

TRC TODAY

TRC TODAY is a newsletter for the employees of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission.

Vol. 16 No. 9
September 1994

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It's NDEAM National Disability Employment Awareness Month! 4

Running the store

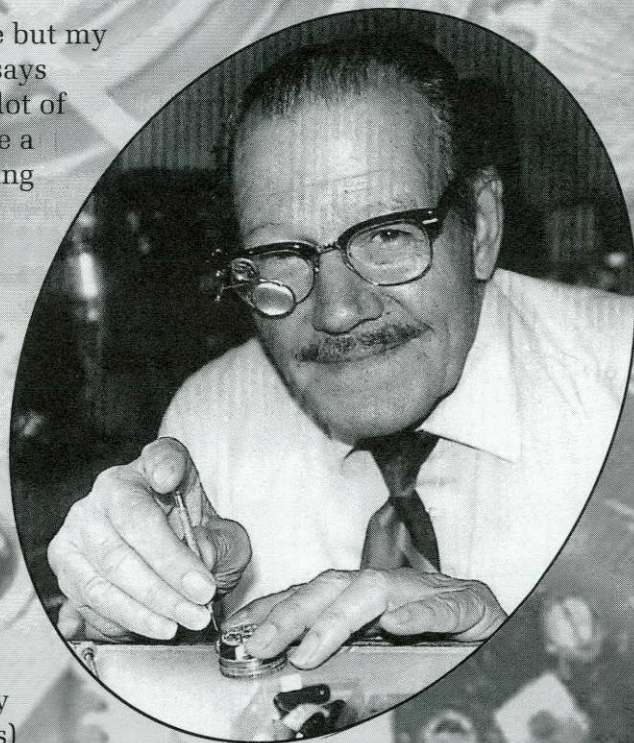
Martin Ayers has run his own business since about the time TRC became its own agency. He is one of the many wonderful examples of how this agency has a rippling effect — touching not only individual lives, but families and whole generations of Texans.

Ayers credits his career and business to TRC. While a teenager, Ayers had an accident that left him on crutches. He said he didn't know what he wanted to do with his life, but that he was sure being a paperboy wasn't going to get him far.

With few other resources, Ayers became our client and went through school for watchmaking. Years down the line, we entered his life again when then assistant commissioner for VR, C.G. Fairchild helped him open up his own shop. That shop slowly grew into a family business and through the years, Ayers mentored other TRC clients, helping them get a start.

"TRC provided not only me but my whole family with a career," says Ayers. "We've never made a lot of money but we've always made a living and had a lot of fun doing it."

True, Ayers Jewelers hasn't grown into a big chain store but it's a business that knows most of its customers on a first-name basis. It's a business that doesn't close down for more than a single day, even when moving locations. It's a business that people drive across town to get to when there's a store they could use right up the street. It's the type of business that many large companies (and agencies) could learn a lot from.



Last chance to reserve your place
at the TRC Homecoming . . . back page

The computer age comes to DDS



The trainers are getting trained in VERSA and AmiPro. Clockwise: Rob Graham, Scott Phelps, Marcy Sprott, Wayne Bogan and Jan Smith (seated).

DDS is busy these days gearing up for VERSA and the long awaited PC on everyone's desk. The first unit is projected to go on-line with the new computer system this month.

Having received \$2.8 million for automation in 1994, DDS installed core elements of a local area network, 170 workstations and a central computer sufficient to support all DDS employees. With the additional \$4.3 million expected by SSA in FY 1995, full implementation is targeted by December 1995. "It's been fast and furious since the first of June," says Dan Eudy, director of Information Management Services. "We've made more progress in three months than we have in five years.

"We're on target for training the first examiners by Sept. 20," adds Eudy. "After that we will be adding one unit a month through January and then increase to two units every month. There is a lot of information for employees to learn but the programs are user-friendly and the training is tailored to the functions of their positions. No one has to know everything about the system, just the parts that relate to their job."

Supported Employment gets big boost

The grant will help persons with severe disabilities get real jobs for real pay.

Good news! TRC just received a sizable grant for Supported Employment. Over the next three years, TRC will get a little over a half million dollars a year to increase expertise in the Supported Employment field and to share that knowledge with other agencies, employers and consumer groups.

