

Teamwork

NEWS

March 2004



A NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Employment Security administrator Chris Betts shows off the Unemployment Insurance awards won by the Employment Security Division.

Tennessee Unemployment Insurance program wins top regional awards

Superior performance in fiscal year 2002 by the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development has resulted in three U.S. Department of Labor awards for the department for achievements in the Unemployment Insurance program.

"These awards speak for our department's earnest dedication to administering the Unemployment Insurance program in Tennessee," said TDLWD Commissioner Jim

Neeley. "The department has a record of excelling on the national level in the Unemployment Insurance program, and we are continuing that tradition of outstanding service – both to workers seeking benefits and to employers paying premiums."

The department won the US Department of Labor's Overall Quality in Unemployment Insur-

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White appointed administrator

Phil White, director of Adult Education, was recently named Administrator for Adult Education for the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development. He has served as state director for Adult Education since 1993.



Phil White

Phil taught science and mathematics in Clarksville from 1969 to 1978, while also teaching Adult Education classes at Trane Industries. He began working for the state Department of Education in 1978 as an Adult Education consultant.

In 1988 he was promoted to deputy director of Adult Education and in 1991 also served as the state GED administrator. He was appointed state director of Adult Education in 1993.

Phil has bachelor's and master's degrees from Austin Peay State University with additional

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EAP Awareness Month celebrated

Central Office employees spiritedly supported Employee Assistance Program Awareness in March, with many units of the Department of Labor & Workforce Development creating displays and planning events.

EAP coordinator Carolyn Shepherd wants to thank everyone who participated in agency activities and attended seminars. See March under Photo Gallery at www.tnui.net for additional photos of the observance.



Employment and Training won first place in the EAP Awareness Month display contest. From left are Joanna Hodges, Personnel; Edith Cook, Theresa Morris, and Carol Norris, Employment and Training; and Carolyn Shepherd, Personnel.



Mary Ellen Grace, director for Labor Standards, holds the clock the division won for placing second in the EAP display contest.



Dr. Carol Boone, head of the state Employee Assistance Program under the Department of Finance and Administration, and Sue Apple, personnel director for the TDLWD, are pictured at the agency's EAP fair.

IAWP seeks Carl Anderson Scholarship applicants

By Joan Dowlen

The Carl T. Anderson Scholarship was established by the 1994-1995 Tennessee Executive Board. Mr. Anderson had a distinguished career in state government, including serving in Gov. Frank Clement's cabinet as a commissioner. Mr. Anderson was a strong supporter of our professional association. He is the only person in Tennessee to serve at an elected international position. Mr. Anderson wholeheartedly supported the concept of this scholarship. We hope it will continue to help families in our membership for many years to come.

The scholarship was set up with his support to provide financial assistance to college-bound children and grandchildren of active IAWP members. In July 2003, our 11th \$500 scholarship was awarded to Brandi Myatt, daughter of Gil and Donna Myatt of the Mid Tenn Subchapter. Brandi is currently enrolled at Tennessee Tech.

The scholarship is funded solely by contributions made "In Honor Of" and "In Memory Of" individuals. This is a loving and lasting way to remember or honor someone special. Acknowledgments are sent to Mr. Anderson's family and the honoree or their family.

We hope to be able to award three scholarships in 2004. The deadline to return an application is May 31, 2004. Winning applicants will be notified in July. Brochures and applications are available by contacting Joan Dowlen at 615-253-5649.

Statewide claims filing added to online services

By Ryan Allen

Now it is easier than ever for claimants to file for Unemployment Insurance Benefits. Tennessee claimants have recently been offered the option to file for unemployment benefits online. This service is available to everyone across the state.

Users can go to www.tn.gov to file a claim. The instructions are easy to follow. Currently between 400 and 500 internet claims are filed each week. For the year 2003, the total number of online initial claims filed was 9,122. Internet claims are expected to increase substantially over time. Claimants can also go online to file a weekly certification for UI benefits, or search for a new job. Claimant comments received so far have been very positive.

