

SOLUTIONS

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Student Scientists Shine at Fair

Texas youth earn scholarships, bragging rights at statewide competition

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On the cover: Cindy Castillo, a student at Pace High School in Brownsville, was one of nearly 1,100 participants in this year's ExxonMobil Texas Science and Engineering Fair in San Antonio. *Photo by Cynthia Hunter*

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Andres Alcantar
Commissioner
Representing the Public

As I take stock in all that the Texas Workforce System has accomplished and all the challenges that we have faced over the past year, I look to what more the system can do to help our customers achieve and sustain economic prosperity. The workforce system has worked hard to deliver quality services and meet historic demands for those services during the national recession. While continuing to meet these demands, we also must make sure that our future workforce is prepared to compete successfully for the high-skill, high-demand jobs in the broad range of traditional and emerging industries in our state.

A number of projected high-demand occupations require a sound foundation in science, technology, engineering or math (STEM), which underscores the critical need for students to have opportunities to study and develop interest in STEM careers. While a majority of these occupations do not require a bachelor's degree, math and science are fundamental to career success in a number of growing occupations in industries such as agriculture, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, energy, biotechnology, and health care. The importance of STEM-based careers to the future success of our state's workforce and economy leads the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to invest in initiatives that enhance the ability of our future workforce to succeed in these careers. The agency continues to sponsor the Annual ExxonMobil Texas Science and Engineering Fair, whose winners can take part in the Governor's Champions Academy. In addition, TWC's Summer Merit program will support the participation of more than 2,100 students at 16 universities and three community colleges offering multiple STEM summer camps across the state.

The people of our state are our greatest asset. A well-developed workforce in STEM is critical to achieving and sustaining economic prosperity for Texas. Our state will continue to face competitive challenges from traditional and emerging markets that can only be met by a workforce that is creative, innovative, and possesses a solid foundation in STEM. TWC remains focused on working to build a quality workforce that can help our state's workforce and employers secure economic prosperity, and it is my hope that more stakeholders continue to join us in these efforts. ■

Setting a path to a career

Program helps youth explore area careers

By **Kate Hourin**

Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas (West Central Texas) wants to help local employers “grow their own workforce” so that when area youth graduate from high school they won’t leave for the big city.

“That’s the idea behind the Career Pathways initiative,” said Steve Collins, West Central Texas business resource consultant.

“If the kids know the types of jobs and careers that are available in the 19-county region, we hope they’ll stay,” Collins said. “Career Pathways is a feeder-system program that is employer-driven, so local industry has the skilled employees it needs to succeed.”

As part of the program, as many as 25 area employers will visit with high school juniors and seniors at a Career Day event.

“Business representatives set up their booths in a high school gym and really spend time with the students, telling them what careers are available at companies close to home,” said Career Pathways Consultant Cason Pyle. He also makes classroom presentations and offers personalized career counseling to students.

One student who attended Stamford High School’s Career Day was junior Nathan Escobedo.

“I liked hearing about why the employers chose their careers,” Escobedo said. “I especially enjoyed hearing from the medical personnel, because that’s the career I would like to pursue one day. It was a very educational project.”

The program has served more



Career Pathways Consultant Cason Pyle makes classroom presentations and offers personalized career counseling to students. The Career Pathways initiative also stages Career Day events to inform high school students about the job and career opportunities in West Central Texas. *Photo courtesy Workforce Solutions West Central Texas*

than 4,600 students in 11 school districts in West Central Texas during the past 18 months. Six Career Day events and 18 classroom presentations are scheduled for 2010.

“The program is gaining steam and schools are buying into it by setting up career paths in high schools, learning what skills are needed for different jobs,” Pyle said. “We want students to learn about career options now so they won’t have to spend unnecessary time or money figuring out what they want to do.”

Career Pathways focuses on industries that have high-wage, high-demand jobs including energy, health care, manufacturing, and banking. Pyle added that the program encourages students to go to at least two years of college or job training, and showcases careers that don’t necessarily require a bachelor’s degree.

“I was told to get more schooling or I wouldn’t be marketable,” said Pyle, who graduated from high school 10 years ago and went on to obtain bachelor’s and master’s degrees. “After lots of money and time I realized you can have a good, productive life and career without all of that higher education.”

West Central Texas Workforce Board Chairman Chance Barr has participated in two Career Day events as owner and manager of BF Transportation in Brownwood.

“Most students have no idea what jobs are available in the region, but these presentations make them more aware of local businesses and career opportunities,” Barr said. “It’s gratifying when something you say triggers something in a student’s head and they think, ‘I can stay here (in West Central Texas) and get into an exciting career.’” ■



Dave Smith provides Trade Adjustment Act case management training to career consultants from the Tarrant, Dallas, North Central, Texoma, and North Texas Board areas. The training will help staff assist workers using TWC's Rapid Response services.

Photo courtesy Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County

Greater Dallas Rapid Response helps place former BAE Systems employees

By Shannon Thomas

William Dunlap had not been job hunting in 24 years. That monumental task was facing the BAE Systems Control Inc. veteran after he received his 90-day layoff notice in March 2009.

"I've only changed jobs a very few times," said Dunlap. "I found myself in a completely new job-seeking world."

The Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) Rapid Response team, mobilized by Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas (Greater Dallas), was there to help Dunlap and the other 450 affected employees. The team leapt into action in March 2009, when TWC received a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) notice from the global defense company. The WARN letter stated that 85 percent of the facility's manufacturing work would be transferred out of state.

A series of 13 orientations were held for the recently separated employees, and Greater Dallas also set up a series of transition centers onsite to help people move to new jobs and careers. More than 300 of the affected employees attended the

orientations and took advantage of the transition center's services. Two job fairs also were held for the former BAE employees.

Rapid Response services included workshops and activities provided in group settings in the areas of crisis counseling, financial planning, job-search assistance, labor market and career information, interview preparation, résumé and application preparation, stress management, unemployment insurance claims information, and other group workshops and activities.

"Through our Rapid Response team, we were able to provide one-on-one feedback to former BAE employees," said John Kuznar, the outplacement services manager for Greater Dallas. "Our goal was to try to outreach to everyone."

According to Kuznar, local job transfers were not an option for the employees, since there were no nearby BAE positions to be filled in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area.

For Dunlap, the Rapid Response services led him to a new job with Bell Helicopter Textron Inc.

"The staff in the transition center

helped me with a list of companies I might possibly match with," Dunlap said. "Bell Helicopter was listed as one of those companies I could probably transition to."

Dunlap started working at Bell Helicopter in January, at approximately the same salary he was earning at BAE. He said he enjoys his new position as a manufacturing operations analyst, which allows him to utilize his production control skills he learned at BAE.

The Rapid Response team wrapped up services to BAE in May 2010, and received praise from the company.

"You guys have been a true pleasure to work with," said Lonnie Hale, departing human resources manager for BAE. "I have many thanks to you and your dedicated team."

Dunlap is grateful for the Rapid Response services and has some advice for others who might face the same situation.

"Don't give up," Dunlap said. "It's hard to be out there by yourself, but you need to continue communication and not let people forget about you. The workforce centers can definitely help with that." ■

Green energy growing in South Texas

Coalition promotes conservation, efficiency

By Kate Hourin

Beginning January 2011, plastic bags will be banned in Brownsville retail stores.

On Earth Day this year, April 22, the local Wal-Mart handed out 50,000 reusable shopping bags.

“All this to encourage energy conservation and efficiency in South Texas and support a growing industry that’s creating jobs,” said Workforce Solutions Cameron’s (Cameron) Hilario Diaz.

