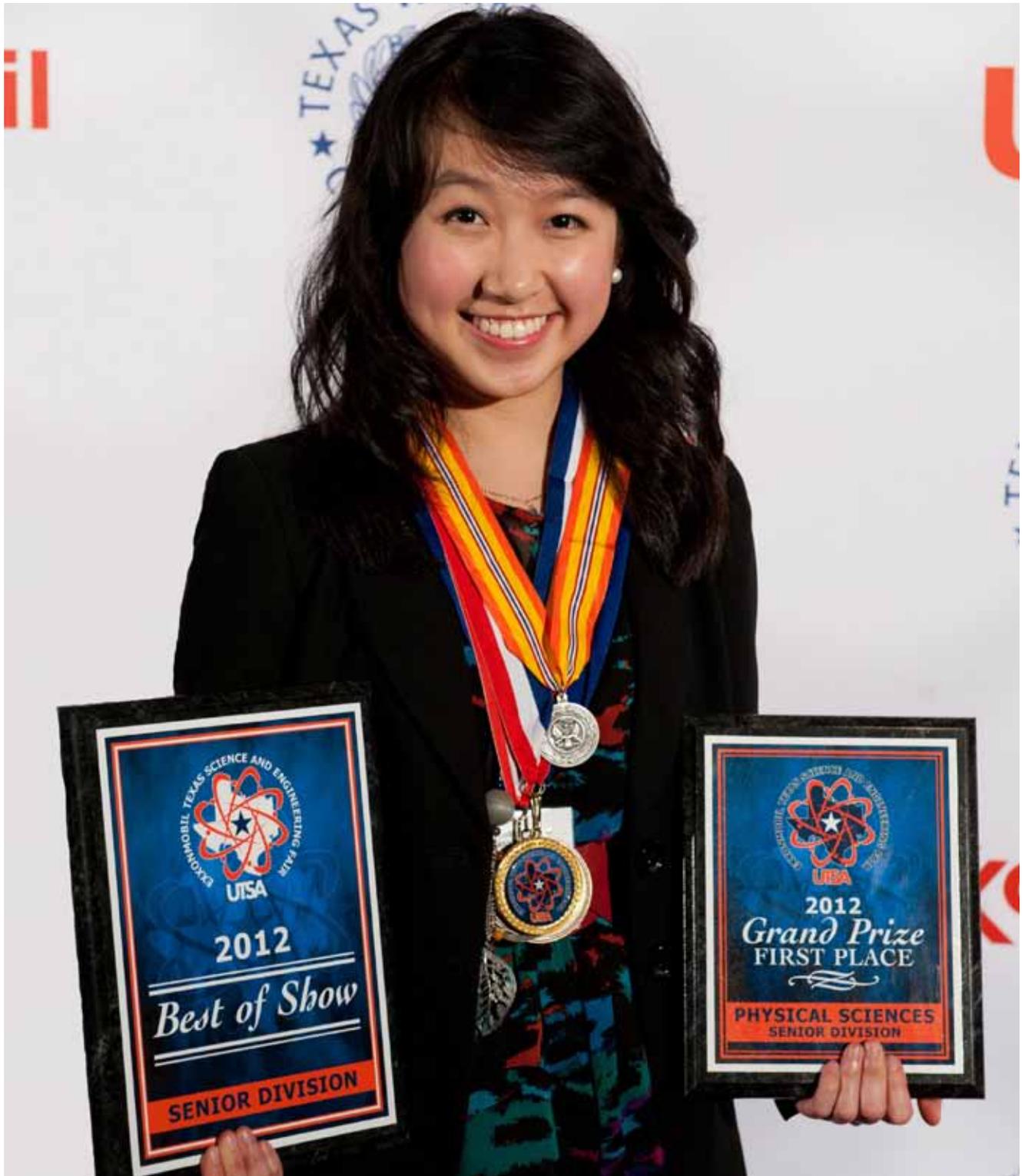


SOLUTIONS

Summer 2012

Vol. 9, No. 3



Nearly 1,000 students display innovative projects at statewide science and engineering fair

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On the cover: McNeil High School Senior Mai-Ahn Vu of Round Rock was the Senior Division Best in Show winner at the ExxonMobil Texas Science and Engineering Fair this spring. Vu's project, which involved the use of chemistry to determine the quantum limit of certain metals, could have important implications for the processes used to manufacture drugs, synthesize chemicals, and refine petroleum. TWC was a co-sponsor of the fair for the 11th consecutive year. *Photo courtesy ExxonMobil*

Texas Workforce Commission

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Ronny Congleton
Commissioner
Representing Labor

The economy is bouncing back and better times are on the horizon. For the dedicated workers who are, unfortunately, still out of a job, an effective job search is a necessity. In our technological society, there are tools that can be used to reach thousands of people and businesses in seconds. Everybody's got to change with the times.

