

Expressions!

OF OKLAHOMA VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Skills Centers give youth second chance

Gov. Frank Keating recently opened the nation's first public-private partnership to help troubled youth gain employable job skills in ceremonies at the Ghost Mound Skills Center, located near Hydro, Jan. 26. The Hydro facility is one of two skills centers that Keating opened. Open House ceremonies were also held at the Tulsa Boys Home Skills Center on Jan. 28.

The Skills Centers are partnerships between the Office of Juvenile Affairs; the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education; the Hydro and Sand Springs school systems; St. Anthony's Hospital and the Tulsa Boys Home, who operate the two centers; and the Associated General Contractors of Oklahoma.

"It is the involvement of the AGC and its member companies that makes this effort so unique", said Jerry Regier, OJA's executive director.

"The construction industry is a critical link in this project's success," Regier said. "They tell us up front what kind of construction skills they need and

we prepare our students with those skills."

Dick Anderson, executive director of AGC of Oklahoma, said AGC saw the effort as a win-win partnership.

"The construction industry is facing a critical labor shortage and we see this project

as a means to help alleviate that," he said.

Greg Dewald, state coordinator of special projects for the Skills Centers division, said the program was designed to evaluate the individual



Gov. Frank Keating recently opened a Skills Center at the Tulsa Boys Home to help troubled youth gain employable job skills. Those in attendance are from left to right, Greg Conway, director of the Tulsa Boys Home; Dr. Roy Peters, Jr., state vo-tech director; Keating and Jerry Regier, Office of Juvenile Affairs executive director.

needs of students when they enter the program and turn them into responsible, educated, employable citizens by the time they finish.

"Students also are taught 'life skills' . . . things like balancing a checkbook, working in teams, and how to live on their own. And they also receive treatment for the problems that brought them into the juvenile justice system in the first place," said Dom Garrison, Skills Centers superintendent.

The two programs, which began in mid-1997, are already seeing signs of success, Garrison said.

"Our first students are coming back from the work site excited about what they're learning on the job," he said.

Keating praised the two state agencies for their cooperative efforts with the private sector and said that, although this project is a small piece in Oklahoma's workforce development efforts, it is an important one. "We must do everything we can to ensure that all of our citizens have the skills and the ability to earn high wages, and the key to that is education," Keating said.

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OAABAVE banquet honors minority educators, students

Educators, legislators and business people came from across the state to attend this year's Oklahoma Association for the Advancement of Black Americans in Vocational Education (OAABAVE) banquet. The banquet was held at Tulsa Tech, Peoria Campus on Feb. 26.

Keynote speaker Melvin Hall, an Oklahoma City attorney, said educators help students fulfill their full potential.

"That's why I applaud this organization," he said.

Hall said that one of his eighth-grade teachers guided him into his profession. He added that OAABAVE president Alberta Jones was also one of his former teachers.

Speaking on the banquet's theme "Lifting, Building, Climbing Together," Hall said it was important that all people do "heavy lifting."

"I hope that we all appreciate the heavy lifting done by others to get us here today," he said. "It's very important that we also do some heavy lifting to pay the debt to our forefathers and many others because it's due to their efforts we are here tonight."

The banquet recognized OAABAVE 1997-98 scholarship winner Katina Ingram, a Moore-Norman AVTS student. It also recognized Dr. Willa Combs and Dr. Coaken Jones (both deceased), the first black inductees into the Oklahoma Vo-Tech Hall of Fame. They were honored by Dr. Roy Peters, Jr., state vo-tech director.

Several awards were also presented. Carolyn Williams, Metro Tech student assessment supervisor, received the Golden Torch award; Sarah McKinney, Metro Tech school board member, received the Meritorious Service Award; and Belinda McCharen, state School-to-Work coordinator, received the OAABAVE president's award.

In addition, awards were presented for the OAABAVE essay writing competition. DeAndre Ross, a student at Indian Capital AVTS, Muskogee, placed first; Amber Meadors, a student at Tulsa Tech, placed second; and Laura Joyce, a student at Indian Capital AVTS, Muskogee, placed third.



Pictured left to right are the three winners of the OAABAVE essay contest. They are DeAndre Ross, Indian Capital AVTS, who placed first; Amber Meadors, Tulsa Tech, who placed second; and Laura Joyce, Indian Capital AVTS, who placed third.