To that end, a collaboration among the South Texas Energy Partnership, the Texas Department of Agriculture, The University of Texas at Brownsville, Texas Southmost College, and Workforce Solutions Cameron was formed to promote and encourage the use of alternative energy and water conservation. The group sponsored the 4th Annual Energy Efficiency Green Conference and EXPO this year in Brownsville. Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Chairman Tom Pauken and state Sen. Eddie Lucio Jr. were among the speakers at the conference.

Among the conference’s 19 exhibitors was Denise Chavez, sales representative for Schneider Electric, a French-owned company that specializes in the emerging energy and operational efficiency industry.

“We build energy solutions for public entities,” said Chavez. “We’ll audit a school district or assess city buildings to see where they can save energy and reduce costs with the repair or installation of new heating and cooling systems or windows and roofs.”

Schneider Electric then enters into a performance contract with provisions that if the customer uses and maintains the improved equipment correctly,



Sylvia Cancino (far right), Education and Community Outreach coordinator for the Brownsville Public Utilities Board, demonstrates how alternative energy produces electricity to youth visiting the 4th Annual Energy Efficiency Green Conference and EXPO in Brownsville.

Photo courtesy Workforce Solutions Cameron

Schneider will pay the difference if a certain cost savings is not realized.

“It’s rarely happened that we’ve had to write a check,” said Chavez. “We’re really interested in making sure our programs maximize your budget and simultaneously help the environment.”

The Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District saved more than \$1 million in the 2008-2009 school year by retrofitting its energy systems. Low-interest loans for public entities that upgrade their energy systems are available through the Qualified School Construction Bond program funded by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The Texas State Energy Conservation Office dispersed nearly \$135 million in loans until that program ended in April.

Among the inaugural sponsors of the EXPO is TXU Energy. TXU Energy Director of Community Relations Jon Bennett stressed the importance of conserving energy.

“We are going to run out of power if we don’t save energy,” he said. “The recession got us to conserve energy over these past two years simply to save money, but we really have to

think about limited resources and the environment now.”

Bennett said droughts and an increasing population are putting a strain on resources.

“The good thing about these energy expos is that kids are invigorated about energy conservation,” he added. “With these alternative sources of power, we are teaching them to make solar and wind energy routine in new construction.”

TXU has invested more than \$100,000 in solar panels in the Rio Grande Valley and donated a full-sized 125-foot wind turbine blade to the International Museum of Art and Science in McAllen to showcase the impact of wind energy. Alternative energy also is part of the curricula at The University of Texas at Brownsville and TSTC-Harlingen with wind-turbine maintenance programs.

“The economic benefits of alternative energy industries on local communities and the need to develop conservation programs are all incentives for Cameron to participate in these types of events,” said Diaz. “It is about creating new businesses and new jobs.” ■



Sr. Cpl. Juan Aguinaga (from left), with the Dallas Police Department, talks with James Armont at a career fair at the Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz International Center in Corpus Christi. The fair featured 60 employers and was held to help those impacted by BRAC-impacted closures. © 2010 Corpus Christi Caller-Times. Photographer: Rachel Denny Clow

BRAC to the Basics

Career fairs help Coastal Bend-area workers launch new careers, opportunities in wake of base closure-related job losses

By James A. Johnson

The “Responding to Change!” 2010 Career Fair was the culmination of years of comprehensive efforts by Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend (Coastal Bend) to offer workers impacted by Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) the chance to pursue employment opportunities and career-transition training.

Coastal Bend has been working with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the U.S. Department of Labor for the last several years to plan and implement programs to serve

BRAC-impacted employees from Naval Station Ingleside (NSI). In early 2007, Coastal Bend established a Transition Assistance Center (TAC) at NSI, and in 2008, launched a similar center at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi where BRAC-impacted workers were provided job-search services and detailed labor market and career information. Even though this was the final BRAC Career Fair, Coastal Bend will continue to provide service to BRAC-impacted workers through its career centers in the 12-county region.

Organizers including Ingleside

Local Redevelopment Authority, Port Industries of Corpus Christi, San Patricio Economic Development Corp., and Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corp. recruited 60 businesses, training institutions, and local, state, and federal employers to exhibit and present information about what Coastal Bend employers need now and in the future. The BRAC announcement by the U.S. Department of Defense affected more than 2,800 military, contract, and civilian workers in the Coastal Bend area, making transition strategies crucial.

“Hosting these events brings employers who need qualified employees together with highly skilled workers,” said Larry Demieville, Coastal Bend’s director of career development.

To address the critical need in a region that saw the closure of the area’s primary ship repair contractor, and teacher layoffs following school enrollment declines, each annual event offered job-search services to affected military workers, base contractors, and others, which lessened the economic impact.

Job-seeker attendance doubled from 500 in 2008 to more than 1,000 in 2009 and 2010. To date, approximately 150 federal civilian employees from affected bases have found employment at other federal civilian jobs.

CenterPoint Energy recruiter Angela Kohl was impressed by the enthusiasm at the fair.

“We had good fortune by tapping into the military community, and I knew we’d find disciplined and skilled candidates,” Kohl said.

The company hired James Stamper Jr. as an electronics installer and repairman from a 2009 job fair, and benefited from the 20 years of experience Stamper possessed in naval electronics.

Because of the job fair, Stamper was hired within a month after his previous job ended.



A military spouse talks to an AFLAC representative about employment opportunities during the inaugural BRAC Conference/Job Fair. The event was developed and hosted by Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande and held on post at Fort Bliss. *Photo courtesy Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande*

“(The job fair experience) was a serious stress reliever for me,” Stamper said. “It led to my current job.”

“We were right on the money by hiring James,” Kohl added.

Deborah Kolher was laid off as a warehouse clerk for an NSI contractor and attended her first-ever career fair in February. She was hired as a material logistics specialist by McTurbine Inc., a Bell Helicopter Textron affiliate.

“The job fair connected me to my employer, and recruiters helped me apply,” Kohler said. “I learned about area companies I wouldn’t have known existed.”

Unlike Coastal Bend, other BRAC-impacted workforce boards such as Workforce Solutions Alamo, Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, and Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande welcomed news that their region would gain troops.

Transition efforts statewide ranged from providing traditional employment services or re-employment services, to conducting surveys and holding BRAC

Other statewide BRAC response efforts

- **Workforce Solutions Alamo** – opened the Fort Sam Houston Community Development Office in response to the relocation of military medical training facilities nationwide to Fort Sam Houston. The one-stop service and resource center links job seekers to health care expansion employers. Two job fairs assisted job seekers in applying for federal jobs at Lackland Air Force Base, which lost troops as a result of military closures and realignments. The fairs provided training for completing federal job applications and preparing electronic resumes using the federal job-matching Web site, usajobs.com.
- **Workforce Solutions of Central Texas** – formed the Regional BRAC Council by partnering with Fort Hood Army Installation, city governments, chambers of commerce, schools, and colleges. The Council hosted a summit that developed and implemented a plan to connect eligible BRAC-related dislocated workers to jobs. Through 2009, the Board helped 944 workers with job placement and workforce services, while 476 received training services.
- **Workforce Solutions North Texas** – commissioned online employer and workforce surveys in 10 Texas and two Oklahoma counties to determine area employers’ skills demands and which BRAC-impacted workers already had found work. A BRAC summit addressed transitioning strategies for workers losing jobs at Sheppard Air Force Base who might pursue jobs at Fort Sill in Oklahoma, which was to gain jobs.
- **Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas** – established a Transitions Workforce Center that showcased job-search services and training opportunities to workers to be affected this fall by the realignment of Red River Army Depot.
- **Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande** – welcomed economic news that Fort Bliss would gain 25,000 troops by 2012 and formed a partnership with the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce to develop an online job bank and assist Fort Bliss’ Employment Readiness Program with military spouse job fairs twice a year. The Board already has provided training, transportation, job placement, and child care assistance to more than 2,100 dislocated workers and military spouses.

summits to determine area employers’ needs.

It was Coastal Bend’s continued relief efforts through the career fairs and community outreach during tremendous adversity that touched former TAC Director Sue Catherman.

“Coastal Bend is still helping about

2,000 workers transition to other bases, especially to homeport operations now in San Diego,” said Catherman, who expects another TAC location to open soon to continue helping locally impacted individuals. “The board’s assistance has been a compassionate handshake to the community.” ■

Fraud prosecution, timely reporting helps protect employer tax dollars

By Debbie Pitts

Over the past four years, the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) Regulatory Integrity Division (RID) returned more than \$153 million to the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund. RID includes investigators and collections and prosecution experts who probe Unemployment Insurance (UI) cases to detect, investigate, collect, and, when necessary, prosecute fraudulent overpayments.

"We owe it to the employers, who faithfully pay into the fund through employer taxes, to make sure the system is not being abused," said TWC Chairman Tom Pauken.

Employers can help protect their tax dollars as well. Employers should report new hires to the Texas Office of Attorney General in a timely manner, and promptly respond to TWC's inquiries for information on claimants who are filing for benefits.

"When employers provide timely and accurate information, we avoid overpaying benefits," said Brad Ward, RID's director of investigations. "There are billions in benefits being paid out each year, which creates a huge opportunity for fraud."

RID investigators detect fraud through several cross-matching methods.

"By far, the largest percentage of fraud to the UI system is through unreported earnings. Claimants fail to report they have found work and continue to collect benefits," explains John McLandrich, RID's director of fraud detection. "When employers report their new hires, our systems can cut off payments to



Sheryl McGowan, a TWC investigator, and John McLandrich, TWC's director of fraud detection, consult about recent cases. The fraud division of the RID team is able to identify unreported earnings and other forms of fraud through a variety of cross-matching systems and databases.

Photo by Joe Anna Haydon

those receiving benefits, reducing or preventing the overpayments."

Through collaborations with district attorneys and other law enforcement agencies, the TWC prosecution team made 788 referrals of UI fraud for criminal prosecution over the last four years, with 584 successful dispositions to date. Prosecution efforts have returned more than \$6 million to the UI Trust Fund. Those prosecuted for UI fraud often are required to pay fines or court fees and serve community service or jail time in addition to restitution orders. Search "criminal prosecutions" on texasworkforce.org for a list of the most recent convictions.

Some cases require special investigations, including a recent federal case in which Jefferson County law enforcement

"There are billions in benefits being paid out each year, which creates a huge opportunity for fraud."

Brad Ward
RID Director of Investigations

investigating an unrelated crime discovered suspicious UI documents, and reported the find to TWC. Working in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, TWC uncovered a scheme in which 12 individuals were prosecuted for illegally obtaining benefits totaling more than \$80,000. The scheme involved the establishment of fictitious employers, identity thefts, and filing false UI claims.

In another investigation, two individuals have been indicted for allegedly claiming more than \$12,000 in combined UI benefits while employed by the Internal Revenue Service. The indictments are a result of a collaborative effort by TWC and the U.S. Department of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax.

TWC also seeks to protect the Trust Fund by identifying and reporting employers who cheat the system by not paying the full amount of their tax obligation.

Individuals can report suspected fraud by calling the TWC fraud tip line at (800) 252-3642. ■

Youth talents on display at science fair

More than 1,000 students take part in statewide competition

By Joe Anna Haydon



Amy Chyao
Senior Division
Winner in
Chemistry

peers from across the state. Almost 1,100 middle- and high-school students entered the competition this spring.

TWC Commissioner Representing the Public Andres Alcantar presented scholarships totaling \$130,000 to the top 30 winners. These students are invited to attend the Governor’s Science and Technology Champions Academy held at UTSA, where they spend their summer working together on challenges involving biotechnology, advanced technologies, and engineering.

