Purchasing, "but the devil is in the detail and you just can't imagine how much detail is involved in



There is now a special BSS bulletin board that gives updates and information about the new system. And, if you have any questions or have information regarding a specification or provider, the best way to communicate is by cc:Mail to *BSSU-Providers* or call (512) 424-4249.

getting a system like this off the ground."

All providers that TRC paid in the last three years have been loaded on the provider database. If field staff find that a provider used regularly does not come up, it's probably not linked to the correct specification. Or you might need a specification that is not on the system. That's where the partnership comes in, because this information needs to be forwarded to the BSS.

"Sure, there will be some frustration in the

short run, but together we can make this a system that works well for all of us," adds Linda Loucks, director of Specifications, Providers and Medical Services. "If you look at the old way we purchased good or services for our clients and you look at the potential of this new system, there is just no comparison. In the new system, we will have more choices, be able to make better purchases, and it will be easier to use. It's the direction we need to go."

## TRC Purchasers get certified

**P**urchasers, Debra Silakowski and Jose Montoya, reached a milestone in the purchasing field by earning certification as professional public buyers (CPPB). A first for TRC, Silakowski and Montoya are well on their way to becoming experts in public purchasing. The CPPB is through the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Inc. (NIGP) a part of the Universal Public Purchasing Council (UPPCC).

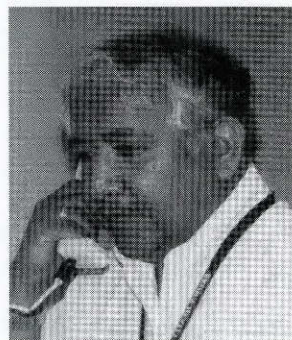
"There are over 50,000 public buyers in the United States and Europe and only 3,500 are certified," said Montoya. "This certification is not taken lightly. This shows that our agency is committed to strengthening the professionalism of its staff and the services we provide."

"It also shows our customers that we are serious about the field we are in. Purchasing is a profession, not just a job," said Silakowski, "and we want to encourage other buyers to do the same thing. We hope to set the trend for other TRC staff to follow."

CPPB candidates must meet specific criteria established by the UPPCC including working in the field a minimum of four years and taking two courses in materials management and public purchasing. Certified buyers must continue to earn points over the next five years by participating in the local chapter of the NIGP and taking continuing education courses. The UPPCC Certification program holds international accreditation from The International Federation of Purchasing and Materials Management.



Debra Silakowski



Jose Montoya

## Letters . . . Letters . . . Letters

*This excerpt is from a TRC client about counselor Sondra Dawn of the Amarillo F.O.*

"I suffered a back injury on 6/6/96 and, in my opinion, have not been treated with the respect and dignity I felt I deserved until my first appointment with Sondra Dawn. ... She makes me feel very important and that she is doing everything she can to speed up my surgery process. She is truly an asset to your organization."

*This note recognizes teamwork by RST Sharon Smith and VRC Linda Robinson with a TRC client in the Katy F.O.*

"I would like to tell you Ms. Linda Robinson and Ms. Sharon Smith do a great job with this company. May God continue to bless them in their skill for working with people."

*The following excerpt is from a letter from a TRC client regarding services provided by VRC Carole Carsey of the Arlington F.O.*

"I can only hope this lady will someday realize the new life she has given to me. I thought life was over after my injury because I could not work at a pain-free pace. I can now work less hours and make more money than I ever have before. ... Thank you for having the insight to hire Carole Carsey."

## New TRAC members appointed

*... a diverse group  
of individuals with  
a common goal.*

If you are in Austin on April 24-25, you will likely see a few new faces in the halls of the central office. Gov. Bush recently appointed new members to the Texas Rehabilitation Advisory Council (TRAC), and the new 20-member council is scheduled to kick off its first session with an orientation for new appointees. "With 12 new members and eight returning from the previous council, the mix should offer some fresh perspectives while still providing continuity," said Barbara Ritter, TRAC staff coordinator. Though the process of confirmation began a year ago, original TRAC members that started the process in January 1994 were willing to continue to serve until the announcement was made. The Governor's Office appoints over 500 members for councils and boards for various state agencies.

Mandated by the Rehabilitation Act, the TRAC advises the vocational rehabilitation program. The law outlines responsibilities and composition, which includes consumers, advocates, and three slots for representatives from TRC, the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and the State Independent Living Council (SILC).

"Our past group was informed and close-knit," said Judith Sokolow, past chair and representative from CAP. "I hope the new members are as impassioned about the issues and as committed to this cause as our former members."

"It is fascinating how a group of strangers with diverse experiences and perspectives can develop into a cohesive and effective organization," said Kaye Beneke, assistant commissioner for TRC Consumer Affairs. Beneke says that is exactly what happens with the TRAC. "Everybody doesn't always see things the same way," added Beneke, "but there has been a lot of listening, learning and sharing over the years and the agency has definitely benefitted from that." The TRAC will cover issues in the upcoming year such as client satisfaction, informed client choice, inclusion of people with disabilities in state workforce training programs and reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act.

### Returning TRAC representatives are:

Susan Junek, *chairperson* CALDWELL  
Boyce Baker KILGORE  
Elizabeth Newhouse SAN ANTONIO  
Thomas Tyree AUSTIN  
Mario Gonzales HOUSTON  
Rena Ventura-Jackson ODESSA  
Kaye Beneke (TRC) AUSTIN  
Judith Sokolow (CAP) AUSTIN

### New appointees are:

Frances Armstrong DALLAS  
Ricardo Barraza, Jr. EL PASO  
Ettalois L. Johnson HOUSTON  
Marilou Johnson Wright WICHITA FALLS  
Susan Blue, M.D. FORT WORTH  
Anne Brown DALLAS  
Malisa Janes HOUSTON  
James Johnson LUBBOCK  
Madeleine Maehl MIDLAND  
Gayle Todd BRYAN  
Wilson Owens GILMER  
Carl Wright (SILC) AUSTIN



Judith Sokolow, (right) past chair of TRAC with Susan Junek, returning member and chair for 1997.

## Kudos for DDS

D Larson, contract manager for DDS Distribution Services, was recently honored by Goodwill Industries with a certificate of recognition and appreciation for cooperative spirit and outstanding service. "She's the best boss I ever had," said Trish Reeves, on-site supervisor for Goodwill. DDS contracts with Goodwill Industries to hole-punch medical records in DDS, providing records that are ready for the Disability Examiner (DE) to place into claim folders when they arrive at the DEs' desks.

Goodwill Industries also recognized Carrie Stewart as "Achiever of the Month" for February 1997. Carrie joined Goodwill Industries in August 1988 and has been a member of the DDS team since the contract began in June 1992. An average hole-puncher completes 12-13 tubs of mail daily. Carrie's average is 25 tubs, and she has a record of 33 tubs in one day. Well liked by her peers, Carrie shows her team spirit by volunteering to help others.

Larson said that customer service is primary in Distribution Services, and employees and contractors support that goal when they know what is expected and the importance of the role they play. Reeves willingly adjusts attendance to suit the peaks and valleys in mail volume, volunteers her staff (who readily jump into assignments) to help in other areas while waiting for hole-punch work to arrive, and takes steps to satisfy customer concerns.



D Larson, supervisor for DDS Distribution Services and Carrie Stewart of Goodwill Industries were recently recognized by Goodwill Industries.

"The valuable work performed by Goodwill staff, their aim to serve customer needs and the outstanding working relationships enjoyed at all levels brings many rewards to me and the agency," said Larson. "We look forward to continuing this mutually pleasant partnership."

