

TRC news & views

TEXAS REHABILITATION COMMISSION

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Feasibility Training Near

Every day, TRC counselors are faced with a challenging task. They must decide which of the thousands of people who apply for TRC services are, in fact, eligible. Though there are policy guidelines to follow, in some cases, the present guidelines aren't enough. This is especially true when an applicant has a minor impairment or a very severe disability.

To help the counselor with this dilemma, TRC officials are developing a Feasibility Training Program. The course is based on the findings of several feasibility studies conducted by committees composed of TRC personnel from around the state. By studying the disability groups TRC serves, these committees were able to determine, generally speaking, the factors that contribute to a person's success in the vocational rehabilitation program. By understanding which factors lead to the successful rehabilitation for a client, the counselor should be better prepared to determine which applicants would most benefit from services.

At present, Staff Development is working with employees from the field and Central Office to develop the training. By Jan. 1, the program will be ready to go.

Training for supervisors and regional staffs is scheduled for Jan. 1 through Feb. 15. All counselors will have participated in the training by April 15.

Hinojosa Named Program Officer

Bertha N. Hinojosa is the new Program Officer for Region VI. Hinojosa, who has worked with the Commission for 14 years, received word of her promotion last month. She replaces Jerry Martin, who left TRC to become a management consultant for a private firm.

Hinojosa started her career with TRC in 1967. By 1973, she had worked as a counselor in Harlingen, Edinburg, Pharr and North Dallas. In 1974, Hinojosa was promoted to supervisor of the Dallas West Field Office. For the past three years, she has supervised the Garland Field Office.

The new Program Officer

holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Texas Woman's University. She earned a master's degree in human behavior management from Abilene Christian University.

Regional Director Robert M. Marx says, "I've known Bertha since she was a counselor, and she has consistently done a good job in every position she's held. I am confident she will do well in her new position." Marx says the vacancy created by Hinojosa's promotion will not be filled. Instead, Region VI will experience "a reorganization of units" to redistribute the supervisory responsibilities to the remaining supervisors.



Deputy Commissioner for Programs Doyle Wheeler (standing) was one of several TRC administrators to address members of the TRC Consumer Consultation Committee at their meeting at the Central Office in July. TRC officials spoke to the consumer group on several topics, including budget activity in Congress and its possible impact on TRC, feasibility studies designed to give counselors better guidance in determining client eligibility and the Commissioner's emphasis on planning.

College Conference a First

College administrators, vocational rehabilitation counselors and others who work with disabled college students from around the state met in Austin last month to share ideas and solutions to problems encountered in making accessible college training a reality for disabled students. "Accessible College Training . . . The Dream Becoming a Reality for the Disabled" was sponsored by TRC, the University of Texas at Austin and the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System.

The three day conference focused on the needs of disabled students and the ways colleges and univer-

sities are, or are not, meeting those needs. Subject matter ranged from legislative action affecting the disabled student and the college to sexuality and the handicapped to curing burn-out among counselors and others who sometimes suffer the effects of a demanding caseload.

TRC Program Specialist Ron Trull, one of the organizers of the conference, says the need for such a program was identified several years ago. Trull adds that one of the most important aspects of the conference was giving people involved in the college and university program a chance to share information and ideas.

From the Field:

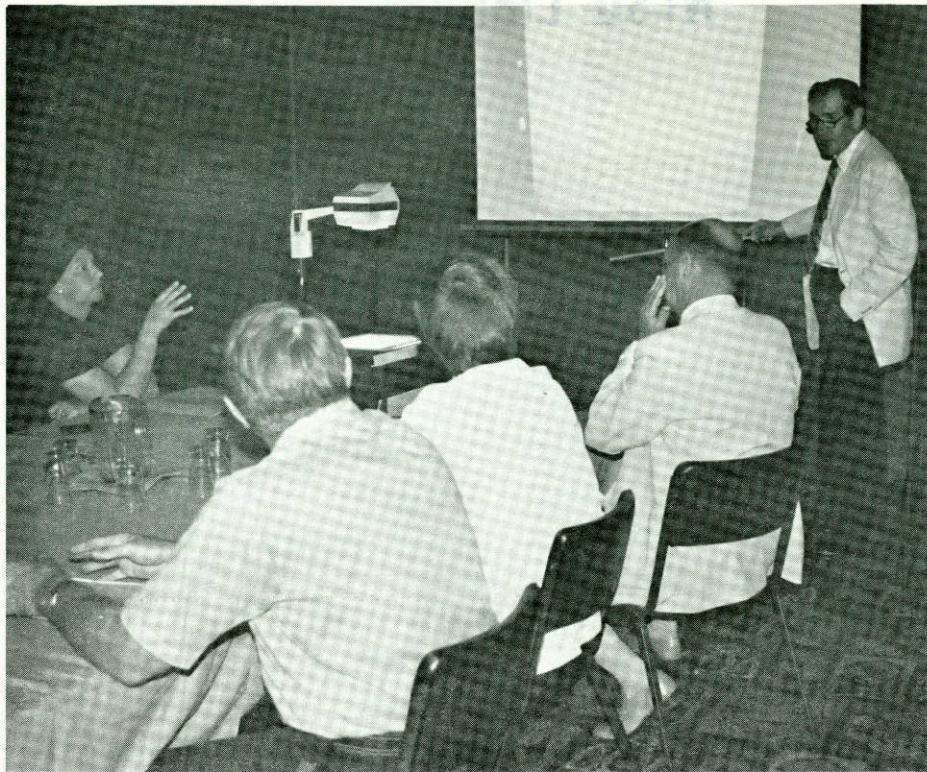
(Editor's Note: The information in this article comes from El Paso Supervisor Bob Brown, who wrote a letter to the Public Information Office recently to share some new and different activities taking place in his office. In the interest of information sharing, we are happy to receive this type of information and will publish it in the "News & Views" when space permits.)