Employers file premium reports online via TNPAWS

The Tennessee Premium and Wage Reporting System (TNPAWS) allows employers to file their Premium and Wage Report via the Internet. TNPAWS is designed to calculate total, excess, and taxable wages before determining the premium amount due.

One benefit of using the TNPAWS system is that the information on the wage report is carried forward from one quarter to the next. After an employer enters the employees' Social Security Numbers, names, and wages the first time, the system will display this information the following quarter. The employer will then be able to add or delete employees as needed to prepare the current Wage Report. All these recent developments have been added to make our services more convenient and accessible to the public.

Personnel changes

Newly hired

Brett Abernathy, veterans' employment representative, Sumner County Career Center
Cindy Bateman, TOSHA, Nashville
Coralyn Becton, auditing associate, Memphis Tax
Eduardo Burgess, Employment Security, Nashville
James Caseday, boiler inspector, Boilers & Elevators, Hamilton County
Judy Clark, Labor Standards, Nashville
Kenneth Drain, veterans' outreach specialist, Clarksville/Montgomery County Career Center
Larry Hall, grant analyst, Labor Fiscal, Nashville
Igor Kikena, Employment Security, Nashville
David May, Employment Security Central Files, Nashville
Richard Michie, Williamson County Career Center
Tameka Russell, Employment Security Cashier Unit, Nashville
John Singleton, Employment Security, Nashville
Emery Soler, Knoxville Tax Office
John Wright Jr., grant analyst, Labor Fiscal, Nashville

Recently retired

Eula Adcox, Labor Research & Statistics, 13 years
Genevieve C. Belser, Nashville Combined Wage, part-time
Gladys E. Calhoun, Southeast Tennessee Career Center at Chattanooga, 34 years
Edward B. Clark, Knoxville Job Service, 31 years
Edna D. Freeman, Dresden Career Center, 24 years
Richard D. Gooch, TOSHA Huntingdon, 26 years
Mary F. Gordon, Dayton Career Center, part-time
Edward M. Harper, Nashville

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Marketing representatives for middle Tennessee, Ron Hammontree and Sharon Johnson, are pictured from above the TDLWD exhibit at Project Paycheck.

trends in hiring. Professionals were on hand to review résumés and make suggestions for improvement.

Sponsors for this year's event were the Tennessean, the Nashville

Area Chamber of Commerce,



the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Middle Tennessee Career Center, Nashville State Community College, Channel 4 News, and Cumulus Media Nashville.

Middle Tennessee's largest job fair featured 100 area employers

Local job seekers had an opportunity to make their best pitch as Project Paycheck featured more than 129 of Nashville's leading employers at this year's event on April 1, 2003, at the Gaylord Entertainment Center.

More than 3,500 job seekers attended to talk to employers such as Baptist and St. Thomas Hospitals, Amsouth, Home Depot, Dell Computer Corporation, and Cingular. Human resource professionals from industries including retail, biotechnology, hospitality, healthcare, finance, and more were on hand. Positions ranged from scientists and programmers to teachers and office administrators.

"Once again Project Paycheck offered employment opportunities with an excellent selection of top companies," said Commissioner Neeley. "The annual event is middle Tennessee's largest and longest running free job expo. Project Paycheck is a great resource for everyone in the job market."

Commissioner Neeley recorded radio soundbites that were used across the state to publicize Project Paycheck. Jeff Hentschel, special projects coordinator for the Communications Office, helped get media sponsors and worked as a volunteer for the fair.

Employment experts and career advisers held free workshops for applicants needing assistance in interviewing skills, power networking, how to work a job fair, and



This year's Project Paycheck is shown in full swing at the Gaylord Entertainment Center in Nashville.

Employee commendations

To: **Jeff Hentschel, Communications Office**
From: Matt Okon-Ofua, Shelby County Government

“I want to acknowledge receipt of the video [Jobs Jobs Jobs] I requested a few days ago. In viewing the video, I noticed the content has been updated and is fresher and clearer than the one I viewed last year. