

Hello Commissioners, It's always a pleasure to give you an update on the activities occurring in the Vocational Rehabilitation Division. Please see the bullet points below for the latest.

- Wages on successful cases are still up at 2.6% at \$11.14 an hour
- Jonathan Cooks unit is averaging \$12.67 per hour on successful closures, and Mike Goza's unit is at 12.05 per hour which is an increase of 18% as compared to last year.
- Our App to eligibility time is at 28 days, and our eligibility to plan time is at 52 days.
- We are at 5,188 applications, 5,020 eligibilities, 3,729 plans, and 1,510 successful closures. All up from last year at this time. I'm sure this means we are probably up in all other areas such as Voc. Evals, AT Evals, Psych Evals, and Benefits Planning. GREAT WORK IS OCCURING!!!!
- We are still working at an incredible pace to help folks go off disability benefits. Great example of quality.
- We recognized the following people for their dedicated years of service to the state of Oklahoma. Kim Gordon, Jonathan Cook, Tiffany Harris, Lisa Olah, Lee Rear, and Larry Fields all have 5 years of service. Teresa Jackson, Linda Johnson, and Susan Moser all have 10 years of service. Shirley Clapp, Keri Nutt; Jennifer Mathews and Sharrel Shipp all have 15 years of service. Melinda Fruendt, Kathy Klammer, Diana Burch, Shirin Davis and Sheri McCoy all have 20 years of service. Judy Stanton and Sue Ragoss have 30 years of service. Super Dave White has 35 years of service. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!!!
- I want to thank Carol Holland and Renee Sansom for their long and great service as WIB Board representatives. They did an outstanding job, and assured we had a strong voice.
- Special thanks to all our staff who played a part in our IJOBS summer program. We had many great articles that came out of that. I would like to expand this program to all parts of the state in the future. I know Kim, Larry, and our transition folks can make that happen.
- We have received the lists of candidates for the position of AT Coordinator, PM II for the Career Planning Centers and Psychological Asst. program, and the Liaison position that will work with the Tribal Programs, and OKDRS.
- School is starting so counselors are getting out to the schools and working their areas.
- The budget at this time is pretty stable. Staff have been encouraged to continue spending on time in regards to case services. We are also continuing our focus of developing appropriate referral bases and employer contacts.
- Staff have been encouraged to look into the benefits of doing more OJT's. This is an excellent way for a Job Seeker to get their foot in the door and hopefully become employed. I would like to double or triple our efforts in this area.
- The McAlester office joined their local chamber and hosted an open house event. They also attended evening event with the chamber and one of our employees (Valerie Rogers) won \$1,500.00 worth of advertising.
- Terry Goodson and Alisa Estes will be leading our efforts for our State Plan, with guidance from Melinda Fruendt. They are very organized and accepting of this challenge.
- Our training services are up still around 22% which is indicative that higher options for employment are being considered by our job seekers.
- I've been making my way out to unit meetings to discuss WIOA, and our mission of quality outcomes.
- Staff are being reminded of the Oklahoma Works initiative, as we have a big part to play, as we are focusing our efforts on active job seekers, to hit our target of a 65% success rate by 2018.
- I recently met with PM's and FC's in regards to the Employee Engagement Survey. Three areas of concerns are opinions matter, recognition, and staff having the tools they need to be

successful at their job. I hope we have addressed the issue of tools needed to be successful as we recently had PM's reach out to their staff in regards to this and are making many necessary purchases for this purpose. I have sought out staff suggestions on how to assure that employees' opinions matter. I plan to send a little more information out on this, but I need to do a better job in this area. Also, we are looking for suggestions on how to provide better recognition of staff.

- Richard Yahola has informed me that our multi-agency partnership on youth in custody is a finalist for the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice's Capstone Project of the Year.
- Kim Osmani has been identified as an expert in the field of Transition by CSAVR and has been asked to participate in a work group regarding Transition by The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition.
- Robert Eames and his unit conducted an awards ceremony for vendors and employers that have worked with our Transition Job Seekers this past school year.
- Business Coordinator update – Rob Gragg has been traveling the state and meeting with staff. We are hoping to have TAP and NET training in the future. More specific to local areas, job leads are being sent as we have them to field offices. We are getting specific job information from Devon, Cox Communications, and Verizon. According to Rob, the Governor indicates that there are 70,000 jobs openings statewide. It seems we need an increased focus on helping job seekers with basic education, resume writing, interview skills, and interpersonal skills. He will be visiting two companies in eastern Oklahoma, Cardinal Glass in Durant and Legal Shield who has various locations.
- We are partnering with Oklahoma Office of Disability Concerns for a job fair to be held at Sheppard Mall on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Kim Osmani just wrapped up our Summer Transition Program Trainings, and many staff were recognized for their positive efforts.
- Many of our staff participated in the Southwest Region National Rehabilitation Conference last month. Those receiving awards were
  - Employer of the Year – Dale Rogers Training Center
  - News Media Award – Enid News and Eagle
  - Inspiration Award – Renee Sansom
  - Distinguished Service Award – Jean Jones
  - Hubert E. Byrd Award – Larry Hartzell
  - Counselor of the Year – Ashley Bryant
  - Student Intern Langston – Cherjuan Robertson
  - Student Intern ECU – Gerald Mason
  - Meritorious Service Award Southwest Region of NRA – Denise North
  - Voyle C. Scurlock Award Southwest Region of NRA – Jason Price