Social media tools are called "networks" for a reason. Through Facebook and Twitter, job seekers can connect to a web of contacts that can lead to job opportunities. Think of all the "friends" you have on your social networks. Most of them have jobs and know if their companies are hiring or know people who have the inside track on the job openings. Friends and acquaintances are an excellent source for job leads.

In the past, networking took more time and effort. These days, all it takes is a click of a mouse to get your message out to thousands of potential leads. At the end of 2011, there were 845 million active monthly users on Facebook and at least 56 million active Twitter users. More and more, businesses are using social media to post job openings, not just to connect with customers. The Texas Workforce Commission has joined the revolution with its Facebook and Twitter accounts; the agency even has videos on YouTube. Why not follow the Twitter and Facebook pages of businesses you are interested in to see what is posted?

Of course, there is a downside to using these networks. Once you post something on your accounts, it never really goes away. Some businesses are using Facebook and Twitter to do background checks on potential employees, and what you post there might mean you don't get an interview, much less a job. Be smart about it and watch what you post. If you do, social media just might land you a great job. ■

Students' innovation on display at annual statewide science fair

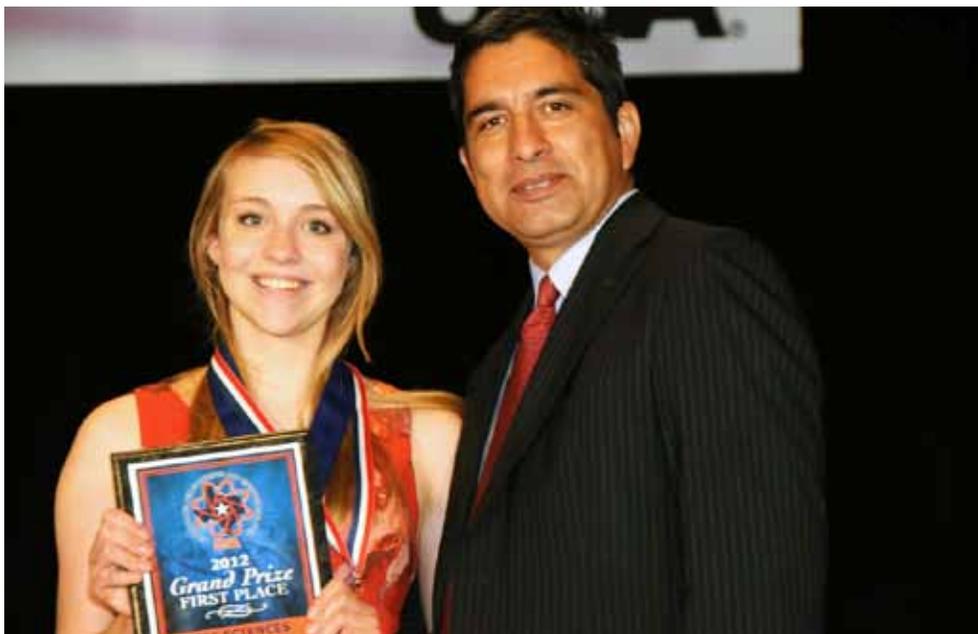
By Debbie Pitts

Ever pondered the effects of binaural beats on cognition and concentration levels of the human brain? Or the effect of oxygen on the growth of breast cancer cells? The schoolchildren of Texas have. Nearly 1,000 middle- and high-school students displayed research on these and other topics at the 2012 ExxonMobil Texas Science and Engineering Fair held in San Antonio March 29 through April 1. The fair, co-sponsored by ExxonMobil and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), featured entries from students throughout the state in 17 project categories.

“The projects that were presented at this year’s fair were truly innovative,” said TWC Chairman Andres Alcantar, who attended the fair and awarded medals to the students. “This fair encourages our future workforce to pursue science, technology, engineering, and math studies—the foundation for success in many high-demand careers.”

