

Expressions!

OF OKLAHOMA VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Oklahoma vocational educators win big at AVA convention

Dr. Belinda McCharen, Choctaw, coordinator of the School-to-Work Office at the Oklahoma Department of Vocational-Technical Education, was named the nation's most outstanding vocational educator during opening ceremonies of the American Vocational Association (AVA) Annual Conference in Las Vegas in December.

The conference attracted more than 7,000 vocational teachers and administrators from all 50 states and several foreign countries.

Brenda Hurst, AVA president, presented the association's Outstanding Vocational Educator Award to McCharen. She said it recognizes one who has made significant contributions toward innovative, unique, and novel vocational and technical programs.

McCharen has pushed for extensive career awareness and orientation for students during her tenure as guidance coordinator for the state vo-tech agency and through her work as School-to-Work coordinator.



Dr. Belinda McCharen, right, School-to-Work coordinator at the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education, was named the nation's most outstanding vocational educator at the American Vocational Association Annual Conference held recently in Las Vegas. Presenting the award to McCharen is Brenda Hurst, AVA president.

Also during the opening ceremonies, Vernice James, Norman, was recognized as one of five finalists for AVA's outstanding teacher award. She teaches health science technology at Mid-America Area Vo-Tech School, Wayne.

The automotive service technology program at Tulsa Technology Center was also presented the nation's top award for Excellence in Automotive Service during the opening session. That award was presented by AVA and the American Automobile Manufacturers Association.

Ironically, Oklahomans played leading roles in all four of the awards presented at the opening session. The day's only other award, for the nation's Outstanding New Vocational Teacher, was presented by Janet Cundiff, Education Enhancement Center instructor at Metro Tech-Sage Center, who won the award last year.

INSIDE . . .

- Partnerships 2
- Mid-Del Vo-Tech 3
- Tulsa Career Fair 4
- Sitton 4
- Training plan 5
- Applause 5
- Director 6

"We're extremely proud of Belinda," said Dr. Roy Peters, Jr., state vo-tech director. "She has been a great leader in vocational education, not only in Oklahoma but across the nation."

Expressions!

Partnerships finish three-year plans at statewide School-to-Work Institute

Crafting third-year action plans was the main event at the recent Oklahoma School-to-Work Institute. After three days, 39 local partnerships had working plans to complete the third-year grants for the initiative.

These community-driven partnership teams sent a total of 481 educators, local business leaders, parents and students to participate in the 1997 Oklahoma School-to-Work Institute, according to Belinda McCharen, director of the Oklahoma School-to-Work Office. The Institute was sponsored by the Oklahoma and National School-to-Work offices in Tulsa from Nov. 18-20.

"Each team worked to complete action plans for successful School-to-Work system building that will be self-sustaining once the grant monies sunset in 2002," McCharen said.

The Institute helped local partnerships by providing time and resources for team decision-making and action planning.

"They (partnership teams) took part in some intensive hands-on learning processes designed to help them explore ideas critical to the success of the School-to-Work initiative at home," said McCharen.

"This was a means for one-on-one assistance with each team, if they chose to have assistance, while they worked through their third-year grant action planning," McCharen said. "The readiness, scope, and breadth of these plans will lay the foundation for implementing systemic sustainability in all of our local partnerships."

J. D. Hoye, director of the National School-to-Work Office, and "experts" from across the country were available to provide leadership in this process. The "experts" were professionals in business and education, and many of them had completed their state's five-year School-to-Work grants.

Guests from 35 additional states also attended the Institute to observe the three-day process for professional development purposes, and representatives from nine states were there as "shadows" before conducting their own School-to-Work Institute.



Taking a break from the three-day Oklahoma School-to-Work Institute held in Tulsa are members from the Cimarron Career Opportunities Partnership team. Around the table from left are Melody Wright, Stillwater High School Business 2000 teacher; Harriet Phillips, representing the private sector; Kent Metcalf, Stillwater Chamber of Commerce; Diana Leggett, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction for Stillwater Public Schools; Virginia Sasser, Oklahoma Department of Vocational-Technical Education; and Cindy Long, CCOP coordinator.

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Mid-Del Vo-Tech pioneers electric vehicle program

Mid-Del AVTS is pioneering an electrical vehicle program that will prepare technicians to work on the cars of the future.