## Across the State

### Welcome Aboard

Karen Beard, management technician  
Karla Myers, systems analyst  
William Oakey, accounting assistant  
Constance Ragland, administrative technician  
Katherine Earles, counselor  
Anthony Guerrero, counselor  
Janice Stevens, RST  
Tricia Williams, counselor  
Keith Bass, counselor  
Elois Bryant, counselor  
Gail Burchfield, RST  
Ernestine Easter, RST  
Trudy Feyt, RST  
Hector Hernandez, counselor  
Ellen Tucker, RST  
Debbie Findlay, counselor  
Melissa Pounder, MST  
Carol Richardson, RST  
Melisa Sconci, medical services coordinator  
Andrea Williams, RST  
Joyce Davis, RST  
Beverly Gajewski, RST  
Audrey Hope, counselor  
Kevin Reed, counselor  
Betty Smith, RST  
Tara Smith, RST  
Lee Ellen Johnson, counselor  
Linda Lewis, RST  
Armando Lopez, counselor  
David Probasco, counselor  
Vivian Sanchez, counselor  
Juanita Villarreal, RST  
Jo Anderson, disability trainee  
David Bailey, disability trainee  
Natalie Bates, disability trainee  
Amany Boulos, disability trainee  
Christine Cannonier, disability trainee  
Susan Cunningham, disability trainee  
Dale Garner, disability trainee  
Mario Grima, disability trainee  
Terry Hirsh, disability trainee  
David Kocks, DE  
Deborah Lagow, DE  
Kenneth Lamparter, DE  
Garnard Morrison, DE  
Monica Norberg, DE  
Vielka Ridley, DE  
Thomas Rutledge, DE  
Brad Scott, DE  
Patrick Stroka, DE  
Dan Michael Tippit, DE  
Veronica Villareal, DE  
Richard Waters, program specialist  
Ricardo Zuniga, DE

### Retirements

Sue Harris, psychological services technician in Lufkin Field Office, retired on March 31, 1997 with 24 years of state service.  
Robert Garner retired after 28 years of state service on March 31, 1997. Garner was Regional Training Administrator in the Metroplex Regional Office.

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Address Correction Requested

# trc today

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## State Service Awards - thru April 1997

When we consolidated several issues last fall, we missed publishing names of some folks who received longevity service awards. Congratulations to the following who reached milestones during this time. If we have still missed your name, please contact us as we know these are important milestones and do not want to miss them.

### 10 years

David J. Bosh  
Deanna Chesnut  
James Ford  
Judith Lamb  
Glenda Lane  
Margarito P. Martinez  
Amelia Mendoza  
Veronica Monsivais

Julianna Nanez  
Tammy Lynn Toney  
Patricia O. Wolschlager

### 15 years

Art A. Asebedo  
Myra A. Carter  
Joan Eisinger

### 15 years cont.

Kathy Fitzgerald  
Mary M. Holt  
Doris Ann Rossman  
Ann Thompson  
Selestina Villarreal  
Doris Wilson  
Candace Yocum

### 20 years

Gloria Alderette  
James Barth  
Karen Gaede  
Jackie Herzog Lockwood  
Carmen Maldonado  
Timmie Monroe  
Barbara Parsley  
Sylvia Perry

### 25 years

Adeline Kasper  
Kathleen Mills

### 30 years

Ida B. Diaz  
Larry E. Gladden

### 35 years

Vernon Max Arrell

## April 1997

### 10 Years

William Davis  
Eugene Aguilar  
Albert Ramos

### 15 Years

Thomas Warkoczewski  
Marcie Young

### 20 Years

Jerry Keesee  
Dolly Jenkins  
Donna Horton  
Dennis Kutach  
Nancy Neill  
Delia Ramirez

### 25 Years

Louise Stubblefield  
Armando Cortez  
Lucy Matwally

### Special Recognitions

Congratulations to Candace Coleman, area manager at Fort Worth West Field Office. Candace was recently honored as the "U.N.T. Outstanding Alumni Graduate of the Year."