Awards were presented to each category’s top five entries in a junior division and a senior division. The top two entries from each division in life and physical sciences were presented grand prize awards. A Best in Show designation was awarded to this year’s grand prize award winner from the physical sciences senior division, Mai-Ahn Vu, a senior from McNeil High School in Round Rock.

“I was completely surprised that my project had been selected as Best in Show,” said Vu. “The competition is very tough because the fair draws the best students from all over Texas. The most interesting thing I learned from the experience is that the field of science is so vast; there are always



TWC Chairman Andres Alcantar, right, presented Senior Division Life Sciences Grand Prize winner Sydney Hutton of Bowie High School in Austin with the Governor’s Champions Academy 2012 medal at the ExxonMobil Texas Science and Engineering Fair. Photo by Debbie Pitts

questions to be asked and problems to solve.”

In addition to local and statewide recognition, category winners from the ExxonMobil science fair’s senior division also qualified for the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair competition in Pittsburgh, Pa. in May and earned a spot at the Texas Governor’s Science and Technology Champions Academy, a weeklong TWC-sponsored residential summer camp, which will be held at the University of Houston. Vu’s sponsor, McNeil teacher Trista Fussner, hopes that her student’s recognition will encourage other students to follow in her footsteps.

“I stress to my students that having a science fair project shows colleges and future employers that you’re are capable of doing research as an individual or cooperatively and will give them an advantage

over other applicants,” Fussner said. “[Participation] can also help students earn college scholarships. With that in mind, more and more scientific minds are developing in my students. I have great hopes for these budding scientists and hope they can use the science fair as an outlet to their creativity.”

This marks the 11th consecutive year that TWC and ExxonMobil have co-sponsored this event, which was hosted by the University of Texas at San Antonio.

“ExxonMobil Foundation is committed to encouraging scientific exploration among the next generation of innovators,” said Suzanne McCarron, president of the ExxonMobil Foundation. “Our nation is fueled by innovation, and the fair is one way to continue inspiring the ingenuity and creativity of America’s youth.” ■

Learning the FACTs of responsible fatherhood

Tarrant County initiative helps dads with employment, parenting issues

By Rachael Pierce

Economic sustainability. Responsible parenting. Healthy relationships. These are goals that fathers in Tarrant County are striving to make “FACTs.” FACTs (Fathers and Children Together) is Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County’s (Tarrant County) latest endeavor to support responsible fatherhood initiatives.

Launched in February, FACT is a comprehensive approach to promoting responsible fatherhood through employment services, job readiness, and training, which can lead to economic sustainability. FACT promotes healthy relationships and parenting through fatherhood and marriage classes, financial literacy workshops, dispute resolution, and mediation services.

“We service FACT participants in many areas, but time and time again, their number one request for assistance involves employment,” said Mervil Johnson, workforce collaboration manager and FACT project director. “For most participants, the number one thing they need, the most important thing to them, is employment.”

Funded through a Department of Health and Human Services grant, FACT is aimed at low-income participants with a minor child (age 16 or younger) or those expecting a child and who reside in Tarrant County. Enrolled participants have access to FACT-related services at no cost.

A collaboration of nine service providers, the Fatherhood Coalition of Tarrant County was established by Tarrant County in 2001. The coalition works to promote FACT through referrals in the community.

For participant Matthew Loftis, FACT affords him the opportunity to network and connect with other fathers and utilize the available services, which ultimately is helping him learn to be a better father and provider.

“I am doing everything I can do to be the best I can be,” said Loftis. “This will benefit myself and my family because I am learning to be a better leader in my household.”

Currently, more than 90 fathers are taking part in the FACT program, which has the capacity for up to 300 individuals.

FACT participants are paired with a mentor-navigator who supports and advises them in utilizing program services. Individuals receive career assessments to help identify their strengths, weaknesses, and potential career paths.

An intensive two-week job readiness boot camp builds on a FACT participant’s career assessment, and helps

FACT Partner	Services Provided
Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County	Workforce system services, including intensive job readiness boot camp
Guinn Healthcare Technologies	Cognitive assessments, which are used as a guide to develop employment objectives and individual service plans
Unique Staffing	Payroll for FACT participants in the subsidized employment program
Catholic Charities	Employment services for legal immigrants and refugees
Texas Re-entry Services	Transitions for re-integration into community, and anger management and workforce readiness classes <i>*Specializes in working with fathers who have been incarcerated</i>
NewDay Services	Fatherhood classes, case management, supervision of mentor-navigators
The Parenting Center	Healthy relationship and marriage classes
Family Pathfinders	Financial literacy workshops
Dispute Resolution Services	Mediation for civil and family disputes, particularly concerning access and visitation with children

target specific occupations that match their interests and qualifications. Creating individualized résumés, learning to use WorkInTexas.com, and participating in advanced interviewing sessions help prepare participants for the job market. Additional funding dollars trains participants in specialized skills, such as forklift operation and heavy equipment usage.