Sandy Stephens, director of the school's business and industry services, said the school developed the program because of the pressing need for technicians who can work on EVs. She said that the new program, which is expected to get underway this spring, will be the first of its kind in the nation.

EVs are the cars of the future because increasingly stringent federal clean air regulations will require cars to be more eco-friendly.

Stephens said because there are few technicians trained to service EVs, many of them lie unused in garages.

Several companies with large fleets of EVs have a vested interest in training technicians to service the vehicles. One of the partners that helped Mid-Del develop its EV program is Southwest Airlines, a company with a large fleet of electric vehicles.

Other partners include Oklahoma Gas and Electric; Clean Cities; DRV, an alternative fuel company; Tinker Air Force Base; and the University of Oklahoma.

Mid-Del also received a \$70,000 state grant to help develop the program. Stephens said the school is also applying for a Department of Energy grant that would go toward curriculum design and the purchasing of equipment.

Dr. John Fagan of the OU Electric Vehicle Research Institute worked with Mid-Del to help translate his college curriculum into a vocational curriculum. Mike Anderson, Mid-Del automotive repair instructor, and Bill Lee, curriculum designer, also worked with Fagan to redesign the curriculum.

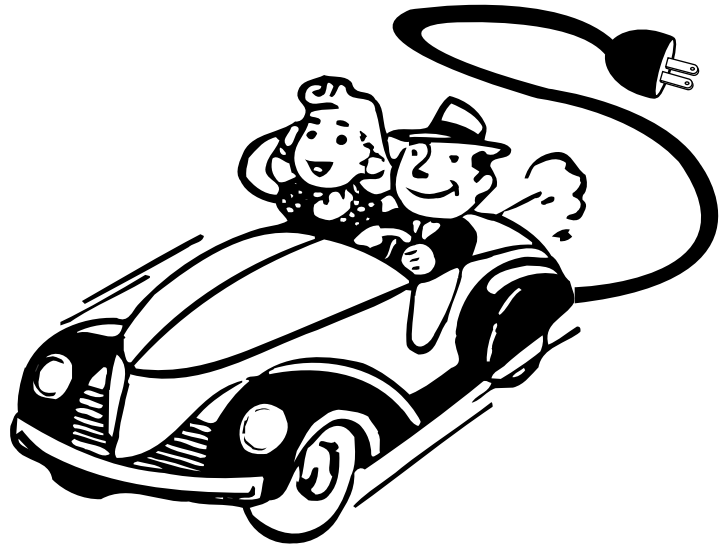
Stephens said that Fagan is also considering starting an EV club for high school students.

"EVs go back many years, but it's really our high school kids that are going to take this forward," she said.

Stephens said that the EV course will be 70-80 hours long. The first class, scheduled to begin in February, will be a validation course featuring the partners and the school's two automotive instructors. The course will then be reviewed, needed changes made and relaunched a few months later. Stephens expects most of the students to be professionals who come for retraining.

She added that Mid-Del has received praise from industry for its pioneering work with EVs.

"OG&E said that Mid-Del has taken an idea and turned it into a program," she said.



"OG&E said that Mid-Del has taken an idea and turned it into a program."

*— Sandy Stephens,
director of Business and
Industry Services,
Mid-Del Vo-Tech*

Tulsa students attend career fair

More than 8,000 eighth-grade students from across Tulsa County attended Career Paths, a career exploration project designed to help students identify and explore job interests and their abilities. The City of Tulsa, Tulsa Technology Center and Brighter Career Choices co-sponsored the event, held Dec. 9-10 at the Tulsa Convention Center.

Career Paths activities included a simple interest inventory and was designed to enhance the experience of each student who participated. More than 170 booths from participating business and industry partners such as American Airlines, Tulsa Columbia Regional Hospital, EMSA, Southwestern Bell, Whirlpool demonstrated various job functions.

Students identified areas of interest prior to attending the event and had the opportunity to experience hands-on activities in each of those areas.

In addition, Brighter Career Choices sponsored "The Reality Store," an interactive simulation of the costs of living in the real world.

Penni Gage, School-to-Work coordinator at Tulsa Tech, said that it was a great opportunity for students to experience a career for a day.

