

# Expressions!

OF OKLAHOMA CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

## National TechiesDay focuses on shortage of high-tech workers

Technology is everywhere in modern day society, from cell phones and desktop computers at the office, to on-board navigation systems in cars, to CAT scans in hospitals, and to DVD players and microwaves at home. However, this new technology needs an army of highly skilled technicians to keep it running. Those technicians—“techies”—will spotlight their profession on Oct. 3, National TechiesDay.

“TechiesDay is a nationwide initiative to honor workers in the high-tech industry and address our nation’s increasing demand for a qualified technology workforce,” said Rose Bonjour, telecommunications training coordinator at the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education.

Bonjour said TechiesDay was founded in 1999 by two information technology companies. The firms are CNET Networks Inc., a content network

providing news and information about the computer industry, and techies.com, a Web site for technology professionals. The goals of TechiesDay are to spotlight challenges facing

workforce development in the technology field, foster relationships between schools and technology professionals, and recognize students for outstanding achievements in technology.

“This is the first year for TechiesDay to be celebrated in Oklahoma,” Bonjour said.

On TechiesDay both students and teachers will job shadow workers in the

Information Technology (IT) field and other technology-based industries. Another event is a statewide videoconference, originating from the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education in Stillwater, which will link several technology centers and higher education institutions.

Bonjour said the state *CareerTech* agency is also using TechiesDay to showcase training available through the passage of House Bill 1815 in 1997. HB 1815 provides funding to train educators in educational telecommunications technology.

“TechiesDay will also draw attention to the dearth of skilled workers in the high-tech field,” said Bonjour.

The state *CareerTech* agency has formed a task force to address the shortage of workers in the IT field in Oklahoma, Bonjour explained. Currently about 40 of Oklahoma’s 54 technology center campuses offer training preparing students for certification with IT firms such as Microsoft, Oracle and Novell.

For more information about TechiesDay, go to [www.teletechonline.org/techiesday](http://www.teletechonline.org/techiesday).



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## Oklahoma technology centers provide IT certification training

Oklahoma's technology centers are accelerating their efforts to train Oklahomans for high-wage, fast-paced, high-tech jobs in the information technology industry by partnering with computer industry giants such as Microsoft, Oracle, Novell, and Cisco Systems. Collectively, the centers are training thousands of Oklahomans for high-tech jobs.

One of those Oklahomans is Brenda Zavesky, Oklahoma City, who graduated seven years ago from Francis Tuttle's microcomputer technology program. Zavesky is now employed as a service manager for Oasis Technologies, Inc., earning more than \$50,000 per year.

"The salary that I make is up to me," said Zavesky, who handles hardware problems with PCs,



laptops and printers. "I can make anywhere from \$45,000 to \$125,000 depending on how many service contracts I bring to the company."

Demand is high for information technology (IT) workers like Zavesky, who was hired shortly after graduating from Francis Tuttle by Digital Equipment Corporation (now known as Compaq). She has been working in the IT field for five years.

Marla Wear, who teaches Oracle database administrator certification courses at Francis Tuttle, said graduates from her classes all get jobs. And her classes are usually full.

"Night classes are 100 percent full," she said, "and day classes are close to capacity now."

"Database administration is one of the top five IT occupations," Wear said. Starting salaries in Oracle database administration range from \$30,000 to \$50,000, she said.

However, in spite of the lucrative salaries offered in the IT field, there is still a chronic shortage of workers.

"A study by the Information Technology Association of America states that 1.6 million IT workers will be needed this year," said Dr. Sheryl Hale, state coordinator for Adult and Career Development at the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. "However, because of a shortage of qualified workers, about half of those jobs will go unfilled," she said.

One way technology centers are meeting such soaring demand is by forming close partnerships with industry giants.

"About 40 of our technology center campuses offer courses that prepare students for professional IT certification," Hale said.

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### career tech

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# State CareerTech Board makes history with first videoconference meeting

The State Board of Career and Technology Education marked a historic first in August when it conducted its state board meeting via videoconferencing.

The board's first videoconference came only three months after authorization for such meetings was granted to the board by the State Legislature.

The Aug. 22 meeting was interactive from two locations: Metro Technology Centers' (Metro Tech) Springlake Campus in Oklahoma City and Tri-County Technology Center in Bartlesville.

"This gave us, as a board, the ability to showcase to Oklahoma the technology we have in our state CareerTech system. The use of this technology saves not only travel time but also tax dollars that would otherwise have been spent on travel costs," said State Board member Mark Roberts.

Dr. Ann Benson, director of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education and the board's chief executive officer, said two board members met in Bartlesville while the remaining nine members were at the Metro Tech originating site.

Benson said that state CareerTech agency staff members regularly use teleconferencing to save time and travel costs.

