

# Expressions!

OF OKLAHOMA VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

## Success Connection conference will link educators, business leaders, students

“Straight Talk Between Students and Business” is the theme for Success Connection IV, the fourth statewide conference on workforce development. The conference will be held Oct. 20-21 at the Tulsa Convention Center.

Keynote speaker for the conference is William G. Little, 1998-99 chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Other speakers are David Aguilar, founder and director of Transformation Education, a consulting firm in Boulder, Colo., and Chad Foster, a motivational speaker and author of the best-selling book “Teenagers—Preparing for the Real World.”

Success Connection IV is a collaboration between The State Chamber and the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education.

According to Karen Leveridge, director of Education and Workforce Development for The State Chamber, conference attendance has grown rapidly, increasing from about 300 in 1994 to 1,400 in 1997. This year she anticipates that approximately 1,500 people will attend the conference.

### SUCCESS CONNECTION IV

Straight Talk Between Students and Business

Belinda McCharen, state School-to-Work coordinator, said that many of the sessions will feature business leaders giving presentations to students. She said that business leaders will give students advice on how to prepare for careers and focus their studies.

Also there will be presentations from business leaders, educators and civic leaders on how they can collaborate to support School-to-Work in their communities, she said.

Leveridge said she hopes business leaders will sponsor students’ attendance at the conference, mentor them during the event and then bring them into the workplace to learn about career opportunities.

The conference will also feature a student section that will include sessions for high school and college students. The student section will kick off with an open session titled “The Modern Work Ethic: A Humorous Approach” presented by Kristine Sexter, a recruiting and training specialist from Key Personnel, a temporary employment agency.

The 41 local partnerships in Oklahoma are now entering year four of their five-year School-to-Work grants. This marks a primary difference between Success Connection IV and previous conferences: the issue of sustainability after School-to-Work grant monies are no longer available.

Collaboration between business, education and the local community and sustainability are key issues of focus. “There has to be both (collaboration and sustainability) if we want to see the positive evolution of School-to-Work,” McCharen said.

For more information on registration, call The State Chamber at (405) 235-3669.

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## Vo-Tech attracts international visitors

The outstanding reputation of Oklahoma's vocational system is drawing visitors from across the globe to the state.

Visitors this summer included a delegation of vocational educators from Bulgaria and Ali Yonel, acting assistant director for the Ministry of National Education, Culture, Youth and Sports in North Cyprus.

The seven Bulgarians visited several locations in Oklahoma, including the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education, Meridian Technology Center, MerCruiser, Central Tech in Drumright and Gordon Cooper Technology Center in Shawnee.

Milka Lubenova Daskalova, director of Vocational Training Policy in the National Employment Service of the Bulgarian Department of Labor, said Bulgaria is interested in implementing a "quick start" training program to improve the level of technical workers.

Speaking through an interpreter, Daskalova said the National Employment Service is working with Clarence Burdette, a U.S. Department of Labor consultant. Burdette recommended some American programs that would be similar to the "quick start" program that Bulgaria is trying to implement.

Dr. Larry Keen, coordinator of Business and Industry Services at the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education, said the Bulgarians chose Oklahoma as one of the sites they would visit because of the reputation of Oklahoma's vocational system. He said that the delegation was interested primarily in the state's Training for Industries Program (TIP).

During his July visit Ali Yonel toured Tulsa Technology Center, Southeast campus, and visited Central Tech in Drumright.

At Tulsa Tech, Yonel was especially interested in the machine tool and business technology programs. At Central Tech, he toured the school's Business and Industry Training Center. Yonel also visited local businesses who have partnered with Tulsa Tech and Central Tech.

He was participating in the Cyprus-America Scholarship Program, a project funded jointly by the United States Information Agency (USIA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The program's goal is to strengthen human resource development in Cyprus by providing short-term, technical training for mid-career professionals in areas targeted by the Cyprus Planning Bureau.



*A delegation of vocational educators from Bulgaria visited Oklahoma in May. They came to Oklahoma because of the reputation of the state's vocational system. Here they are pictured touring the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education's Print Shop.*

**Expressions!** is the official publication of the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education. It is published five times a year (from September through May) by the Public Information division. Story ideas are welcomed. Please send your ideas to the

address  
below, or  
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(405) 743-  
5109.

**votech**

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This publication is printed and issued by the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education as authorized by 70 O.S. 1981, Sec. 14-104, as amended. 3,800 copies have been prepared and distributed at a cost of \$808.51. Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

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# 'Growing Up Digital' author says 'Schools must reinvent themselves'

Vocational educators from across the state learned about the changing role of education in society from one of America's leading technology experts during the 1998 Vo-Tech Summer Conference.

Keynote speaker Don Tapscott talked to vocational educators about coming technological changes that would not only affect education but also the workplace. Tapscott is the author of "Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation" and president of New Paradigm Learning Corporation.

One of the key changes in recent years is the change toward a knowledge-based economy where the key assets are intellectual, Tapscott said.

He said that in the old economy, a student needed to graduate from school with skills that would guarantee him a job. Now, he said, there has been a shift that means people have to be committed to lifelong learning.

There also has been a blurring of the institutions of work and school. Many companies now have their own learning institutions such as Motorola University and Hamburger University.

"Schools need to reinvent themselves for the new economy," Tapscott said.

Tapscott also talked about the Net generation — children who have grown up around new technology such as the Internet and computers.

"They will be able to effortlessly use new technology," he said. "They have no fear of technology because it is natural to them."

Tapscott also said that the Net generation is witnessing the birth of a new medium of communication (computers).

"The last time it happened was with the printing press," he said,

The rise of the Net generation has caused some radical changes in society. Tapscott talked about the "generation lap," where children are better experts on technology than their parents, and "reverse



*Dr. Juanita Bice, state coordinator for professional development at the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education, chats with Don Tapscott as he signs a copy of his book "Growing Up Digital." Tapscott was the keynote speaker at the 1998 Vo-Tech Summer Conference held in Tulsa.*

mentoring" where younger employees at companies help older employees learn how to use new technology.

He also said that the rise of personal computers at home has cut into the time young people spend watching television. However, he said that while children are surfing the Internet, they are writing, reading and authenticating information.

"They are developing the tools that they will require for success in the new economy," he said.

Technology was a continuing theme of this year's Vo-Tech Summer Conference with many of the sessions featuring ways to incorporate new technology—such as the Internet, distance learning and video conferencing—into the classroom.

The Cyber Cafe also featured several demonstrations such as computer troubleshooting, nonlinear video production and Track Star, a software program that enables educators to create online lessons.

## Miss Oklahoma Teenager attributes success to FBLA

Learning leadership skills can really pay off, no matter where your walk in life leads you, even if that walk is down a beauty pageant runway.

Ashley Bowen, this year's Miss Oklahoma Teenager and the recipient of a \$32,000 college scholarship, knows that firsthand.



BOWEN

Bowen attributes her success, in part, to her membership in Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), where she served as the state's southeast vice-president for the 1997-98 school year.

"I am convinced that I would not be where I am today if it wasn't for the leadership skills I gained as a member and officer of FBLA," said Bowen.

She has chosen to incorporate FBLA into her philosophy and let other teens know how beneficial this program and others like it are.

"This student organization helps teens get involved in their community," said Bowen. "Members get commended at the local and state level for all the hard work they do."

Bowen put her skills to work and helped reconstruct FBLA's "Stay on Task" program. This is a state program for FBLA members that encourages them to become involved with their community by doing volunteer work.

"I devised an easier way to implement this program," said Bowen. "I began a how-to list and a point system for receiving awards."

FBLA is one of seven vocational organizations sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education. Its mission is to bring business and education together in a positive

working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs. Oklahoma has more than 4,000 FBLA members who participate in many activities and community projects.

Bowen hopes to remain active in this type of program at the college level. She is now a freshman at Oklahoma City University.

— DeAnne Stotts-Koumbis

A stylized black and white illustration of a hand clapping, with motion lines suggesting movement. The hand is positioned on the left side of the 'Applause' section.

### Applause

**Scholarship winners**

Glenn Davis, a drafting and design student at Canadian Valley Area Vo-Tech School, Chickasha, and Felicia Knott-Andrews, an LPN student at Great Plains Area Vo-Tech School, were the recipients of the Oklahoma Association for the Advancement for Black Americans in Vocational Education (OAABAVE) 1998 Renae Washington-Lorine Dubose Memorial scholarship. Each scholarship is worth \$1,000.

**Employee of the Quarter**

Ron Haun, groundskeeper at the Oklahoma Department of Vo-Tech Education, has been selected as the agency's Employee of the Quarter.

## Report shows record number of vo-tech grads land training-related jobs

A record number of students trained through Oklahoma's vo-tech system are landing jobs directly related to their training programs, state vo-tech officials announced recently.

More than 49 percent of students who completed one of the system's vocational training programs were employed in a job directly related to their field of study one year later. Ten years ago the figure was 32 percent.

An additional 31 percent were continuing their education, and another three percent were in the military.

The 1997 Completion/Follow-up Report, conducted by the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education's Information Management Division (IMD), was a study of nearly 21,000 students who completed their vocational training programs in 1997, said Dr. Roy Peters, Jr., state vo-tech director.

The study found that nine percent of graduates were employed in a job not directly related to their field of study and only four percent were unem-

ployed, seeking work. The remaining four percent were simply not looking for work at all, a category that includes spouses who take time off from the workforce to raise a family.

"That means our 'positive placement' is about 92 percent," Peters said. He defined positive placement as the categories of training-related, training not related, continuing education, or in the military. The state vo-tech director said the vo-tech system's record-setting training-related employment number was due to better preparing students for the job market and a better career counseling effort. A booming state economy has also helped, he said.

"Statewide, our teachers and administrators are doing a very good job of helping students match their interests and abilities with the right kind of vocational training programs," Peters said. "They are also working with them to develop stronger academic skills."

The follow-up study is further evidence that Oklahoma's School-to-Work system, implemented three years ago, is paying big dividends in improving Oklahoma's workforce and its economy, Peters said.

Randy Feagan, the information specialist who compiled the report, said vocational instructors, who provide the data for the report, are also doing a better job of following the success of their graduates.

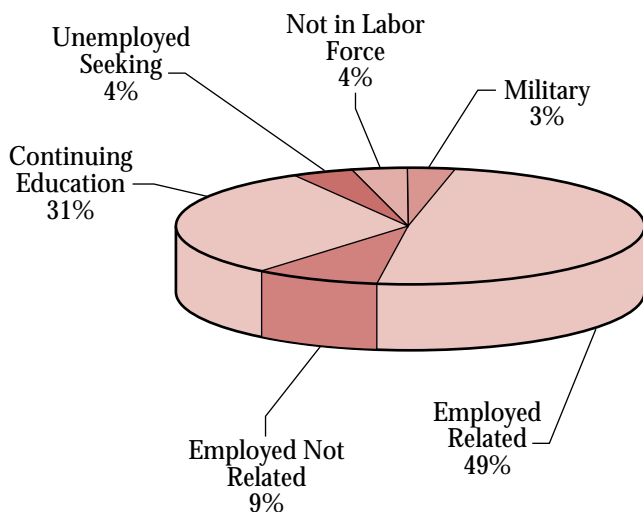
"Our teachers are making great efforts to stay in touch with their former students," Feagan said. "They have done an exceptional job at helping us collect this data."

Peters said the follow-up report is just one of the ways—albeit a very important one—that his agency evaluates the effectiveness of its programs.

He said, "We are always concerned with our bottom line question: Are we meeting the needs of our customers and the needs of the workplace?"

"Employers and our students are going to keep coming back to the supplier that meets their needs," he said.

1996-97 Completion/Follow-up



# Expressions!

## *Vo-tech administrators participate in Educator's Leadership Academy*

Twenty Oklahoma vocational administrators were among 75 school leaders who participated in the Oklahoma Educator's Leadership Academy. They participated in the Academy for Vo-Tech Administrators from July 13-17 at Roman Nose State Park, Watonga.

The Oklahoma Educator's Leadership Academy enables leaders from colleges, universities, school districts and vo-tech schools to explore leaderships, concepts such as systemic thinking, visioning, empowerment ethics and servant leadership.

The Academy's faculty includes Dr. Leo Presley, program director; Dr. Tom Boyd, professor-emeritus

of philosophy at the University of Oklahoma and Dr. Michael Anderson, senior minister at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City.

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"Our school CEOs need exposure to the same caliber of executive development as their corporate peers," said Charles Hollar, Academy founder. "This

program has the potential to transform our schools by transforming their leaders."

In addition to Hollar, a 16-member governing board and six advisory boards are investing time and resources in the development of the Academy, which is located at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond.

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SEPTEMBER 1998

Oklahoma Department of Vocational  
and Technical Education  
1500 West Seventh Avenue  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074-4364

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