"Students had a chance to experience a career in a hands-on environment and in the Reality Store and see how far the paycheck from their chosen career would go toward rent, utilities, car payments, insurance," she said. —Tony Heaberlin, Tulsa Technology Center

VO-TECH



Sitton serves on state vo-tech board

Grove resident Pam Sitton, a former educator and current small business owner, was recently appointed by Gov. Frank Keating to serve on the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education. She will complete the unfinished term of board member Annette Wallace of Ft. Gibson, for a term expiring April 1, 2000.

After earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education and home economics education from Northeastern State University, Sitton taught kindergarten and second-grade. She later received a master's degree in vocational home economics from John Brown University, Siloam Springs, Ark.

Sitton is involved in many community service activities and organizations, including the Grove Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Project Graduation, Angel Trees, a project for children of incarcerated persons, and the Delaware County Food Bank.

Sitton and her husband of 27 years, Howard, own and operate the Grand Lake Glass and Frame Shop and Sitton Rental Properties in Grove.



Pam Sitton

Expressions!

Statewide training plan aims to enhance classroom technology

A plan to prepare state teachers in the use of classroom technology will use the “teachers teaching teachers” concept.

Legislation passed in the 1997 session charges the state vo-tech agency with developing technology training for higher education faculty members, vo-tech instructors and elementary, middle and high school teachers, said Dr. Roy Peters, Jr., state vo-tech director.

Funding for House Bill 1815 will come from a 75 cent per line per year fee paid by all customers of telephone companies doing business in Oklahoma.

Tom Riley, chief operating officer of Chickasaw Telecommunications, acted as a consultant to the legislature during the writing of the bill. Riley said that while technology in the classroom was important, preparing the teachers to use the technology was essential.

Since the bill was signed, the vo-tech agency has met extensively with its “customers” to determine the most effective, efficient approach to training teachers, Peters said. Among those consulted were representatives from all levels of education and the telephone companies involved with the funding.

Peters said the bill provides \$7 million over a five-year period to provide statewide teacher training in the most effective use of telecommunications and distance learning technology.

Dr. Juanita Bice, coordinator of the agency’s professional development division, said the money will be used to fund six regional training centers to make the training more accessible to state teachers. Consortia and amounts awarded are Oklahoma/Cleveland Counties, \$248,585; Tulsa County, \$176,320; Northwest Region, \$137,580; Northeast Region, \$253,055; Southwest Region, \$187,495; and Southeast Region, \$191,965. Each of the six regional training sites will be operated by a partnership of schools within the region.

“Each of these six partnership groups must include common schools, one area vo-tech school, and higher education institutions within the region,” Bice said.

The regional centers will select master trainers of technology from schools, area vo-tech schools and higher education institutions in that region. These trainers will then cascade the training to other teachers within that region. The money provided by HB 1815 does not provide for equipment. Bice said that she is encouraging sites to seek alternative funding for equipment either through the private sector, grants or state projects.



Applause

Harris Named Regional Administrator

Cliff Harris, regional career development specialist with the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education, will begin duties as a regional administrator effective Jan. 1. He replaces Dean Reeder who retired.

Schiefelbein Receives Award

Karen Schiefelbein, training coordinator for business and industry training services at the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education, has received the designation of Certified Program Planner from Learning Resources Network (LERN), an international association in lifelong learning. She accepted the award at the 1997 International Conference on Lifelong Learning Programming, Dec. 4-6, in San Diego, Calif.

Expressions!

State director speaks in Germany

State Vo-Tech Director Dr. Roy Peters, Jr., conducted a seven-day whirlwind tour of Germany last November. He spoke to a host of German groups about Oklahoma's vo-tech system. His speaking tour was arranged by the U.S. State Department.



Students at a technical school in Muhlhausen, Germany, work on computers. Muhlhausen was one of the sites that Dr. Roy Peters, Jr., visited during his speaking tour of Germany.

"There is great interest in Germany in what we are doing here in Oklahoma to link career guidance, academic, vocational, and postsecondary education," Peters said.

"They want us to share how we are preparing a workforce that meets the needs of our business and industry partners," he said.

Peters' itinerary included speeches at the Institute for Work and Technology in Gelsenkirchen; the German Ministry for Education, Science, Technology and Research in Bonn; the German American Institutes in Heidelberg and Nuernberg; the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Nuernberg; the Regional Teachers In-Service Training Center in Erfurt; and the GA Tuebingen in Stuttgart.

Travel arrangements in Germany were coordinated by the U.S. Embassy in Bonn.

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