Respectfully submitted,



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## **SUCCESS STORIES**

**From:** Charity Hill

**Sent:** Sunday, July 05, 2015 4:14 PM

**To:** Karolyn D. Motte; Kimberly Kaniatobe

**Subject:** Update

I'm not sure if you remember me from May 2014. I may have had my hair dyed blonde back then (attached is a current photo of me). I was cleaning and going through some boxes when I came across my paperwork. I thought you could use an update.

I continue to wear my hearing aids daily and I am blessed to have received them through DRS. This August will be 1 year at my current job in the nursing home. I enjoy being a CNA, although it has its days. About 3 months ago, I moved out of my parent's house and found a rental house for my son and I. I no longer have a vehicle since the car I had broken down last December and it isn't worth the cost of fixing. Luckily, work is only a couple of blocks away. I have to ask someone for a ride to the grocery store when I need to shop. But nonetheless, I still consider myself to be very blessed.

On another note, about 2 months ago, my pastor asked me to preach. I attend a very small church. I was honored and nervous, but I knew the Lord would lead me. I don't believe being a pastor is in my calling, but I'm willing to serve again if the need arises. I do believe that it strengthened me though to remember that the Lord is here for me when I have those depressing times about my hearing loss.

I sincerely hope you enjoyed my update.  
Charity Hammond

# Twins learn, graduate from Manufacturing program together

Wednesday, August 12, 2015

By Sara Plummer

Coddy and Cayle Danker have been doing things side by side since they were born.

The twins attended Wilson High School, just 15 miles south of Okmulgee, while also completing the CNC manufacturing program at Green Country Technology Center their junior and senior years.

“Once I got into the program, I liked it. After that program I wanted to further my education,” Cayle Danker said.

After graduating from high school in 2013, the two enrolled in OSU Institute of Technology’s Manufacturing Technologies program.

Coddy Danker said he enjoys the hands-on nature of manufacturing, but OSUIT’s program takes it a step further.

“It’s still hands on, but you go more into the programming side of manufacturing at OSUIT,” he said. “Nowadays you can’t do anything without a college education.”

Both will graduate Aug. 21 with an Associate in Applied Science in Manufacturing Technologies from OSUIT.

OSUIT’s 201st graduating class will be recognized at two commencement ceremonies on Friday Aug. 21 with Natalie Shirley, Oklahoma secretary of education and workforce development and OSU-Oklahoma City president serving as keynote speaker for both ceremonies.

The first at 2 p.m., will recognize students from the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Construction Technologies, Culinary Arts, Engineering Technologies, Information Technologies, and Nursing & Health Sciences. The second ceremony at 7 p.m., will honor students from the Schools of Automotive Technologies, Diesel & Heavy Equipment, and Energy Technologies.

Attending the same university and enrolling in the same program was a benefit for the brothers.

“It’s been easier. We’ve done our homework together, and it’s easier to do work. When we have group projects, we don’t have to worry about whether we work well together,” Cuddy Danker said.

His brother agrees.

“You always have someone to ask if you have questions. We try to help each other out,” Cayle Danker said.

The two also just completed their required internships at Champagne Metals in Glenpool. Although they interned at the same place their opposite shifts caused the brothers to work apart for the first time in years.

“It was different. We were used to carpooling together, and it was nice having someone to ride with,” Cayle Danker said.

But now that they are about to graduate, they know the odds of finding employment at the same company aren’t high.

“We’re ready to go on our own, but it would be nice to work together,” Cayle Danker said

**From:** Richard Yahola  
**Subject:** Client story.

One of the young men, Camron and I are working on his DRS plan. We have worked with his interests and I've found out this young man loves horses and caring for them. We have started our career search and exploration is leading us to seeing about going to Horseshoeing School and being a Farrier. He is really excited about the plan and when he gets to the highest level, we will go on tours of the Ardmore and Purcell facilities. His grandfather has already offered to build him a barn and he's going to work towards getting his license and take small steps to get trained and see if he can get going from there.

We have worked on his IPE and need mom's signature. She is in Tulsa. Well I finally got the plan back today and I'm going to get Camron to sign it. I'm big on empowerment and one of the things I do is include a handwritten note included in the letter which I send with the IPE for his mother to sign. I didn't read the note when we sent it but it came back with his signed IPE today. It's brief but very powerful. Camron wrote:

**Mom Please send this back**

**I really need this**

Sometimes the residents give a little look at what is important to them. And Camron taught me a lot today. Anyhow, appreciate all of your support and work with this project and we will continue on.