A Centennial Year Celebration

Annual Report 2007
(July 01, 2006-June 30, 2007)

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

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1907 to 2007

On November 16, 1907, Oklahoma became the 46th state.

At that time, Oklahomans with disabilities were part of Native American hunting parties, settlers making a go of it on farms homesteaded during the land runs and roughnecks from all over the world hoping to strike it rich in the Oklahoma oil fields.

Everyone's help was needed to survive and prosper, so those with disabilities adapted their equipment and tools and pitched in to get their work done.

You can read more in these pages about Oklahoma heroes with disabilities, including aviation pioneer Wiley Post; Oklahoma Territory legislative representative and U.S. Senator Thomas P. Gore; songwriter, folk singer and author Woody Guthrie; first woman chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma Wilma Mankiller; and graphic artist Greg Burns.

Many others we may not know, but their marks on the state of Oklahoma are nonetheless indelible.

One hundred years later, 635,170 Oklahomans have disabilities -- 19.6% of the total state population.

Still hardworking and optimistic, present-day citizens with disabilities continue to play a major part in the state's struggle for success.

Today 77,571 of these Oklahomans are assisted each year by the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) – the state employment agency for Oklahomans with disabilities – the educational option for children who are blind or deaf -- and the agency responsible for determining medical eligibility for Social Security disability benefits.

DRS staff help the individuals we serve graduate, go to work, or qualify for disability benefits, thus expanding their opportunities to become more independent and self-sufficient at work and in their homes and communities. As a result, many end their dependence on disability benefits and government assistance and become taxpayers whose income has a significant impact on the Oklahoma economy.

Mission

The mission of the Department of Rehabilitation Services is to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve productivity, independence and an enriched quality of life.

Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services 2007

Chair Ben C. White of Lawton

Appointed by the Governor of the State of Oklahoma

Ben C. White served as Executive Vice President of Comanche County Memorial Hospital, where he was instrumental in developing the Center for Disability and Rehabilitation. He owned and operated The Center of Good Health, a full service family fitness and wellness center, which offered physical therapy and cardiac rehabilitation services.

Vice Chair Dr. David Pittman of Sulphur

Appointed by the Speaker of the State House of Representatives

Dr. Pittman is a practicing pharmacist who owns and operates Sooner Pharmacy in Sulphur, Oklahoma, as well as an Angus cattle farm. He was the 100th president of the Oklahoma Pharmacists Association.

Member Ray F. Kirk of Muskogee

Appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the State Senate

A native of northeastern Oklahoma, Kirk owns and operates a 585-acre cattle and thoroughbred horse ranch southeast of Muskogee. He was employed as a State Farm Insurance Companies agent for 32 years before retirement.

DRS Director Linda S. Parker

Linda S. Parker has served as the DRS' chief executive officer since 1996. Under the guidance of the Commission for Rehabilitation Services, she leads 983 employees who assisted 77,571 Oklahomans with disabilities during the State Fiscal Year 2007.

History

The Department of Rehabilitation Services was created as a new state agency on July 1, 1993. Previously the various programs were divisions of the Department of Human Services. Five major divisions or schools are included in the agency. Each of these divisions has a long history of it's own.

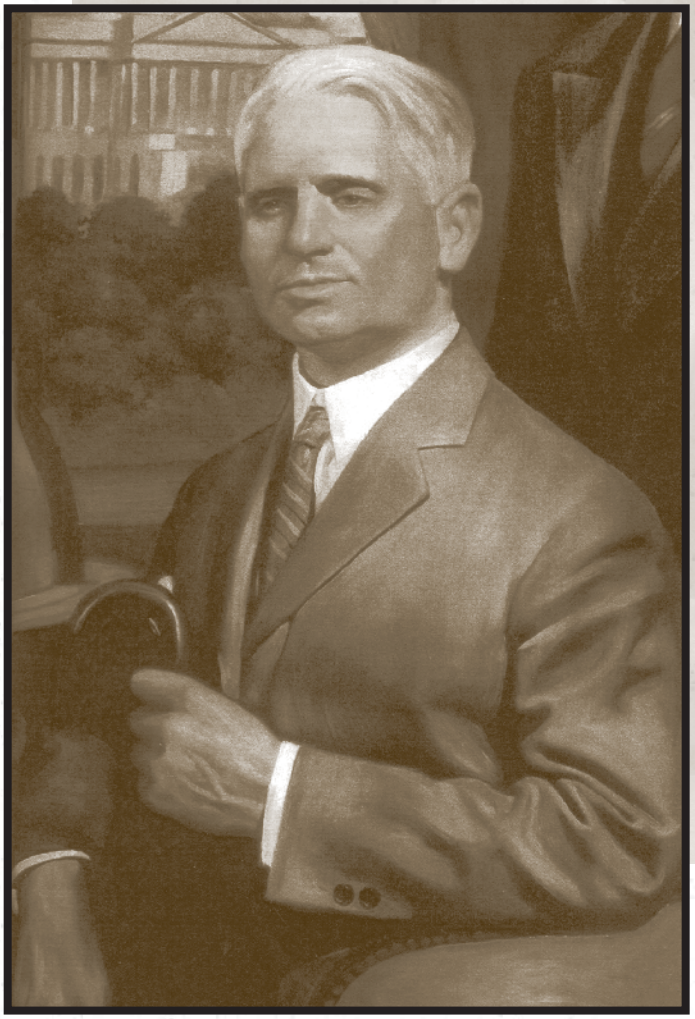
- Vocational Rehabilitation became a state program in 1927.
- Visual Services has been a state program since 1947.
- Oklahoma School for the Blind and Oklahoma School for the Deaf were established in 1897.
- Disability Determination became a state program in 1954.

DRS Overview

The Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) operates dozens of programs that help Oklahomans lead more independent and productive lives.

- Vocational Rehabilitation and Visual Services help Oklahomans with disabilities prepare for good jobs in the careers of their choice.
- These divisions also operate programs that help people adjust to blindness and hearing loss by learning new skills that lead to independence.
- Disability Determination reviews medical records to see if applicants are eligible for Social Security disability benefits because they are not able to work.
- The Oklahoma School for the Blind in Muskogee and Oklahoma School for the Deaf in Sulphur help residential students, those who commute and summer school students, achieve their educational and career goals.
- Both schools offer outreach services to families, local schools and their students who are blind or deaf across the state.

Thomas P. Gore (1870-1949)



Despite an eye injury which led to blindness at an early age, Thomas P. Gore was nominated for an office in the Mississippi state legislature in 1891 at a time when little technology was available to compensate for vision loss. He was forced to withdraw from the race because he was a minor, but continued to be active in politics in Mississippi and Texas.

In 1901, Gore moved to Lawton, Oklahoma and was elected to the upper house of the Territorial Legislative Assembly. He was an advisor to the 1907 constitutional convention and was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1907, 1909 and 1915.

Although Gore built a progressive voting record in the Senate, his opposition to World War I led to conflict with President Woodrow Wilson, whom Gore had helped to elect by leading his Oklahoma campaign.

Gore's position on the war eventually cost him the support of his Oklahoma constituents. He was defeated when he ran for re-election 1920 and came in a distant third in the 1924 primary, but was re-elected to the U.S. Senate in 1930.

Although he supported Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932, Gore, who remained an independent thinker, opposed the New Deal and came in last in a four-way primary in his final bid for re-election in 1936.

He practiced law in Washington, D.C. until his death in 1949.

DRS and Vocational Rehabilitation

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is the employment agency for Oklahomans with physical or mental disabilities. Those with visual impairments receive similar services from the Division of Visual Services.

A person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services if he or she has a physical or mental disability that is a substantial barrier to employment. The individual must be able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation (VR) services which are required to prepare for and find a job.

VR services primarily consist of career counseling, vocational education and training, medical services to improve employment opportunities, special technology and job placement to help Oklahomans get or keep jobs in the careers of their choice. As a result, thousands whose disabilities were barriers to employment become taxpayers each year, eliminating or reducing their need for disability benefits and government assistance.

Vocational Rehabilitation offers a head-start on work experience through the Transition School to Work program for high school students with disabilities; employment assistance and interpreter certification from Services for the Deaf; and free recruitment, job-related training and information about tax credits for employers from the Business and Employment Services Team (BEST).

Division staff also operate three career planning centers and coordinate services with eight tribal vocational rehabilitation programs.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Clients Served	17,563	15,070
Program Applications	7,074	6,406
Employment Plans	4,564	3,877

VR Clients Who Became Employed

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Employment Outcomes	1,808	1,694
Average Yearly Earnings	$18,511	$19,179
Average Cost of Services Per Client	$5,637	$6,445
Average Taxes Paid	$5,183	$5,370

Wiley Post (1898-1935)

Wiley Post, who moved to Oklahoma at age 5, started his career in 1924 as a parachutist for a flying circus. He used workman's compensation money to buy his first airplane following an oil field accident that led to removal of his infected left eye.

Around this time, he met fellow Oklahoman Will Rogers when he flew Rogers to a rodeo. The two eventually became close friends.

Post was the personal pilot of wealthy Oklahoma oilman F.C. Hall, who bought a high-wing, single-engine Lockheed Vega, famous for breaking speed records in the early 1930s. Hall nicknamed the plane "Winnie Mae," after his daughter, but the plane will be forever associated with Post.

Post's vision impairment saved navigation time and helped him set records because he was accustomed to making calculations in his head while flying to compensate for his lack of depth perception.

He achieved national prominence by setting speed records and winning aviation races, starting with the National Air Race Derby in 1930. In 1931, he and his navigator, Harold Gatty, were the first to fly around the world, returning in the record time of eight days and 15 hours and 51 minutes.

In 1933, he circled the globe in seven days, 18 hours and 49 minutes while testing an early automatic pilot prototype. Convinced that he could win races by cruising at high altitudes in the jet stream, Post helped design a pressurized suit, which was a precursor to modern space suits.

Hoping to set new altitude and speed records, Post was working with Lockheed designers to test a hybrid plane when he and Will Rogers were killed on takeoff from a lagoon near Point Barrow, Alaska in 1935.

DRS and Visual Services

Many Oklahomans who are blind or visually impaired turn to Visual Services for assistance through vocational rehabilitation, employment and other programs that encourage confidence and independence.

Visual Services (VS) offers the same type of employment assistance as DRS' Vocational Rehabilitation division -- career counseling, vocational education and training, medical services to improve employment opportunities, special technology and job placement. However, the VS program is customized to help Oklahomans with visual impairments adjust to vision loss and develop skills needed to get or keep quality jobs.

Clients are eligible for the vocational rehabilitation program if visual impairments make it difficult to work. They must be able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, which are required to prepare for and find jobs.

VS helps high school students get valuable vocational training and work experience, and assists business owners who are blind in operating food service businesses in government buildings through the Business Enterprise Program.

The Business and Employment Services Team (BEST) and VS staff provide recruitment assistance free to employers, along with information on tax credits and training on the latest adaptive technology to help employees with disabilities get the job done.

Rehabilitation Teachers offer free classes and in-home instruction to help Oklahomans adjust to vision loss, while Orientation and Mobility Specialists teach clients techniques for traveling safely. Oklahomans who are 55 years of age or older get assistance through the Older Blind Independent Living Services program.

VS' new Vision Center concentrates a variety of services in one convenient location. The center features a Rehabilitation Technology Lab, which enables clients to try out the latest technology and receive hands-on training.

Visual Services operates the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, which mails thousands of free recorded books to patrons and provides free braille textbooks and classroom materials to public school students.

Division of Visual Services (VS) Services

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Clients Served	3,124	3,151
Program Applications	1,465	1,326
Employment Plans	983	891

VS Clients Who Became Employed

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Employment Outcomes	499	516
Average Yearly Earnings	$13,633	$14,183
Average Cost of Services Per Client	$4,480	$5,200
Average Taxes Paid	$3,817	$3,971

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Services

Circulation

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Library Patrons	5,985	5,894
Books Circulated Daily to Patrons	935	809
Books Received Weekly by Patrons	4,506	3,290
Daily Inquiries	20	20

Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Center

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Children Served	1,097	1,200
Average Days for Child to Receive:		
In-house Book	2	2
Ordered Book - Braille	90	16
Ordered Book - Large Print	30	16
Total Books/Items in Collection	16,097	19,131

	FY-2006	FY-2007
New Books Purchased:		
Braille	133	294
Large Print	542	718
Instructional Aids and Equipment *	118	571

*Books and instructional aids/equipment, such as talking globes, tactile maps, etc., are ordered during one fiscal/school year and received the next fiscal/school year.

Federal Quota Funds (Previous School Year)

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Children Eligible for Textbooks	762	834
Funding	$172,582	$205,062

The State Department of Education has provided supplemental funding from $50,000 to $100,000 per year for braille education materials.

Combined VR/VS Statistics

VR and VS Clients Served

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Clients Served	20,687	18,221
Program Applications	8,539	7,732
Employment Plans	5,547	4,768

VR and VS Clients Employed

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Employment Outcomes	2,307	2,210
Average Yearly Earnings	$17,456	$18,012
Average Cost of Services Per Client	$5,387	$6,149
Average Taxes Paid	$4,888	$5,043

DRS and Disability Determination

The Social Security Administration pays disability benefits to Oklahomans who can't work due to a medical condition expected to last at least one year or to result in death.

Disability Determination is a division of the state Department of Rehabilitation Services, but the program is funded by the federal government to determine medical eligibility for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

Disability examiners and consulting physicians or psychologists review applicants' medical and vocational information and work as a team on the medical review process. They decide whether or not applicants are disabled or blind based on medical evidence using federal guidelines.

Children are evaluated based on their ability to perform age-appropriate activities and their medical evidence.

Cases are re-evaluated periodically to make sure that individuals receiving benefits are still disabled.

Disability Determination helps Oklahomans cope with loss of income due to disability. As a result, they gain more independence and build a better life for themselves and their families.

Disability Determination Division Performance

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Budgeted Workload	52,062	52,744
Completed Workload	53,126	53,825
Processed Budgeted Workload	102.0%	102.0%

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Decision Accuracy Rate Oklahoma	93.5%	96.0%
Decision Accuracy Rate National	93.7%	93.8%
Processing Time (days)	93.9	92.4

Woodrow Wilson "Woody" Guthrie (1912–1967)

Okemah-born Woody Guthrie wrote hundreds of songs about his experiences in the Dust Bowl era, as well as articles, poems and six books, including his autobiography, "Bound for Glory."

Guthrie learned traditional folk and blues songs while traveling with migrant workers from Oklahoma to California and often borrowed traditional melodies to accompany his original lyrics.

His songs and performances drew attention to social injustices and were sometimes a rallying cry to action with subjects that ranged from political themes to traditional and children's songs. His best known song, the classic "This Land Is Your Land," is archived along with hundreds of others in the Library of Congress.

In spite of a 15-year battle with Huntington's Disease, a rare genetic neurological disorder, Guthrie provided inspiration to a generation of folk musicians, including Bob Dylan, Ramblin' Jack Elliott and Joan Baez.

Woody Guthrie was inducted posthumously into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988, the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame in 1997 and the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2006. He was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2000 Grammy Awards for lifelong artistic contributions to the recording industry.

DRS and Oklahoma School for the Blind

Located in Muskogee, the Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB), sometimes known as Parkview School, offers education programs, free of charge, for children with vision loss.

OSB is the state resource center in Oklahoma for students who are visually impaired or blind.

Children from preschool age through high school benefit from small class sizes and individual instruction from highly skilled and dedicated educators. Students may live on campus during the week or commute from home. The OSB Summer Enrichment Program is for students who attend public schools during the regular school year.

Students follow a fully accredited academic program with specific skill training, remediation, and reinforcement of academic skills as well as access to specialized equipment and recreational activities.

The Oklahoma School for the Blind provides thousands of free outreach services each year for students attending local public schools, their families and local school systems. Qualified staff offer free student evaluations, in-service training for teachers and recommendations for classroom modifications and special equipment that help students reach their full potential.

Oklahoma School for the Blind School Census

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Residential Students	**56**	**56**
Day Students	**45**	**45**
Total Students Attending All or Part of the Year	**101**	**101**
Counties Served	**45**	**45**
Students with Multiple Disabilities	**6**	**6**
Teacher to Student Ratio	**1 to 6**	**1 to 6**
Direct Care Specialist to Student Ratio	**1 to 10**	**1 to 13**
Summer School Students	**31**	**31**
Days for Summer School	**23**	**23**

Outreach Program

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Direct Services	2,399	3,297
Consultations and Evaluations	249	66
Services to Families	167	141
Services to Schools	722	1,123
Services to Organizations	1,261	1,762

School Year Graduation Percentage

	FY-2006	FY-2007
OSB Graduation Rate	100.0%	100.0%
State Graduation Rate	82.4%	84.6%
National Graduation Rate	70.0%	70.0%

Wilma Mankiller (1945-)

In 1985, Wilma Mankiller became the first woman principal chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. She grew up in Mankiller Flats near Tahlequah. Her family relocated to California in 1956 as part of a Bureau of Indian Affairs program designed to urbanize poor, rural Native Americans.

She was a homemaker living in the San Francisco suburbs when she became involved in the Native American occupation of Alcatraz Island. The protest inspired Mankiller to become active in the struggle for Native American and women's rights.

Eventually, she returned to live on land in northeastern Oklahoma that was allotted to her paternal grandfather just after Oklahoma became a state in 1907.

She was diagnosed with a rare form of muscular dystrophy while recovering in the hospital from a serious car accident.

Mankiller was the first female in modern history to lead a major Native American tribe. With an enrolled population of over 140,000, 1,200 employees and an annual budget of more than $75 million, her administrative responsibilities were comparable to those of executive directors of major corporations.

DRS and Oklahoma School for the Deaf

The Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD) in Sulphur is the state resource center in Oklahoma for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

OSD provides educational services to students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, free of charge. Students may live on campus during the week, commute from home, attend satellite pre-schools in Edmond or Collinsville, or participate in summer school programs.

In addition to a fully accredited educational program, OSD offers specific skills training, including American Sign Language (ASL) and use of adaptive technology. Students may receive remediation or skills reinforcement, and staff work effectively with students who have varying degrees of hearing loss using their preferred communication methods.

OSD staff offer free early intervention, student evaluations and onsite consultation regarding modifications to improve learning environments for students attending local public schools and their families.

The school now hosts the National Accessible Learning Center, which in collaboration with the Oklahoma School for the Blind, houses and distributes 70,000 educational videos specially formatted for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired. The center is now the only educational video library of its kind in the U.S.

The School for the Deaf also provides assistive equipment, such as TTYs, videophones and captioned telephones, for people of all ages and hearing aids for senior adults with hearing loss.

Oklahoma School for the Deaf School Census

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Residential Students	90	83
Day Students	60	58
Total Students Attending All or Part of the Year	150	141
Counties Served	77	49
Students with Multiple Disabilities	27	27
Teacher to Student Ratio	1 to 6	1 to 5
Direct Care Specialist to Student Ratio	1 to 3	1 to 7
Summer School Students	21	88*
*OSD 35, Public Schools 53		
Days for Summer School	5	10

Preschool Programs

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Satellite Preschool Programs	2	3
Students	36	31

Outreach Program

	FY-2006	FY-2007
Direct Services	2,788	63,045*
Consultations and Evaluations	829	1,358
Services to Families	10,087	11,039
Services to Schools	1,901	1,868
Services to Organizations	1,123	2,717

*Includes videos shipped to patrons nationwide by OSD's National Accessible Learning Center.

School Year Graduation Percentage

	FY-2006	FY-2007
OSD Graduation Rate	100.0%	100.0%
State Graduation Rate	82.4%	84.6%
National Graduation Rate	70.0%	70.0%

Department of Rehabilitation Services 2007 Budget

	DVR/DVS	OSB	OSD	DDD	TOTAL
State	$13,993,119	$6,777,000	$8,443,131		$29,213,250
Federal	61,318,614	228,000	433,218	24,423,003	86,402,835
Other			1,184,050		1,184,050
Total	$75,311,733	$7,005,000	$10,060,399	$24,423,003	$116,800,135

What We Do

Opening doors to opportunity -- that's what we do at the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services.

We are proud of dedicated staff – including 17% who have disabilities – because they understand and care about the people we serve.

Our programs and services help people lead more self-sufficient and fulfilling lives.

We are DRS. We open the door to opportunity, but each person we serve deserves the credit for walking through it to achieve their dreams.

Greg Burns

Born with Arthrogryposis, a muscle and joint disease which affects the use of his arms and legs, Greg Burns' ink and water color originals, giclee prints and color prints are widely collected in the U.S. and throughout the world.

A University of Oklahoma graduate with a bachelor's of fine arts, Burns draws with the pen in his hand and adds watercolor by holding the brush in his teeth. His style is generally thought of as realistic, although Burns says he interprets what he sees and presents his own version of reality.

His popular subjects include Oklahoma City landmarks and universities as well as scenes from travels to Colorado, Florida, Europe and Africa.

Burns has won numerous art competitions beginning in high school in 1964, continuing at the University of Oklahoma in 1967, and culminating with the Governor's Art Award for the state of Oklahoma in 1978.

Since closing his art gallery in 2006, Burns markets his work on the web at www.gregburns-fineart.com. He frequently adds new original art and prints to the lists of available pieces.

the Oklahoma
department of
rehabilitation services

DRS

"opening doors to opportunity"

okdrs.gov

Oklahoma Hills

by Woody Guthrie

Many a month has come and gone
Since I wandered from my home
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.
Many a page of life has turned,
Many a lesson I have learned;
Well, I feel like in those hills I still belong.

'Way down yonder in the Indian Nation
Ridin' my pony on the reservation,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.
Now, 'way down yonder in the Indian Nation,
A cowboy's life is my occupation,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.

But as I sit here today,
Many miles I am away
From a place I rode my pony through the
draw,
While the oak and blackjack trees
Kiss the playful prairie breeze,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.

Now as I turn life a page
To the land of the great Osage
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born,
While the black oil it rolls and flows
And the snow-white cotton grows
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.

Our path forward begins here.