Andre Johnson, job developer and trainer for Tarrant County, sees the benefits of FACT extending not only to the fathers, but also into the employer community.

“The benefit of FACT participants reentering the workforce is that you have tax-paying citizens who are able to become more financially stable and provide for their children,” Johnson said. “For employers, the benefit comes through having trained workers who want to advance in their career.” ■

Cameron County community partners join forces to combat veteran unemployment

By Laura Ybarra

Texans have always answered the call to serve our nation in times of military need. Now a group of community partners in Cameron County want to answer the call to serve our veterans. The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) reports that approximately 35,000 veterans separate from military service and return to Texas each year, and the Cameron County Coalition for Veterans (Coalition) wants to help connect veterans with employment when they return.

“I met with several people from the United Way of Southern Cameron County, the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce, and other community organizations and one thing we all noticed was that more and more veterans were in need of assistance,” said Hector Garza, a Veterans Resources and Referral Specialist with the Texas Workforce Commission’s Texas Veterans Leadership Program in Cameron County and Lower Rio Grande Valley. Garza has been a Coalition member since it formed last year.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the 2011 U.S. unemployment rate for veterans who joined the armed forces after 9/11 was 12.1 percent, significantly higher than the non-veteran unemployment rate of 8.1 percent. Even more concerning, the unemployment rate for young male veterans aged 18 to 24 stood at 29.1 percent.

“At the beginning of 2011, [the Coalition] started to meet once a month to brainstorm ideas on how we could help,” Garza said.

The Coalition applied for and received a \$100,000 grant from



The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the 2011 U.S. unemployment rate for veterans who joined the armed forces after 9/11 was 12.1 percent, significantly higher than the non-veteran unemployment rate of 8.3 percent. Photo by Stockbyte/Thinkstock

TVC, which helped turn some of those ideas into reality. Administered through the United Way of Southern Cameron County (UWSCC), the grant will be used to provide area employers a \$2,000 incentive to help offset training costs for newly hired veterans. The Coalition also formed an apprenticeship program in which an employer and UWSCC each give \$2,000 to provide a veteran with a paid eight-week internship.

In February, UWSCC also hired Bill Hollis as a full-time veterans coalition coordinator to assist veterans and promote the programs to employers.

“Beyond the employer incentive programs, we’re assisting veterans by organizing networking events, reviewing résumés, and conducting mock interviews,” Hollis said. “We

also provide computer and Internet access, and refer participants to available financial and medical veteran resources.”

With the number of returning vets expected to grow significantly over the next five years due to anticipated reductions in military forces, the need for these initiatives will likely continue to increase.

Spc. Joseph Campbell plans to separate from the National Guard next month after six years of service, which included a deployment to Iraq.

“I never needed a résumé before and I didn’t really know where to start when putting one together,” Campbell said. “The veteran’s coalition has really helped me feel more prepared and has offered me networking opportunities I wouldn’t have had otherwise.” ■

THE EDUCATION CONNECTION

Eagle Ford Shale boom opening up opportunities for more skilled workforce



Officials with Victoria College, Key Energy Services, and Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent collaborated to train students to receive Commercial Driver Licenses. So far in 2012, 25 Key Energy Services new hires have graduated from the program. Photo courtesy Victoria College



Sean Smith, a second-year student in oil and gas technology, holds a drill bit in Robert Coley's drilling class at Coastal Bend College. Photo courtesy Coastal Bend College

By Mark Lavergne

The Eagle Ford Shale region of Texas isn't just booming with oil and gas. It's overflowing with jobs and a strong need for skilled workers. Opportunities abound for young workers and students to gain in-demand skill sets that will prepare them to start their careers in the energy industry.

Efforts are being made to equip young workers with needed technical skills for the available jobs, and employers are encouraging students to resist the temptation to put off finishing high school to get a job and start making money.