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Vo-tech staff tour area school programs

Late in January, about 40 Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education staff members hopped on a bus to gain a fresh perspective — a sort of bird's-eye view — of the varied aspects of the vo-tech system.

The five stops on the tour included Central Tech, Drumright; Oklahoma State University/Okmulgee Tech; Green Country Area Vo-Tech in Okmulgee; Taft Skills Center-Jess Dunn Correctional Center and Tulsa Tech, Southeast Campus.

Each stop featured something unique to that particular school. At Central Tech, state staff visited the truck driving school. OSU/Okmulgee Tech treated its guests to a luncheon catered by the Food Service Management and Culinary Art department prior to a tour of the Reynolds Center, a 56,000 sq. ft. facility, which is in its final stages of completion.

"I was pleased to see the number of students from area vo-tech schools who are getting advanced training in the various programs offered at OSU/Okmulgee," said Dr. Roy Peters, state vo-tech director. "We are excited about future opportunities of working together."

The group later visited the state's newest area school, Green Country, located across the street

from OSU/Okmulgee. Green Country opened in 1992.

They also toured Taft Skills Center-Jess Dunn Correctional Center, where they learned about the business maintenance technology program. At Tulsa Tech, Southeast Campus, the educators visited the Craftsmanship 2000 and Transportation 2000 programs where Tulsa Tech students and instructors shared their experiences with the C2000 program.



Provost Bob Klabenes was tour guide for the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education staff excursion to the Oklahoma State University/Okmulgee Tech campus. Here, he discusses the new 56,000 sq. ft. Reynolds Center, in its final stages of completion, which will house — among other programs — telecommunications, multimedia, micro experimentation, and engineering graphics, and provide a semi-clean room as a training center for the semiconductor industry.



Applause

Garrison Named Employee of the Quarter
Dom Garrison, Skills Centers superintendent, has been selected as the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education's outstanding employee for the spring quarter.

Francis Tuttle Instructor Honored
The Teletraining Institute in Stillwater recently recognized Brenda Benda, health science instructor at Francis Tuttle, as the nation's second Certified Distance Learning Instructor.

Metro Tech Staffer Receives Nomination

Carmaleta Walker, coordinator for Metro Tech's Displaced Homemaker/Single Parent program, was one of seven nominees for the State Leadership Award at "Crossroads: Meeting the Challenge of Change," a national conference held in Washington, D.C.

Students Honored

Daniel Miller of Enid High School and Stacey Bartmann of Jenks High School were both recently honored with citations on the floor of the State House of Representatives. Miller, state DECA president, and Bartmann, state DECA vice president, placed first in different categories of the national DECA competition.

RITA program is launched

RITA is off and running. The Rogers Industrial Technology Academy (RITA) at Will Rogers High School, Tulsa is a new vocational program that offers freshmen and sophomores hands-on experience in a variety of manufacturing and industrial technologies.

In partnership with Career Partners, Inc. (CPI), RITA was added to the Will Rogers High School Fall '97 schedule. The goal of the program is to make high school students aware of career opportunities in the manufacturing industry.

Administered through the Metropolitan Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, CPI is an organization that serves as a link between education and local businesses. Those who initiated the program report that student interest in RITA far exceeded their expectations, according to John Bernardine, CPI program manager.

"We expected to only have one class, but when the enrollment numbers increased we realized we needed to open two more classes," said Bernardine. "Will Rogers' RITA program wound up with three classes and a total of 63 students enrolled."

In the program, students are exposed to a variety of manufacturing and industrial technologies. They receive basic hands-on experience in everything from metal cutting to reading blueprints and welding, Bernardine said.

When CPI and the Will Rogers school decided to add the RITA program, the school lacked equipment and facilities necessary to operate the program. Recognizing this, Career Partners stepped in to help equip the classroom for RITA and to hire staff.

Equipment for the program was donated by Craftsmanship 2000, Tulsa Technology Center, Tulsa Public Schools and the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education.



Luis Zurita, Will Rogers High School student, adjusts the wing on a space shuttle float. RITA students from Will Rogers built the float for a Christmas parade in Tulsa.



