

National Career Clusters project launched

The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, working with other state *CareerTech* systems across the nation, has completed a project that could well change the face of career and technology education.

In June 2001, state *CareerTech* agency staff began coordinating a \$2.2 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The DOE had earlier identified 16 career clusters representing the major career opportunities for main industry sectors in the 21st century economy.

Oklahoma's work was focused on identifying the knowledge and skills that help students recognize the relationship between what they learn in school and what they can do in the future.

Although federal funding ended in September, the Career Clusters Initiative is now being funded by the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education consortium.

"All 50 states have voluntarily agreed to report student enrollment by the 16 career clusters in the Consolidated Annual Report for Perkins funding," said Pam Stacey, Career Clusters coordinator. "Also, several clusters have obtained additional external funding and are continuing their work with knowledge and skills validation and pilot sites."

"Career clusters are a great career planning tool for parents, teachers, career counselors and

students," she said. "They provide a broad-based education by combining technical, academic and workplace skills for an entire grouping of occupations. This preparation helps students make educated decisions with regard to specific occupational training that *CareerTech* already does so well."



From left are back row: Greg Dewald, Dwight Stoddard and Curtis Shumaker. Front row: Denise Christy, Lisa Batchelder, Marsha Daves, Karan Smith and Pam Stacey. Charles Losh is not pictured.

Stacey said one of the goals of the project was to establish a set of rigorous academic and technical knowledge and skills for each of the 11 new career clusters.

The state *CareerTech* agency, in conjunction with partners in different states, oversaw the development of guidelines for 11 career areas. Those areas include agriculture, food and natural resources; architecture and construction; business management and administration; education and training; finance; government and public

administration; hospitality and tourism; human services; marketing, sales and service; law, public safety and security; and science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Five additional clusters are currently being developed as separate projects, namely arts/audio video technology and communications, health science, information technology, manufacturing and transportation, distribution and logistics.

Staff members at the state *CareerTech* agency who coordinated developmental work for the clusters initiative are Stacey, Marsha Daves, Greg Dewald and Curtis Shumaker, coordinators; Denise Christy, research and development; Lisa Batchelder, financial support; Karan Smith, administrative support; and Charles Losh, project director.

The finished resources for the 16 clusters were presented to educators from 44 states and two territories at a national conference held in September in Charleston, S.C.

Heading up the Career Clusters Initiative was a great honor for Oklahoma, Stacey said.

"Coordinating the Career Clusters project provided tangible evidence that our system is one of the best and strongest in the world," she said. "A less prepared system could not have produced the successful results that our system did."

REAP promotes agricultural industry to minorities

Agriculture is a billion dollar business in Oklahoma. And, many minority youth are missing out on the opportunity to participate in this key industry. One of the goals of the Retired Educators for Agricultural Programs (REAP) is to address the issue by encouraging more African-American and culturally diverse youth to pursue opportunities in agricultural education.

REAP was founded in 1994 by the late Sam Combs Jr., a retired soil conservationist and former agricultural education instructor, and four other retired educators, W.G. Parker, James R. Johnson, A.W. Hampton and W. E. Gamble. Their goal was to create an organization that provided opportunities for African-American youth interested in the field of agriculture. However, REAP is open to all minorities and other youth from socially disadvantaged populations.

"There are currently no African-American agricultural education instructors in the state of Oklahoma," said Rita Combs, REAP executive director and Sam Combs'



From left are Shawn Fletcher, Lawton High School; Rita Combs, executive director of REAP; and Brandi Stevenson, Muskogee High School. Fletcher and Stevenson received the Sam Combs Jr. Youth in Agriculture Award at this year's Blacks in Agriculture Recognition Luncheon.

daughter-in-law. "There is a void in organizations like FFA and 4-H. With the absence of minority leadership, many youth are reluctant to become involved in agricultural education."

To achieve its goals, REAP organizes workshops and seminars promoting careers in the field of agriculture.

"We also partner with state agencies, such as the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, and federal agencies, such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to promote internships so that young people have an incentive to work in the agricultural industry," Combs said.

She said REAP works to educate minority communities about the different facets of the agricultural industry such as agricultural engineering and genetics.

"Our goal is to increase the opportunities for minority internships by partnering with private industry, educational institutions and governmental agencies," Combs said.

Other REAP initiatives include organizing mentoring projects and making students aware of the many scholarship opportunities offered to African-American students pursuing degrees in the field of agriculture.

"We host the Blacks in Agriculture recognition luncheon each February, which is Black History Month. The event recognizes minorities who have made significant contributions to the field of agriculture," Combs said. During the luncheon, two students are also honored as recipients of the Sam Combs Jr. Youth in Agriculture Award.

For more information about REAP, call 405-848-5944 or e-mail reap@sbcglobal.net.

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CoorsTek partners with MNTC in safety training

CoorsTek recently entered a training partnership in conjunction with the Oklahoma City area Office of Occupational Services and Health Administration (OSHA) and Moore Norman Technology Center (MNTC). The partnership marks the beginning of an innovative collaboration focusing on the safety and health of CoorsTek employees.

CoorsTek designs and manufactures components, integrated assemblies, and automated systems for the semiconductor capital equipment market and other high-tech applications.