Coastal Bend College (CBC) at Pearsantion has been working with Houston-based Marathon Oil Corp. to encourage students to stay in school.

"We encourage students to finish high school, and depending upon career aspirations, complete additional

levels of education," said Darren Black, senior human resources consultant with Marathon Oil. "Education is really the key to unlocking your earnings potential."

Marathon Oil has advised CBC in developing an oil and gas program that would allow high school students to receive dual credit and certification in different energy-related skills, like drilling and safety, by the time they graduate from high school.

"If you're already certified to work in this industry by the time you graduate from high school, you're in a position to get a job straight out of high school, which is what a lot of these students are looking for," said Glynis Strause, CBC's dean of institutional advancement. "That job can then help pay for a post-secondary education and open up opportunities for even better paying jobs. It's a positive cycle."

Community colleges throughout

Employment Focus



A student practices welding at Coastal Bend College. Welding is just one of the many oil and gas-related skill sets now in demand in the Eagle Ford Shale area. Photo courtesy Coastal Bend College

the region are adding and enhancing course offerings to meet growing industry demands. Such courses teach the skills needed to drill for, safely handle, transport, refine, and market oil and gas. Whether students are in two-year associate programs, dual credit, one-year, or continuing education tracks, classrooms are filling up at Alamo Colleges, Laredo Community College, and Southwest Texas Junior College.

CBC's two-year Associate of Applied Science degree aims to provide students with knowledge and skills encompassing the entire oil and gas industry and process. Also included is training to receive certification in CPR, first aid, and hazardous materials handling.

"If you're willing to invest your time to get a degree or a certificate in oil and gas technology, you could have the makings of a long-term, good-paying career."

Robert Coley
Coastal Bend College
instructor

When CBC oil and gas technology instructor Robert Coley started teaching in 2007, he worked part-time and had three to seven students per class. Now, all five of his classes are at full capacity with 20 students or more receiving either associate degrees or some form of certification.

"There are thousands of jobs in different areas of the oil field," said Coley, who has 15 years of experience in drilling and production. "If you're willing to invest your time to get a degree or a certification in oil and gas technology, you could have the makings of a long-term, well-paying career."

Coley estimates that about 60 students so far have received certificates through the oil and gas technology program, and about 98 percent of them have since secured employment with salaries ranging from \$60,000 to \$100,000 a year.

Patricia Garibay just completed her first semester in CBC's oil and gas program. A three-year Navy veteran, she recently returned home from duty in San Diego to Mathis, Texas, located in the Coastal Bend region.

"I'm definitely happy with my decision to pursue a career in the energy industry," Garibay said. "This program provides unique hands-on learning. It will be good to know how

the industry works from beginning to end, whether I'm working out in the field or in an office doing sales and marketing."

Another option for those looking to gain in-demand skills for work in the Eagle Ford Shale region is to obtain a Commercial Driver License (CDL). Eagle Ford Shale area workforce development specialists, employers, and educators alike say commercial truck drivers are more in demand than ever and the number of courses that teach the skill is increasing.

Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend (Coastal Bend) and Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent have been working with local community colleges and employers, including CBC, DelMar College, Victoria College, and Key Energy Services, to train workers to receive CDLs and safety certification in handling hazardous materials.

"There's a huge need among oil and gas employers all around this area for people who have a CDL and a clean driving record," said Ken Treviño, president and CEO of Coastal Bend.

Coastal Bend has dedicated \$100,000 in Workforce Investment Act funding to both DelMar College and CBC to help expand their CDL programs, allowing eligible students to train and receive CDLs.

Strause emphasized that CBC is not training job-seekers and employees to merely drive trucks. Truck drivers also must receive hazardous materials training, for example.

"They're getting hired not as a truck driver, but as somebody who is a technician who can drive a truck," Strause said.

Continuing education courses are proving popular at local colleges. CBC's one-year oil and gas technology programs are "bursting at the seams," Strause said.

"People are realizing that in a year they can learn a whole lot about the oil field and get a well-paying position," she said. ■

Partnership aims to fight fraud

Crime Stoppers, agencies focus efforts on public assistance theft

By Shannon Thomas

Everyone knows that crime doesn't pay. But reporting public assistance fraud in Harris County, which includes Houston, could pay up to \$5,000, thanks to a new partnership between state and local agencies and the Crime Stoppers tip line.