"Many of our staff members have to travel across the state to local schools and technology centers," she said. "When possible, we try to make those visits via videoconference, allowing our staffers to do their work without leaving their offices. This saves us thousands of dollars on travel costs and countless work hours."

Board members discussed future uses for videoconferencing during the board meeting. They also discussed the agency's proposed international initiative and the budget request for Fiscal Year 2002.

Board members also approved a cooperative agreement between Indian Capital Technology Center, Muskogee, and Connors State College, Warner.

Oklahoma technology centers have more than 350 cooperative agreements with colleges. These agreements allow students to receive college credit for coursework taken at a technology center.



## Applause

### **eBusiness Symposium**

The Oklahoma Electronic Commerce Connection (OKEC) will host its eBusiness Solutions Symposium 2000 on Oct. 11-12 at the Myriad Convention Center in Oklahoma City. Call (405) 743-5560 or go to [www.ocec.org](http://www.ocec.org) to register.

### **OAABAVE Scholarships**

Carmetia King, a business and computer technology student at Moore Norman Technology Center, and Carlos Hart, a practical nursing

student at Mid-Del Technology Center, are the winners of the 2000-01 Oklahoma Association for the Advancement of Black Americans in Vocational Education (OAABAVE) scholarship competition. They each received \$1,000 scholarships.

### **One Voice Against Violence Week**

On Oct. 2, Gov. Frank Keating will sign a proclamation announcing that Oct. 2-6 will be One Voice Against Violence Week. This event will launch the career and technology student organizations' (CTSO) second year to take on violence prevention in their statewide One Voice campaign. Also on Sept. 19 at 7 p.m., the CTSOs will again be sponsoring the KAUT Channel 43 special, "Teen Files: Surviving High School." Students from the eight CTSOs will be interviewed as part of the program.

## Director says new name of agency reflects CareerTech's new programs

What's in a name?

To those of us in what used to be called vocational-technical education, the answer is simple . . . a whole lot.

That's why we asked the Oklahoma Legislature and Gov. Frank Keating to authorize a name change from Vocational-Technical Education to Career and Technology Education.

On May 19, a historic day for us, Gov. Keating signed House Bill 2128 into law. This legislation officially and immediately changed the name of the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education to the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education and the State Board of Vocational-Technical Education to the State Board of Career and Technology Education.

The name change affected more than just a state agency and a state board. It also changed the name of our entire "vo-tech" system to the Career and Technology Education system—"CareerTech."

It's a statewide system that includes high schools, technology centers, skills centers (which provide job training to the incarcerated) and on-site programs in Oklahoma's businesses and industries. Last year, enrollments in our system totaled 481,000, or more than one in every 10 Oklahomans.

While we were proud of the "vo-tech" tradition, the time had come to choose a name that better reflected our state-of-the-art, high-tech programs.

We did not make the name change decision lightly. Our State Board of Career and Technology Education thoughtfully considered and debated the issue before unanimously recommending a name change to the State Legislature. While they were well aware a name change would bring challenges, they also knew it would provide all of us in career and technology education a chance to educate Oklahomans about the progress we've made in recent years.

They strongly believe the new name reflects our emphasis on the use of advancing technology and on a career-focused, well-rounded education. They also believe the new name more accurately represents what we teach and how we teach it.

Other factors influencing their decision included:

- During the development of a new strategic plan for our statewide system of career and technology education, we received input from more than 1,300 stakeholders of our system, including students, parents, business and industry leaders and educators. Repeatedly, they asked us to consider dropping the word "vocational" from our name.

- The old name also proved to be a stumbling block when marketing our programs to business executives from other states. While "vo-tech" in Oklahoma enjoyed a strong reputation among our state's business leaders, that was not the case in many parts of the country. Oklahoma's business recruiters said it was difficult to get executives of new companies to understand the high quality of services and programs we offer until they could see our technology centers firsthand.

- More than 30 states across the nation no longer use the word vocational in the names of their state agencies responsible for career and technology education.

- The national association representing the career and technology education profession dropped the term vocational from its name.

- The name change also aligns the department with Oklahoma's 54 technology center campuses. In recent years, all have changed their name from "vo-tech schools" to technology centers.

A campaign to highlight this name change is now beginning, and it will allow us to showcase the quality of our students and our programs.

— By Dr. Ann Benson, state CareerTech director

# Expressions!

## Virtual CareerTech classes coming to a computer screen near you

Imagine a school where students have 24-hour access to teachers and classes they can work through at their own pace—going slowly, speeding up at the spots they already know or understand, or reviewing at their leisure.

Right now, this concept is just a dream in the minds of officials at the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. Soon, those officials say, they hope this dream will become reality.

A proposal, put together by the state CareerTech agency's Educational Technology Resources and Innovative Programming and Research divisions, outlined the formation of an online system that would coordinate virtual career and technology education courses.

"We want to use technology to bring students and educators together in new ways," said David Jinks, Educational Technology Resources coordinator. "That gives us the opportunity to reach new customers and new ways to reach old customers."