The firm, which has a facility in Norman, first discussed partnering with OSHA in April with a particular interest in improving the effectiveness of its safety and health program. CoorsTek's Chief Operating Officer Derek Johnson and Director of Environmental Health and Safety Ed Mahardy attended the signing ceremonies along with Nathan Powell of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. Representing OSHA at the signing were Heather Hartman, compliance

assistance specialist, and James E. Brown III, area director for the state of Oklahoma. Representing Moore Norman Technology Center were Greg Waddle, industrial coordinator, and Chris Royse, management development coordinator.

The training partnership will utilize the expertise of Moore Norman Technology Center staff and focus CoorsTek's resources on

promoting the development of effective safety and health programs. Such programs involve management commitment and employee participation, worksite analysis, hazard prevention and control, and safety and health training.

"MNTC is excited to be included in a partnership that promotes a safe and healthful work environment through management, labor and government cooperation," Waddle said.

Hartman said this was the first time his firm had partnered with a technology center.

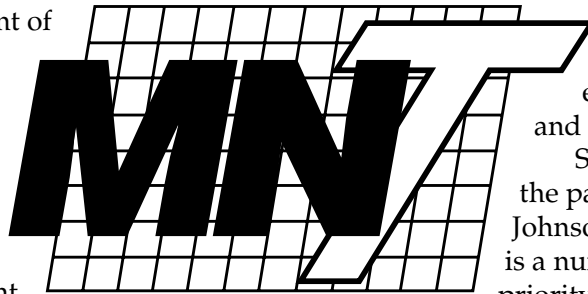
"OSHA hopes it serves as a model for other industries and technology centers across the state," he said.

CoorsTek and MNTC staff will work together to establish and implement a comprehensive safety and health program that will

increase the safety awareness of managers, supervisors and lead personnel. Speaking about the partnership Johnson said, "Safety is a number one priority at CoorsTek,

and we are pleased to have the resources of MNTC available for this partnership. We look forward to working closely with OSHA and MNTC to make our Oklahoma facility second-to-none in terms of safety issues."

"It's encouraging to see a company taking a proactive approach to safety. We'll all benefit from working together to achieve common goals," Waddle said.



CareerTech class grooms next generation of leaders

Twenty five educators recently participated in a Leadership *CareerTech* workshop held at the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education in Stillwater.

Alice Rushmore, organizational development specialist, said Leadership *CareerTech* is an eight-month program designed to prepare a new generation of leaders for the Oklahoma *CareerTech* system.

Educators selected for the program must have at least five years experience in the system and a degree in education (or a related

field) or industry certification.

Participants receive a comprehensive review of competencies required for *CareerTech* administrators, receive extensive leadership training and take part in a job shadowing experience. Rushmore said the sessions are held at different technology centers around the state to give participants a broader view of the *CareerTech* system.

"Developing the skills of the Oklahoma *CareerTech* system's future leaders and administrators is the cornerstone to our continued success," Rushmore said. "At the

end of this program, participants will graduate with finely tuned leadership skills and a comprehensive understanding of the competencies required for *CareerTech* administrators."

The next Leadership *CareerTech* training session will be held at Pontotoc Technology Center, Ada. Educators interested in applying for the 2003-04 Leadership *CareerTech* class can contact Rushmore at 405-743-5193 or e-mail arush@okcareertech.org.

Technology centers list jobs online

Applicants seeking jobs in the Oklahoma *CareerTech* system can now access a Web site that lists job openings at Oklahoma's 29 technology center districts.

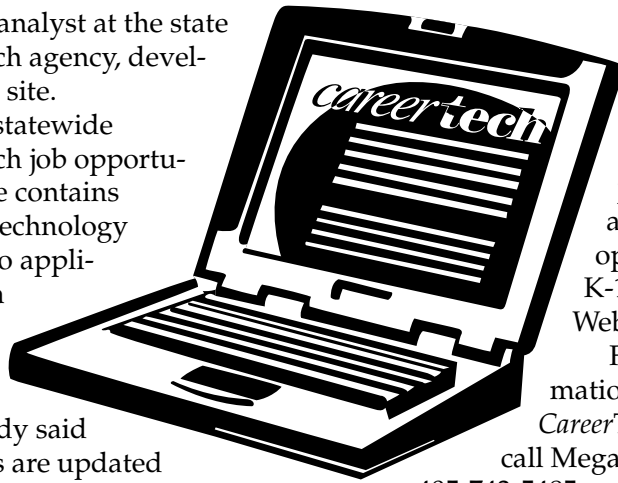
Megan Moody, human resources coordinator at the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, said the Web site offers a central location where individuals can access information about jobs in the *CareerTech* system. Previously, applicants had to contact each school.

The idea for the Web site came out of a meeting of technology center human resources professionals, Moody said. Kristen Josey,

systems analyst at the state *CareerTech* agency, developed the site.

The statewide *CareerTech* job opportunities site contains links to technology centers so applicants can submit applications.

Moody said openings are updated daily and automatically deleted after the closing date.



She added that the agency has also received requests to post job information about *CareerTech* openings in the K-12 system on the Web site.

For more information about *CareerTech* jobs, call Megan Moody at

405-743-5485 or go to www.okcareertech.org/jobs.