“Encouraging the growth of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers is the key to the future success of our state’s workforce and economy,” said Alcantar. “That is why TWC continues to motivate students early to realize their potential and see their future in careers that maximize their choices.”

Amy Chyao, a junior at Williams High School in Dallas, was awarded first place at the fair for her work in developing a photosensitizer for photodynamic therapy, a cancer treatment that uses light energy to activate a drug that kills cancer cells.

“The ExxonMobil fair was fun. It is really well organized and the best part is talking with the judges,” Chyao said.

Chyao won a scholarship to compete in the Intel



TWC Commissioner Representing the Public Andres Alcantar (left) congratulates Arlington High School student Preeti Singhal, the first-place winner in the Biochemistry Senior Division. Her work studied Microfluidics: A Pioneering Method for the Assessment and Prognosis of Cancer Metastasis. Photo by Cynthia Hunter

“Encouraging the growth of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers is the key to the future success of our state’s workforce and economy.”

Andres Alcantar
TWC Commissioner Representing the Public

International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) held in May in San Jose, California, where she also won the top honor and a \$75,000 scholarship. Chyao plans to continue her education after high school by majoring in chemistry so she can one day work in medical research or education.

“For the past 10 years, we have valued this opportunity to recognize and encourage the brilliant minds of the future,” said Truman Bell, senior program officer for education and diversity at ExxonMobil Corporation. “Whatever their professional aspirations may be, it is clear they will be celebrated leaders in their respective fields. We hope this event serves as an exciting stepping stone to their bright future.” ■

Greater Dallas unveils new Southwest Workforce Center

Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas has opened a new state-of-the-art 30,000 square-foot workforce center that provides upgraded services in a single location replacing its smaller site that scattered services between two floors of two buildings.



The new location features 52 work stations, assistive technology for job seekers with disabilities, two computer labs, 64 staff cubicles, four classrooms, a closet with men's suits available for job interviews, a conference room, and a 1,000 square-foot meeting space for in-house job fairs and community events.

This one-stop center, located at 7330 South Westmoreland Road, also accommodates Texas Veterans Commission staff, a child care contractor, a General Educational Development (GED) instructor, tax preparation assistance, and service for disabled veterans.



The new Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas workforce center features 52 work stations, two computer labs, four classrooms, and a 1,000-square-foot meeting space.

Photo courtesy Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas

\$2.2M Grant targets dislocated Central Texas workers

Workforce Solutions of Central Texas used a \$2.2 million federal National Emergency Grant (NEG) awarded to the Texas Workforce Commission from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide additional support for workers who lost their construction and manufacturing jobs between September 2008 and April 2009.

The grant, funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, added dependent care and transportation assistance to job-search services for dislocated workers who qualify for Trade Adjustment Assistance, which



Coastal Bend Board names Ken Treviño new president, CEO

Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend (Coastal Bend) has selected Ken Treviño as its new president and chief executive officer from among more than 130 applicants.



Ken Treviño

Treviño previously was director of business services for SERCO of Texas, a human resources contractor that provides workforce services for Coastal Bend. There, he managed operations at the Workforce Solutions Sunrise Career Center at Sunrise Mall in Corpus Christi. He



also was previously with the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce.