Jinks said this proposed virtual school of technology would use online educational services and resources including courses delivered by interactive television (IETV), the Internet and other distance learning technologies.

He said one of the advantages of having the Oklahoma CareerTech system involved in virtual

learning (or e-education) is the ability to support online courses through Oklahoma's 29 technology center districts.

"The technology centers would develop the programs and support the courses," he said.

The proposal suggests creating a system that would offer online course work enhanced by video conferencing, Jinks said.

Although the "virtual technology system" is still just a proposal, some e-education courses have already been scheduled.

Gordon Cooper Technology Center, Kiamichi Technology Center-Poteau and Northwest Technology Center-Alva (including feeder schools Spiro,

Heavener, Waynoka and Free-

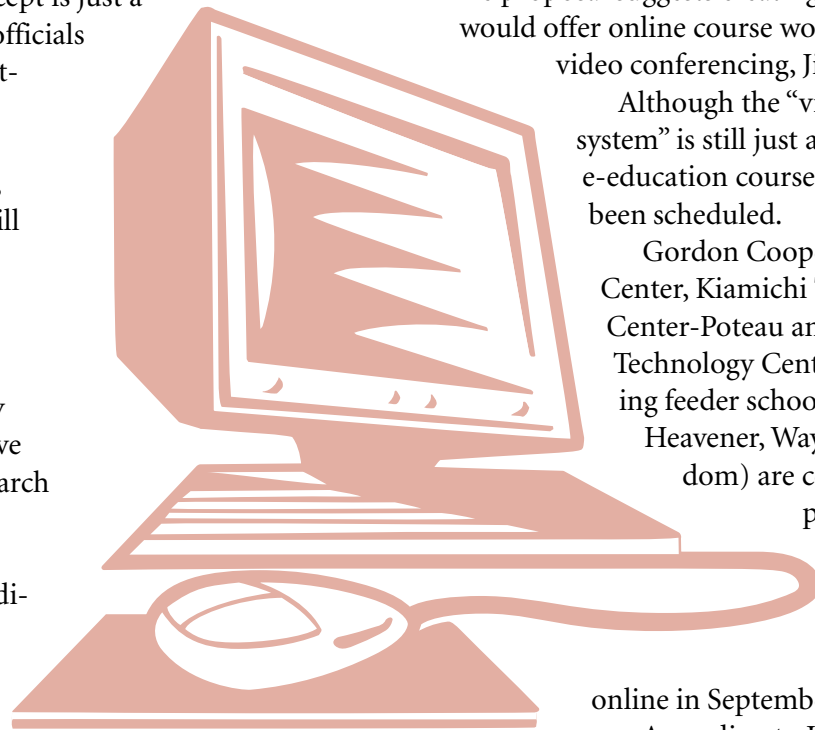
dom) are collaborating to pilot a virtual learning system for e-commerce that is expected to go

online in September.

According to Jinks, the curriculum leads to official recognition through the Certified Internet Webmasters (CIW) and is endorsed by many leading Internet associations throughout the world.

The course will prepare students for certifications as site designer, e-commerce designer and master e-commerce designer. It will also cover issues such as e-commerce Web strategies and e-commerce security measures.

Jinks said the proposal for a virtual technology system has been approved by the State Board of Career and Technology Education. He expects the system will go online sometime in 2001.



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## CareerTech system launches marketing campaign

Oklahoma's technology centers launched an intensive statewide marketing campaign Aug. 28, designed to make state residents aware of their programs and services.

The media portion of the campaign includes television and radio commercials, newspaper advertisements and strategically placed billboards. It is funded by the technology centers.

"This marketing campaign dovetails with 'Securing Futures,' the new statewide theme for Oklahoma's career and technology education system," said Dr. Ann Benson, director of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. "Our system plays a significant role in securing the economic futures of hundreds of thousands of Oklahomans."

"It is designed to build an appreciation for the role our technology centers play in Oklahoma's economic development. It also showcases our high-tech programs and reminds people of our new name," she said.

"Although the spots focus primarily on the tech centers, the rest of our system will see many benefits because they build an awareness of career and technology education," Benson said.

The statewide media campaign includes three different spokespersons. They are Tom Pipal, director of corporate communications for WorldCom, Inc.; Roger Valdez, president of Valco, Inc., and Keenan Meadors, a parent of five children who all graduated from Tulsa Technology Center. The television spots began airing August 28. Newspaper and radio ads will begin airing in September. Brochures, postcards and other supplemental material will be produced to reinforce the media campaign.

The Public Information Council, composed of public relations professionals at technology centers around the state, is coordinating the campaign.



A billboard posted at the junction of I-35 and I-40 in Oklahoma City bears the logo of Oklahoma Technology Centers' statewide marketing campaign. The campaign also includes television, newspaper and radio advertisements.

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