"We had a lot of initial success with the partnership, and have really started concentrating some of our efforts on different kinds of fraud," said Renee Magee, assistant district attorney for Harris County and section chief of the public assistance fraud division. "Since the announcement, we've already made several arrests."

In February, Crime Stoppers of Houston and the Harris County District Attorney's Office announced a first-of-its-kind initiative to combat public assistance fraud, including unemployment insurance (UI) fraud. As part of the partnership, the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) Regulatory Integrity Division (RID) will investigate UI fraud tips that Crime Stoppers receives.

"Partnerships like this show criminals how seriously we take attempts to defraud the system," said John Moore, RID director. "TWC's goal is to maintain our UI Trust Fund for those who are legitimately due its benefits."

The Harris County partnership was formed two years ago, when the Harris County District Attorney's office joined forces with Crime Stoppers to combat criminal activity in various high-crime areas. As tips for felony crimes poured in, investigators noticed a high volume of calls dealt with public assistance



In February, Crime Stoppers of Houston and the Harris County District Attorney's Office announced a first-of-its-kind initiative to combat public assistance fraud, including unemployment insurance fraud.

Photo by Keith Brofsky/Photodisc/Thinkstock

"Partnerships like this show criminals how seriously we take attempts to defraud the system."

John Moore
TWC Regulatory Integrity
Division Director

fraud, according to Magee.

"The Crime Stoppers model is perfect for combating public assistance fraud," said Katherine Cabaniss, executive director for Crime Stoppers of Houston. "Our tip line has always been available to take calls concerning fraud, but this is the first time we've really emphasized that public assistance fraud is something you can report. Once we publicized that fact, the phone started ringing off the hook."

Though individuals accused of

committing public assistance fraud are treated in the same manner Crime Stoppers treats other accused criminals, Magee said the DA's office did help to train tip line intake callers on how to deal specifically with fraud calls.

The top 10 offenders are featured on the Crime Stoppers website (www.crime-stoppers.org), along with photos, warrant numbers, and the dollar amount of fraudulent benefits obtained. Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast's Harris County workforce centers also display posters promoting the program.

Crime Stoppers of Houston is funding the initiative, and will provide up to a \$5,000 reward if a tip leads to an arrest. All tipsters remain anonymous.

In 2011, 24 Harris County residents and one person each from Galveston and Montgomery counties were prosecuted for state UI fraud and were ordered to pay a total of \$87,223 in restitution.

Moore said there have been discussions at TWC on ways to take the program statewide.

Whether or not the program goes statewide, Magee says the message the partnership sends to criminals is clear.

"We've encountered individuals lying about their incomes to get more public assistance money, a woman filing millions of dollars in false Medicare claims, and even have charged a couple with setting up new identities to bilk the system," Magee said. "What this initiative says to those people is you will not get away with these crimes." ■

Youth work to break barriers

Disabled students benefit from work placement program

By Kate Hourin

This summer, more than 75 youth with disabilities will be working in the El Paso area thanks to the Breaking Barriers program. Breaking Barriers allows disabled teens, who often face employment obstacles, to find work with participating employers and gain valuable work experience.

“The benefits employers receive when they hire youth with disabilities include reduced employee turnover, high performance, and excellent attendance,” said Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande (Upper Rio) Board member Luis Chew, who is also the executive director of Volar Center for Independent Living (CIL). “These are qualities any employer would value in every employee, disabled or not.”

Upper Rio subsidizes up to 100 hours of the employee’s wages and also assists with job placement and case management.

“This program has made a difference for youth who acquire their first work experience,” said Upper Rio CEO Lorenzo Reyes Jr. “Employers also gain awareness of working with someone with a disability. Working on this program



Brandon LeMasters works at the Pet's Barn in El Paso. He is one of several hundred disabled youth who have secured summer employment over the past several years through the Breaking Barriers program. Photo courtesy Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande

has been truly rewarding.”

The Texas Division of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), CIL, and local school districts all refer youth to the program; CIL and DARS also assist with job coaching and case management.

“This collaboration has allowed students with disabilities to benefit from paid work experiences and put them on career paths,” said Bobby Acala, DARS area manager. “Breaking Barriers is a powerful example of what can be achieved through community partnerships.”

Walgreen’s and Nation Wide Wireless are among the businesses that hire teens through Breaking Barriers. Luis Flores’ son Diego has Down syndrome and has worked at both stores.

“Diego does primarily cleaning and stocking shelves,” said Flores. “While Diego communicates slowly, this job program has helped him be

more active and easy-going.”