Coming on the heels of a Supported Employment Summit recently sponsored by Texas Comp-

troller John Sharp, the timing of this news couldn't be better. "The Summit really helped focus Texas on Supported Employment and this grant will help make the goals of the Summit a reality," says Joellen Flores Simmons, deputy commissioner for Rehabilitation Services.

"We are really excited," says Roger Ward, director of Programs, who played a key role in developing

the grant request. "This grant will allow Texas to create some innovative programs that help persons with severe disabilities get real jobs for real pay in their communities." The focus of the grant will also be to develop ways for clients to get long-term support in their jobs and means seven new positions for the Commission.

ReengineeringUpdate

The train screeched to a stop!!

It's been called the Rehabilitation Train. Working for over 25 years, it's one of the best trains in the country and has had a good run. Yet, like all good things over time, it needs to be renovated to meet the new needs of a new era.

The Reengineering task groups are meeting almost non-stop to create a blueprint of the new rehab train — a streamlined, efficient model to get counselors back in the job of counseling and out of the job of shuffling paperwork.

They expect to wrap up this redesign by October, when the blueprints will be turned into action during the laboratory phase of the project. The lab will last approximately three months, after which the new system will be piloted in a "real life" work setting.

Out-of-the-box thinking

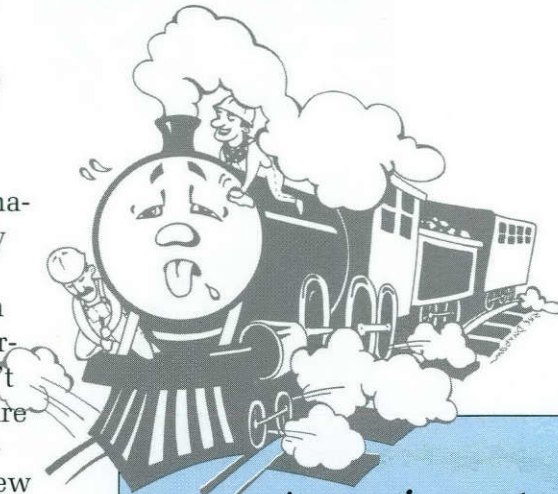
When you take a train apart, you'd be surprised at what you find. Evidence of this is the steady stream of Commission Letters obliterating policy that has been slowing the train down. Gone are many of the

useless and redundant forms, policies and signatures that don't add any value to our services.

And when you take a train apart, you'd be surprised at what you don't find. The task groups are looking at things differently and are finding new ways to greatly enhance our services to clients.

Here's an example — How would you like to be able to see pictures of the items you want to purchase on a computer and get the item the next day? Wouldn't it be nice not to worry about invoicing when you send a client to see a doctor? The option of using "preferred providers" for equipment/products and medical services would make this and much more possible. It's just one concept the Reengineering Task Groups are investigating.

"The task groups have broken loose of 'as is' and are coming up with some real breakthrough ideas on how to better serve our clients," says Jimmy Jackson, executive deputy commissioner. "This effort will not only greatly affect us and the people we serve, it will have a far-reaching impact in Texas state government."

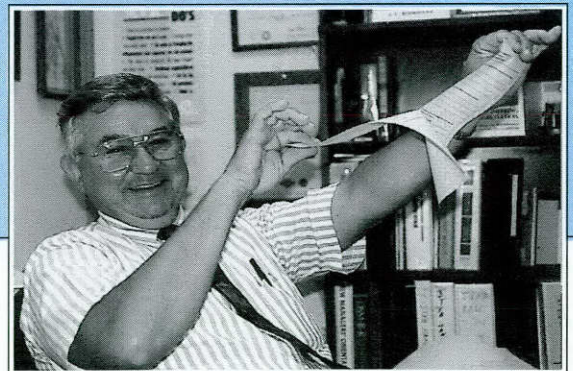


A reengineer at work

"GOOD RIDDANCE" says Joe Rodriguez, counselor in the Eagle Pass Field Office, ripping up the obsolete and no longer required IWRP worksheet, one of the 'quick hits' produced by the Reengineering Task Force. Quick hits are items that that can be implemented immediately to ease the workload of field staff.

