

Audit results please CareerTech officials

Officials at the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education said they were pleased with the results of an abbreviated state audit of Oklahoma's CareerTech system released recently by the Office of State Finance. Suggested changes are already being implemented within the system.

Former Gov. Frank Keating requested a more extensive audit last summer but parts of the planned audit were shelved because of state budget shortfalls. The audit was originally estimated at \$225,000 but the final cost of the scaled-back version will total about \$60,000.

Pete Buswell, state CareerTech director, said the agency was grateful to have an extra set of eyes look at the agency's reporting processes and make suggestions.

"Our staff members had already made several of the changes suggested by the audit team," he said. "The rest of the audit team's suggestions will be implemented."

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sandy Garrett, chair of the State CareerTech Board, echoed DeMuth's remarks.

"I concur with the CareerTech staff's response to the recommendations contained in this special audit report," Garrett said. "The audit team has made some excellent recommendations. We appreciate their hard work and thoroughness."

One of the audit's chief concerns centered on how some technology centers report student

enrollment figures. While technology centers report the number of students they have enrolled each year by Oct. 1, some schools do not notify the state CareerTech agency when students either complete the class early or drop out.

Bruce DeMuth, associate director, explained that many students, particularly adults, enroll in a CareerTech program only to pick up a particular skill, not to complete the entire length of a course. "For example," he said, "an adult student may enroll in an auto service technology program only to learn how to repair brakes and then leave when they have mastered that skill."

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State CareerTech Director

However, when schools fail to report those early finishers or dropouts, it results in an overstatement of the number of hours students actually attend, DeMuth said.

"It does not change the number of students actually served by the technology centers," he said. "Those have been accurately reported."

DeMuth noted that state funding for technology centers is based on programs, not on student count. Schools have not financially benefited from this reporting discrepancy.

Sarah Mussett, who supervises the agency's data collection, said the agency realized it needed to update its student information processes more than two years ago and began implementing changes at that time.

In the transition to the new process, some schools did not fully understand how to report their enrollment. Mussett said that regional training programs were held across the state this year to help schools understand the new enrollment reporting process.

Another of the audit's recommendations was that technology center school districts be required to implement a policy requiring each district to maintain capital asset records. That recommendation has also already been implemented. It was established by the State Board of Career and Technology Education in July 2001 and became effective in FY02.

Another recommendation was that the state agency consider a standardized method to account for technology center administrative costs consistently across the system.

"We completely concur with this recommendation," said Dwight Stoddard, the agency's audit manager. "Beginning next fiscal year, we will require our technology centers to use the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System's site code to account for all administrative expenses."

Guidebook offers tips on information security

The information revolution created the opportunity to perform a host of tasks on a personal computer. However, many corporations—and individuals—are unaware that sensitive information stored on their computers is vulnerable to theft, loss or destruction from viruses and worms.

The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education's Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center (CIMC) has partnered with Scott Klososky, president and CEO of Critical Technologies, to create a guidebook and video on information security.

The CareerTech CIMC designs competency-based instructional materials used by customers in all 50 states and throughout the world.

Based in Edmond, Critical Technologies stores business records such as images, PC files and mainframes on the Internet. Klososky said most individuals and firms do not think of information security until it's too late.

"Most organizations don't practice safe computing until they get burned," he said. "Companies are losing millions from theft and productivity loss because of hackers and viruses. Most people think there will be IT people to protect them. That is simply not true. There needs to be curriculum

simple enough to take novice users and convert them into safe users."

Statistics from a 2002 Computer Security Institute/FBI survey reinforce Klososky's point. Ninety percent of the corporations and government agencies responding to the survey said they had detected computer security breaches within the last 12 months. Responders also reported more than \$455 million in financial losses from cyber crime.

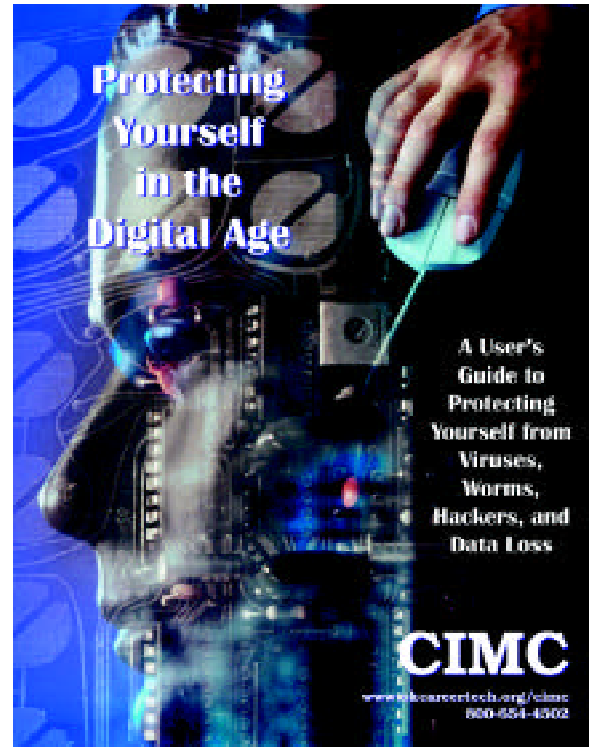
CIMC Coordinator Kimberly Sadler said the guidebook and video, which is titled *Protecting Yourself in the Digital Age*, is targeted at a broad range of CareerTech clients. These include human resource departments, information technology departments, businesses and home users.