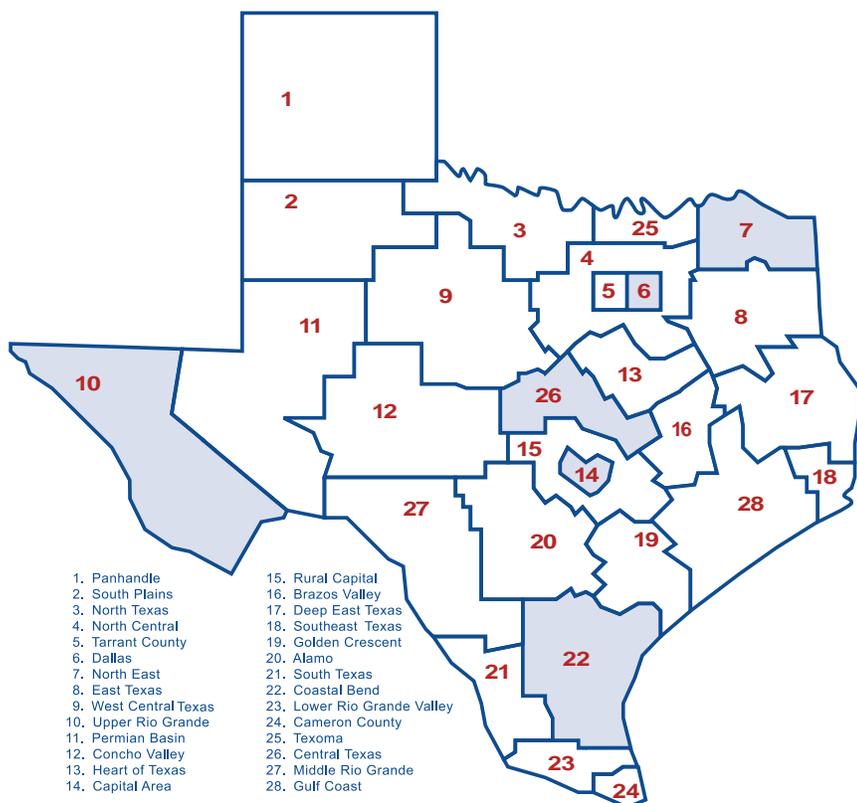
Treviño was one of four finalists for the position. A search committee selected him based on previous workforce experience, leadership skills, and financial management.

Training program targets diversity in the workplace

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas has partnered with the Paris Economic Development Corporation (PEDC) to introduce a new diversity training program.

The training teaches productive ways to deal with conflict and educates on diversity in the workplace as a vital asset to the community. Area employers are encouraged to include diversity training in job postings as an employment prerequisite. Job seekers interested in applying for those positions may attend the training at no cost. Training is offered weekly at the workforce center in Paris, and also is offered to employers on-site





Job fair helps bank workers facing layoffs secure jobs

Workforce Solutions Capital Area (Capital Area) held a job fair exclusively for workers facing layoffs from a local banking operation, helped four financial institutions fill their hiring needs, and prevented more than 30 workers from becoming unemployed.

Organized by Capital Area's Business Services team, the job fair was open to workers at a local bank who were facing layoffs. Affected workers' job titles and skills were matched using TWC's job-matching system, WorkInTexas.com, with active job postings from area employers.

By June 2010, the four participating employers, which included Netspend, OneWest Bank, Banker's Toolbox, and Aditya Birla Minacs, had filled more than 30 positions as a result of the fair.



Participants attend a diversity training program at the Paris workforce center location. Photo courtesy Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas

to benefit their current workforce.

Funding for the training development is provided by PEDC and other business and community organizations.

Upper Rio board chair tapped for national workforce board post

Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande (Upper Rio Grande) Board

Chair Patricia Villalobos has been elected to serve on the board of the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB).

Villalobos was among more than a dozen nominees nationwide and will serve a three-year term. She is the owner of Barnhart-Taylor Inc., a siding contractor, and has served on the Upper Rio Grande Board since 2006, when she was appointed by the mayor of El Paso. She has served as Board chair since October 2009.

NAWB's services are designed to help board volunteers advance the public-private workforce model among key policy makers, and assert that a quality workforce development system can meet human resource needs of the competitive global economy.



Left to right: Gerry Barrientos, Lydia Diaz, Douglas Robinson, James Riddle, Chris Whitehead, and Karen Smith are grateful to Netspend and Workforce Solutions Capital Area for helping them avoid unemployment. Photo courtesy of Workforce Solutions Capital Area



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The Texas Workforce Commission, in partnership with 28 local workforce development boards, forms Texas Workforce Solutions.



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