Says Joe on the need to reengineer: "I have 160 active cases and 160 work hours in a month. When you take away the time it takes to do paperwork and other tasks, I'm left with an average of about 10 minutes a month to work directly with each client. How can that be quality rehab?"

Rodriguez is a member of the Reengineering Task Group on Rehabilitation Process. Wayne Sanders, head of the group, says Rodriguez keeps the task group focused on the needs of clients, especially ones that live in rural areas. He also deserves a special award for high mileage on his car —driving all the way to and from Eagle Pass about twice a month during this phase of the project.



NDEAM

NDEAM

**“Ability +
Diversity =
Economic
Strength”**

is the slogan for this year’s National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The theme is designed to call attention to the fact that people with disabilities, who themselves include different colors, races and genders, are important to diversity in the workplace.

Every October is an opportunity in each community to highlight the advantages of hiring persons with disabilities.

According to the recent census figures, there are about 49 million Americans with disabilities. Yet, of those with disabilities between the ages of 21 - 64, a scant 23 percent are employed and most lack any form of health insurance.

The cost to this nation each year by neglecting to use the talents of persons

with disabilities is around \$300 billion, including benefits and loss of productivity.

These numbers send us a clear message: vocational rehabilitation is as vital today as it ever has been. People with disabilities want to work, want to earn a paycheck and support their families. VR helps them accomplish that. This country cannot continue to financially support people that are more than capable of supporting themselves.

During the month of October, take the time to contact your local media, acknowledge employers in your area that are doing an outstanding job of hiring persons with disabilities and/or contact new potential employers. Call the TRC Public Information Office for help at (512)483-4043. We can supply you with proclamations, PSAs, press releases and other ideas that can help bring NDEAM to life in your community.



ADA Update

As of July 26, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act covers **ALL businesses with 15 or more employers**. Don't overlook contacting small companies as a resource for hiring persons with disabilities.

NDEAM



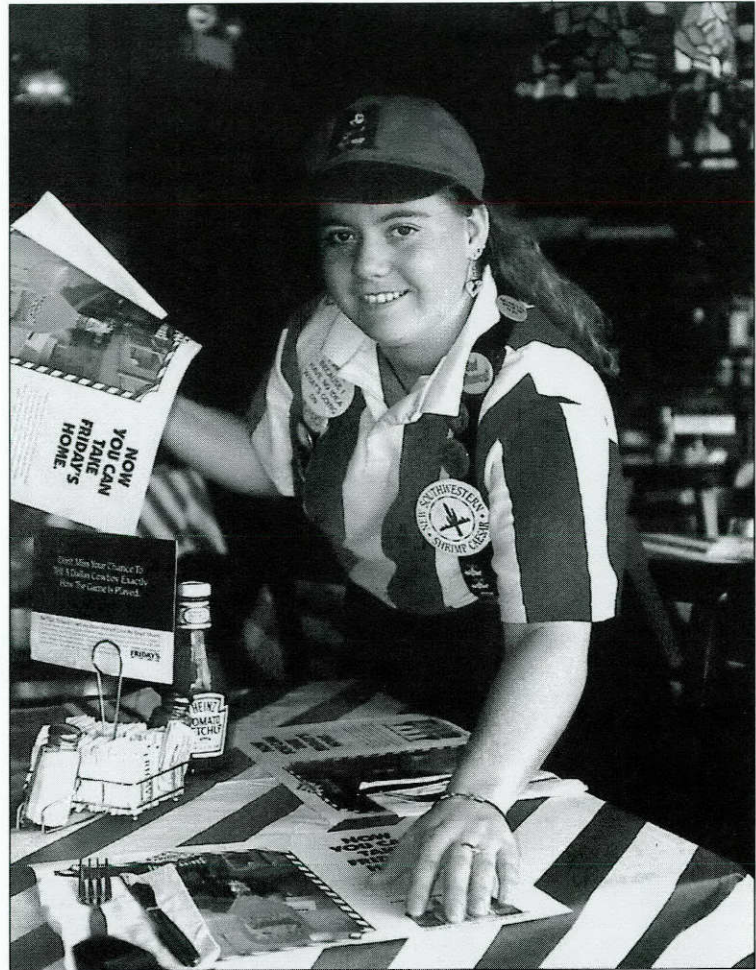
TGI FRIDAY'S

Last year in the Dallas area, TGI Friday's hired between 40 and 50 TRC clients in all types of work and all levels of the organization. "TGI Friday's is a great company to work for," says Kim Mason, who coordinated most of the placements. "Clients tell me they do not discriminate on the basis of a disability and treat everyone the same."