More than 200 youth and 100 employers have participated in Breaking Barriers during the past four years. Participation grew from 30 youth and 14 employers in 2008, to 55 youth and 22 employers last year. In the coming weeks, two skills certification sessions are scheduled for participants with job orientation starting in May. Breaking Barriers participants will be placed in their jobs by June 4.

The cost of the program, secured through the Workforce Investment Act, could reach \$80,000 depending on the number of youth and hours worked.

In recognition of its workforce programs, Upper Rio received the Service to Workers Award at the annual Texas Workforce Conference last December, along with a check for \$25,000 to use to support its programs and services. ■

CGI Corp. breaks ground on new center in Belton

Governor Rick Perry and a collection of local and state dignitaries gathered in Belton on April 11 to break ground on a new 40,000-square-foot facility, which will bring hundreds of well-paying jobs to Central Texas. CGI Technologies and Solutions Inc. is building its new Onshore IT Services Delivery Center in Belton to accommodate approximately 400 employees.

Recognized as one of the largest independent information technology and business process services firms in the world, CGI has more than 120 offices in 16 countries. The company chose Belton as the site for its new facility partly because of the strong partnerships available with state and local governments, Fort Hood, local universities, and technical institutions.

CGI also received an investment of \$1.8 million through the Texas Enterprise Fund (TEF) and formed a partnership with Temple College for a \$180,924 Skills Development Fund job training grant through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). That grant will be used to custom train 100 new and 30 incumbent workers and will provide highly technical, specialized information technology training for applications developers and business analysts with the company.

“Employers from across the nation and around the world continue to look to Texas as the best state to do business thanks to our low taxes, reasonable and predictable regulatory climate, fair legal system, and skilled workforce,” Gov. Perry said. “This TEF investment in CGI will create 400 jobs and millions in capital investment, strengthening the economy in Central Texas and creating a livelihood for hundreds of Texas families.”



Gov. Rick Perry (far left) applauds as TWC Chairman Andres Alcantar (center of check) presents a \$180,924 Skills Development Fund grant check to Temple College Board of Trustees Vice Chair Stephen Niemeier (right) and CGI President of U.S. Operations George Schindler (left). The presentation was part of a groundbreaking ceremony for CGI's new manufacturing facility in Belton. *Photo courtesy the Office of the Governor of Texas*

STEM Challenge³ inspires students to excel

El Paso high school students presented business plans to community leaders as part of Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande's (Upper Rio) STEM Challenge³ Innovative Solutions

Competition at the University of Texas at El Paso in March. The competition is intended to advance the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills of regional youth and spark an interest in STEM jobs.

“The STEM challenge encourages our youth to identify and develop ideas that address regional concerns in a practical business plan approach,” said Upper Rio CEO Lorenzo Reyes Jr. “We provide them with the opportunity to expand on their concepts and learn how to turn a dream into reality.”

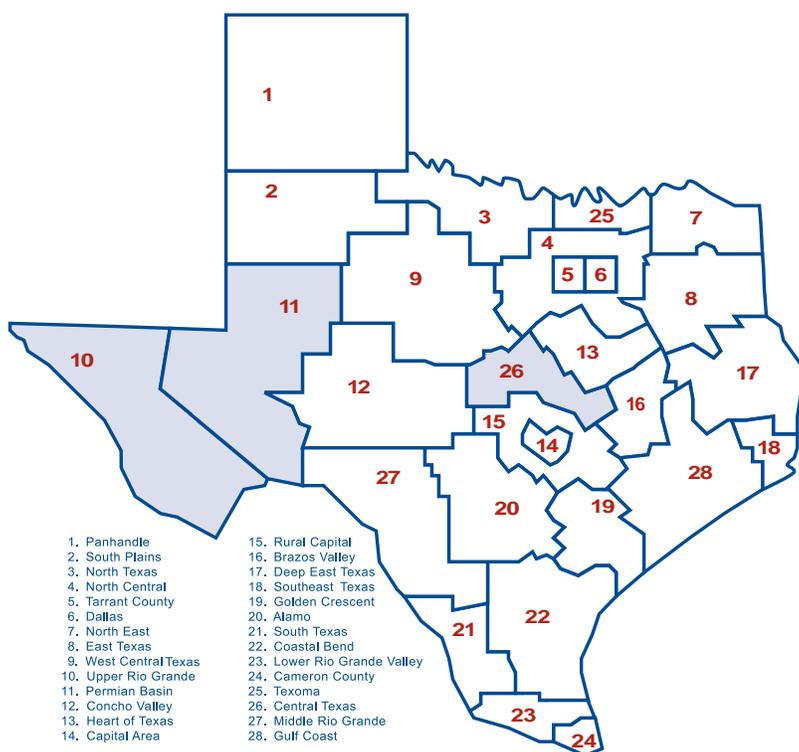
The winners of this year's contest are:

First Place: Inkblot Postal Service from Coronado High School. The company proposed that the U.S. Postal Service offer premium postal tracking services to their customers at a low flat rate, with the goal of increasing efficiency and providing an extra source of income for a diminishing market. Each team member was awarded \$500.

Second Place: S.P.E.A.K. (Specialized Patient Efficient and Accurate Kare) from Coronado High School. This company developed a plan that would provide first responders a more efficient and accurate way to access a patient's medical history during times of emergencies. Each team member was awarded \$300.

Third Place: TMS Manufacturing Co. from Parkland High School. This company developed the idea for a soft, skin-like flexible patch to be worn by a customer that would collect data to develop a specialized fitness routine for that person. Each team member was awarded \$150.





Central Texas College launches vets' education site

Central Texas College recently launched www.CollegeCreditforHeroes.org, a personalized online portal that helps Texas veterans and service members translate military experience into college credit. The portal was launched as part of a state-funded \$3 million workforce development initiative, College Credit for Heroes, which aims to enable veterans and service members, particularly those who served post-9/11, to more quickly re-enter the civilian workforce. The portal results from a partnership between TWC and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and participating community colleges.

New users can set up an account on www.CollegeCreditforHeroes.org. Once registered, veterans will have access to an official evaluation of their military experience and training, and the ability to request a military transcript from their branch of service

be sent to College Credit for Heroes staff for review. Users also may request that a transcript of awarded credits be sent to a Texas college of their choice. Central Texas College is one of seven community colleges participating in the College Credit for Heroes initiative. The other participating colleges include: Houston Community College, Temple College, Lone Star College System, Lee College, San Jacinto Colleges, and Alamo Colleges.

Labor Law Department honored by public employees association

TWC's Labor Law Department was honored by the Texas Public Employees Association (TPEA) with its 2012 Unsung Heroes Award at an April awards ceremony and luncheon in Austin.

Chosen from 45 nominees, the award recognizes the contributions Labor Law employees have made to advance the mission, goals, and services of TWC. TPEA features the Labor Law program's achievements in the April 2012 edition of *Texas*

Public Employee magazine. Labor Law employees also received an award plaque at the luncheon.

As part of TWC's Regulatory Integrity Division, the Labor Law program administers the Texas Payday and Texas Child Labor laws. In Fiscal Year 2011, the Labor Law program:

- conducted 16,648 wage claim investigations, all within 45 days of receipt;
- collected more than \$6.8 million in unpaid wages;
- fielded 90,128 telephone inquiries on the toll-free line;
- conducted more than 2,500 child labor compliance inspections; and
- held 3,708 appeal hearings.

Permian Basin recruiting for youth employment program

Workforce Solutions Permian Basin (Permian Basin) is helping teens and young adults find jobs through its summer youth initiative. The program targets youth between ages 16 and 24 in the 17-county region served by Permian Basin. Permian Basin aims to place 300 to 400 youth in jobs over the summer.

Permian Basin surveyed local employers to find out what positions could be a good fit for local youth. With a thriving local economy, which boasts one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state, employer demand for workers is strong.

Employers partnering with Permian Basin include insurance companies, medical establishments, restaurants, oil companies, and day care centers. Permian Basin workforce staff visited high schools and colleges and provided students with applications for the program. Workforce staff matched the students to employers offering jobs; students then applied directly with the employers with whom they had been matched.



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www.workforcesolutionstexoma.com

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www.workforcelink.com

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www.wrksolutions.com

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www.wspanhandle.com

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www.workforcesolutionscb.org

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www.hotworkforce.com

Permian Basin
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www.workforcepb.org

West Central
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(800) 457-5633
www.workforcesystem.org

Rural Capital Area
(512) 244-7966
www.workforcesolutionsrca.com

The Texas Workforce Commission, in partnership with 28 local workforce development boards, forms Texas Workforce Solutions.



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