Craig Maile, CIMC assistant coordinator, partnered with Klososky on the project. He said the main reason the book was created was to put Klososky's information security expertise into a deliverable format.

"I have been speaking to many different groups—associations, CEOs and educators—for the last year on this subject," Klososky said. "Most are computer users who have heard about hackers and had been touched by viruses. They really have no idea how it all works or what it means to them."

Protecting Yourself in the Digital Age focuses on subjects such as recognizing the need for security, understanding Internet infrastructure and understanding exploits, viruses and worms.

Maile said the 234-page book is divided into eight sections. A supplemental CD is also included.



"Every section has a self-test over what you read," he said. "The book also includes summaries of each chapter with key points, activities and true stories about Internet security issues."

"This toolbox has several applications, which could range from a company using it as a training resource for its workers to an individual using it to improve security at home," Sadler said. "Schools could also use the toolbox as a guide for instructors or for short-term training courses."

Maile hopes people who use *Protecting Yourself in the Digital Age* walk away with a better understanding and awareness of computer security issues.

"This is a tool people can use to become more informed about personal security on their computers," Maile said.

For more information about the computer security resource book, call 800-654-4502 or go to www.okcareertech.org/cimc.

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CTLN helps rural communities attract business

Growing up in the small community of Bennington has given former Congressman Wes Watkins a unique understanding of the economic challenges facing rural Oklahoma. He believes that the Oklahoma *CareerTech* system will be a positive force in turning things around.

Watkins' legislative support recently helped the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education secure a \$300,000 federal grant to continue to develop an online learning system to spur economic development in rural Oklahoma.

Piloting the project are six targeted communities: Bennington, Coalgate, Durant, Healdton, Wetumka and Wewoka, according to David Jinks, manager of Educational Technology Resources at the state *CareerTech* agency.

The grant, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, will fund the Rural Employee Advancement Challenge (REACH) project.

"The purpose is to further the work of the Rural Education Virtual Tech job training program



(REVTECH) and assist six rural communities with economic development projects," said Jinks.

REVTECH is an economic development project to help rural communities recruit new and expanding businesses.

"The project is targeting firms in the information technology, telecommunications and manufacturing areas," Jinks said.

"The new grant funding will be used to continue implementation of the *CareerTech* Learning Network,

introduce new targeted industries to the six communities, and provide customized training to the rural workforce," he said. The *CareerTech* Learning Network (CTLN) is an online learning system accessible to all 54 technology center campuses across the state.

The long-term goal of the project is to create new jobs in rural areas of Oklahoma.

"We want this pilot project to serve as a basis for extending the effort to many more rural communities in Oklahoma," Jinks said. "We want to show that skilled workers reside in rural Oklahoma and the quality of life in our rural communities is excellent. Businesses can find well-trained workers in our rural communities."

The REACH grant is largely due to the hard work and interest of Watkins, who is concerned about the economic situation facing rural dwellers.

"I believe in *CareerTech* education," Watkins said. "*CareerTech* has the delivery system and we need to utilize it as frequently as we can to improve Oklahoma's human capital. This new grant will help more people in rural communities have access to 21st century training."

FCCLA receives grant for anti-violence initiative

The Oklahoma association of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) has been awarded \$3,000 to help prevent school violence.

Oklahoma was one of eight states to receive the grant, awarded by the national FCCLA organization and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs.

FCCLA is the career and technology student organization associated with family and consumer sciences education. It is one of seven career and technology student organizations sponsored by the Oklahoma

Department of Career and Technology Education.

According to Denise Morris, state FCCLA advisor, STOP the Violence is a national FCCLA peer-to-peer initiative, which empowers young people to recognize, report and reduce the potential for youth violence.

"Oklahoma FCCLA chapters have held many assemblies educating their peers about how to recognize violent situations, report them to authorities and then reduce the number of violent acts in their schools and communities," she said. "Oklahoma is among the nation's leaders in the number of projects that have been

carried out and the number of chapters that have been trained. We have earned a reputation for quality projects and programs, and I think that helps when applying for grants."

Morris said the grant will be used in part to create an educational video which shows young people how bullying and other situations have the potential to lead to violence.

"There will also be a parents' guide on what to do if your child is being bullied," Morris said.

For more information about STOP the Violence, call 405-743-5467 or go to www.fcclainc.org.

TechCAP grooms future CareerTech leaders

Twenty-three CareerTech educators recently kicked off the first Technology Center Administrator Program (TechCAP) sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education.

TechCAP provides an in-depth look into specific technology center administrator-related tasks and survival skills, said LaMecia Stidham, program coordinator. She said the new program was designed to prepare educators to step into administrative roles over the next few years when many in the CareerTech system will be retiring.

"This program is the capstone to our other statewide leadership development programs," Stidham said.

The program kicked off recently at Meridian Technology Center in Stillwater. It will end in November



after providing sessions on finance, the system's history and philosophy, and its organizational structure. Both state and national perspectives will be highlighted.

Sessions will be held at several of the state's technology center campuses. Meridian is one of the 29 technology center districts located on 54 campuses in Oklahoma's CareerTech system.

Pete Buswell, recently named as Oklahoma's state CareerTech director, said programs such as TechCAP were critical to the system's continued success.

"We must prepare our teachers and administrators with the skills they need to succeed as our future leaders," Buswell said, "if we are to build on the reputation of this system as one of the nation's finest."

For more information about TechCAP, contact LaMecia Stidham at 405-743-5115 or e-mail lstid@okcareertech.org.