Mason says that this attitude starts in top management and filters down to the individual stores. And in addition to a great track record in hiring, two employees sit on the Dallas Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities and the Project Link Business Advisory Committee.

"We have one operating philosophy," says Randy Smith, senior personnel specialist with the company. "We treat *everyone* with care, respect, fairness and understanding. That's our bottom line. If we are to live up to this, we have done our job."

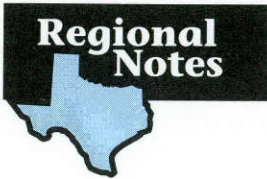
Years ago, we encouraged opportunities for persons with disabilities," says Juanita Nanez, director of employee relations. "Managers saw real successes and employees reaped the benefits as well. When managers talked with each other, the hiring of persons with disabilities took off from there and became part of day-to-day business."



TRC client and TGI Friday's employee
Julianne Alexander.

**We treat *everyone* with
care, respect, fairness and
understanding.**

Randy Smith, TGI Friday's senior
personnel specialist.



Region I

Kent Lord is the new counselor in the Amarillo TRC/DHS Field Office.

Priscilla Gibbs was selected as transition/program support secretary transferring from Programs Support. The vacancy left in Programs Support was filled by Gloria Braly.

Nena Thomas transferred to the RST position for the El Paso U.T.E. P.

Region II

Lucy Endermark, counselor in the Northeast Dallas Field Office, won the Employment Award by the Life Options Advisory Council for her strides in the employment of persons on dialysis and with other kidney impairments.

Stephanie Karen Cook is the new regional transition/program support secretary, transferring from the Metroplex Human Resources Department.

Francine Todar-Peters, counselor in the Stephenville Field Office, was awarded Field Instructor of the Year by the Tarleton State University.

Hardy Bell, counselor in the University of North Texas Field Office, retired after 26 years of service with the Commission.

Janet Darr was selected as counselor in the Dallas Southwest Field Office.

Region IV

Quintrella Van Orsdell (Mrs. Van), former employee in the Houston Regional Office, passed away on August 23.

Scott Loree is the new counselor for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired in the Houston Central Field Office transferring from the Pasadena Field Office.

Region V

Jim Nichols, counselor Beeville Field Office, Lupe Ramirez, RST in the Beeville Field Office, and Veronica Spaleck, AST in the Victoria Field Office, are the Employee of the Year winners in Region V!

Bill Glenn is the new area manager for the San Antonio North Field Unit.

Tony Ocana is the new area manager for the Harlingen Field Unit.

Tammy Balderson was selected as RST in the Victoria Field Office.

DDS

The Employee of the Year winners for DDS are: Diane Hume, clerical supervisor in Unit 23, Carmen Vasquez, DST in Unit 23 and Leslie Hendren, examiner in Unit 35.

Santiago Moncada is the new employment officer at DDS HRM, transferring from Central Office.

Central Office

Central Office Employee of the Year winners are: Grady Ridings, ad tech in Facilities Management, Sellie Moore, systems support specialist and Roxanne Rios, auditor, both in Management Audit.

Grady Ridings, facilities technician (but more commonly known as a jack-of-all-trades), is retiring after six years with the Commission.

Learning the law



TRC took the lead in getting together for the first time ever all health and human services agency lawyers to discuss government contract law. Debby Gardner, general counsel for Health and Human Services Commission, (left) opened up the one-day seminar. "These laws have become more complex over the years," says Charles Schiesser, TRC associate commissioner for Legal Services, who was responsible for coordinating the seminar. "It's very important

for this agency to know what it can and can't do in areas such as HUBs (historically under-utilized businesses) and other government contracting."