"Instructor Buddy Cagel was hired by Career Partners in June 1997. He worked during the summer in order to get the classroom ready for the start of the fall term. Two area manufacturers, Baker Oil Tool and HILTI, Inc., each sent an engineer to Will Rogers for three weeks to get equipment in useable condition. They also donated \$10,000 worth of equipment," Bernardine said.

The RITA program has been such a success that plans are being made to initiate similar programs in other local high schools. According to Bernardine, some of the possible schools for a similar program are Tulsa Webster and East Central.

The RITA program will prepare students for the nationally acclaimed Craftsmanship 2000 (C2000) program administered by CPI. C2000 is a three-year program for students beginning their junior year at Tulsa Technology Center.

— by Chase Huston

IMD sees data as a valuable resource

Today's educators face a world of rapidly changing technology and increasing accountability for the resources they are allocated. Information is a key part in that accountability.

Richard Makin, coordinator of the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education's Information Management Division (IMD), said that data will become an increasingly valuable resource in society. IMD's goal is to turn data into an asset and a resource for the department.

IMD processes a wide variety of data such as enrollment figures for comprehensive schools, area schools, and skill centers and financial statistics.

The department's greatest resource is its many databases. Makin said his division aims to make greater use of these databases through the creation of a data warehouse.

The data warehouse would be a huge database allowing agency staff to access all kinds of information from their computer work stations. Makin said he hopes to have the data warehouse running in at least one subject area within a few months.

Makin said that gathering information has changed over the years. The division used to gather data the old way — through paper and pencil exercises — but now, most of the schools they work with submit information on computer disks, he said. He added that IMD is now working on receiving information through new forms of media such as the Internet.

Makin said the division, which is made up of eight full-time staff members, is working closely with the agency's Systems Design and Computer Services (SDCS) to employ new technology to improve data collection.

IMD went through a restructuring phase about a



year ago. The division used to be called the Information Analysis Division. Dr. Roy Peters, Jr., state director, met with an in-house study group to discuss a change of direction for the division that came about in March 1997.

According to Makin, the IMD needs to better communicate with the schools from which it requests data.

The schools need to understand what IMD does with the data requested and why the information is so important, he said.

Makin envisions a series of regional forums to facilitate an exchange of information with school personnel.

"I like to tell schools that there isn't any information or data being collected that isn't being used by the department," he said.

IMD also does a lot of work involving legislative requests.

Makin said he is amazed at the detail involved and the frequency of the requests. Often, requests may be for information that goes back as far as 1986. He also said schools need to be praised for the information they provide.

"It plays an important role every legislative session," he said.

"I like to tell schools that there isn't any information being collected that isn't being used by the department."

*— Richard Makin
Information Management
Division coordinator*

Expressions!

Shadowing links students to mentors

Budding journalist Crystal Jones spent Feb. 2 working with cutting-edge multimedia tools at the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech during the first nationwide Groundhog Job Shadow Day.

Jones, a senior at Dover High School, was one of hundreds of students across Oklahoma who shadowed with adults in their communities. Job shadowing gives students a chance to get practical experience in a career field they find interesting.

"Job shadowing allows students to take an up-close look at a 'real life' job and helps them relate skills they have learned in school to the workplace," said Belinda McCharen, state coordinator for Oklahoma's School-to-Work system.

Oklahoma's Groundhog Job Shadow Day was coordinated by a broad array of partners, including the Oklahoma Municipal League, Tulsa and Oklahoma City Junior Achievement offices, The Oklahoma Lumberman's Association, Oklahoma Homebuilders Association, The State Chamber, local human resource managers' associations, local School-to-Work partnerships and the Oklahoma School-to-Work office.

Jones job-shadowed with Craig Maile, an instructional development specialist with the Curricu-

lum and Instructional Materials Center (CIMC). CIMC staff work on instructional materials, many of which are in new forms of technology such as CD-ROMs.

Jones was matched with the state vo-tech agency by Carol Jones, School-to-Work coordinator for the Wheatbelt Educational Partnership.



Dover High School Senior Crystal Jones spent Groundhog Job Shadow Day working alongside staff members from the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education's Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center. She worked with Craig Maile, an instructional development specialist.

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