"I have been conducting a different type of staff development, for me anyway, here in El Paso which we call the 'Brown Baggers Special.' So far, the attendees include myself, the three newest counselors in our unit and any specialists we call in to speak to us. On Friday, we each bring our own lunch, hence the name, and while we eat, discuss problem cases, the RSM, job duties, etc. This has proven to be a very effective means of training. Out of this and (Senior Counselor) Art Power's request for sharing information, has come another idea for a counselors' monthly or bimonthly luncheon for the expressed purpose of peer growth. In addition, the unit staff has now requested a retreat for the employees and their families which we have tentatively scheduled for a weekend in September. We hope that all of these ideas bring us closer together as a team and foster new ideas to help our clients."

Bimonthly Payroll Nixed

TRC employees holding classified positions below salary group 12 have turned down an option to be paid on a bimonthly basis. During its regular session, the Texas Legislature passed a law which requires any state agency to pay employees below group 12 twice a month, if at least 30 percent of the eligible group wants to participate in the program.

Personnel Director Mike Mericle says the employees were polled, and less than 30 percent indicated they would like to be paid bimonthly. Therefore, the program will not be put into effect at TRC. Mericle has suggested, however, that the Commission resurvey eligible employees next summer.



State Medical Consultant Dr. James K. Pope is on the road a good bit these days, getting acquainted with TRC's local medical consultants across the state. Dr. Pope is traveling to each region to host a luncheon for the local consultants. Afterwards, the physicians are given a brief review of the medical consultant program and a chance to discuss problems, suggestions or ideas with Pope and other TRC staff members. Pope is pictured here with local medical consultants from Region III, at their meeting in Austin.

Wheelchair Athletes Gearing Up

There's good news for wheelchair sports fans! Several exciting sporting events are planned for September and October.

The first event is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 12, in Austin. The Austin Parks and Recreation Department's Adaptive Programs Division, as part of its observation of the International Year of Disabled Persons, is sponsoring the Austin Wheelchair Sports-Fest. Participants will be instructed in tennis, basketball, archery, table tennis, weight lifting con-

ditioning and many other athletic activities.

Then, on Wednesday, Sept. 23, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department will hold an organizational meeting of the Austin Wheelchair Sports Club. People interested in attending this meeting should gather at the South Austin Recreation Center at 7:00 p. m. For further information on the Austin activities, call (512) 477-6511, ext. 2850.

The City of Houston boasts a well established athletic organization, the

Southwest Wheelchair Athletic Association. On Oct. 3 and 4, SWAA is sponsoring the first annual "Wheels in Motion: A Salute to Outstanding Wheelchair Athletes." Wheelchair athletes from all over the country will converge on Houston to compete in basketball, tennis and track. The events will take place at the Jeppenson Field House on the University of Houston campus. Proceeds will be used to support the growth and development of wheelchair sports in Texas. For more information, call (713) 666-6707 or (713) 749-1527.

Employee Safety Program Begins ...by Linda Dryden

As a result of recommendations made in the recent Operational Audit Report of the Governor's Office, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission is expanding its Employee Health and Safety Program. The administrative responsibility for the program has been assigned to the Personnel Department and within this department, to me as the Accident Prevention Coordinator. Mr. James Jackson, Deputy Commissioner, has asked Regional Directors to designate the Personnel Officer/Assistant to coordinate the safety program at the regional level.

The Commission is vitally interested in the safety and health of its employees. Although TRC has a good safety record, there is room for improvement. Last fiscal year, the State of Texas paid over seven million tax dollars for medical bills as a result of on-the-job injuries of state employees. Some \$26,600 of this total was due to TRC employee accidents. Such

accidents are costly to the state not only in terms of medical bills paid, but in the reduction of the Commission's productivity and effectiveness due to employee absence. A major goal of the Health and Safety Program is to significantly reduce the number of job-related accidents.

The Health and Safety Program will continue to include safety surveys, analysis of agency accidents, and implementation of needed safety improvement. However, the program is being expanded with a major emphasis on employee safety awareness which will include both on and off job safety awareness. In the near future, we will be offering safety training in Fire Prevention, First Aid, Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscita-

tion, and health related programs.

The success of TRC's Health and Safety Program depends on the acceptance of safety as a personal responsibility by all employees. All employees are urged to participate fully in our safety program. If you have any special concerns relative to health and safety, please make them known to your Personnel Officer/Assistant. In the meantime, watch for safety notices, program announcements and seasonal safety tips in the "News and Views."

Retirements

Burton Kennedy, Disability Examiner II, employed Aug., 1965, retired Aug. 14, 1981.

TRC News & Views is printed by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission for distribution to its employees and retirees throughout the state. Letters to the Editor may be addressed to Kaye Beneke, Public Information Office, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, 118 E. Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas 78704; or telephone (512) 447-0745, (Tex-An) 823-4745.

Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER 1981

September

1- 4	National Rehabilitation Association	Indianapolis, Indiana
13-18	Supervisor Management Training	TSMDC, Lakeway
27-Oct. 2	Supervisor Management Training	TSMDC, Lakeway