A change of pace

Lee Rogers, new medical relations coordinator at the DDS Branch in Arlington, really enjoys her new job. It's quite a change of pace from days as a disability hearings officer in Houston. "I'm seeing the more positive side of this business," says Rogers. "As a hearings officer, I was talking to people who were upset that their benefits might end."



Now, at the beginning of the disability determination process instead of at the end, she works with physicians who see SSA applicants. She's been impressed with what she's found. "The stereotype is that the doctors we use are

below standard," she says. "I found it to be the opposite. They are very successful and this is their way of giving back to the community."

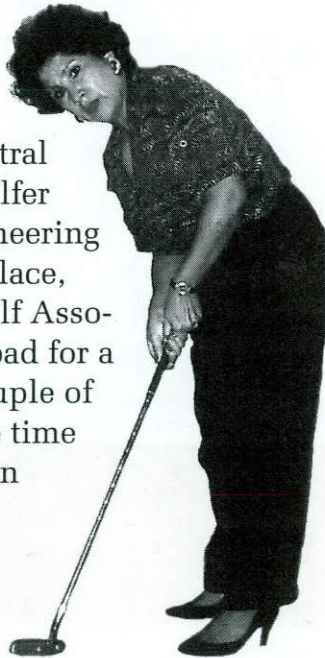
Some of the doctors also have unusual stories

to tell. One physician goes to disaster sites to help out and has made humanitarian trips to Florida after Hurricane Andrew, and to Azerbaijan and Bosnia. Another physician recently used a new technique in eye surgery to give a teenager almost 20-20 vision after he had been legally blind since four years of age.

"These doctors see a need and fill it. I never cease to be impressed with their dedication," say Rogers. "Even if I won the lottery I would not quit this job. It is such a treat to work with such fine people on a daily basis."

Fore!

Who would have thought that Central Office had a national champion golfer in its midst? Gloria Lopez, reengineering services specialist, just won first place, first flight in the Pan American Golf Association (PAGA) tournament. Not bad for a lady who started playing golf a couple of years ago so she could spend more time with her husband. "Last year I won third place at this tournament and said this would be my year," says Lopez. "I really felt it would happen."



August 1994 State Service Awards

Region I

10 years

Margarita Carrasco

Mona Roybal

15 years

Karen Miranda

Ruth Briscoe

25 years

Elmer Blankenship

Region II

10 years

Sherry Gutierrez

15 years

George Calhoun

Region III

15 years

Michelle Crocker

Carol Hoppens

Monica Bayer

25 years

Sylvia Kirby

Nelda Smith

Region IV

10 years

Rosalinda Egge

20 years

Joan Brabury

Judith Taylor

Region V

10 years

Alan Craig

Herlinda Escobar

20 years

Sylvia Flores

Maria Solis

Virginia Sicotte

DDS

10 years

Lori Lawson

Maria Zuniga

Trudy Wiley

Bony Marrero

Laurelinda Rodriguez

15 years

Candy Powell

Mary Louise Sanchez

Denice Whisenaut

Mark Rodriguez

20 years

Mary Ann Rodriguez

Jeanette Sutherland

Patricia Bell

Central Office

20 years

David Stephenson

Jeff Kaufmann

25 years

George Schneider



Ya'll Come

Reserve your plate and place at the TRC Homecoming, barbecue and overall fun festivities Friday, October 21, 1994, from 3 p. m. til dusk. Celebrate the 25th anniversary year of TRC. More than a reunion, more like a renaissance. Reconnect with professional rehabers from the last quarter century. Commissioners, counselors, examiners, bureaucrats ... they will all be there to tell tall tales about how good we were. Don't miss this. It won't happen again.

Yes, reserve my place at the 25th Year TRC Homecoming:

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone: _____

**2ND NOTICE
DEADLINE IS OCT. 12**

Barbecue Ticket Price: Adults \$10.00 Children under 11years \$5.00

Mail check to:
TRC Homecoming
P.O. Box 925
Pflugerville, Texas 78691-0925

Number _____ Adults \$ _____
 Number _____ Children \$ _____
 TOTAL \$ _____



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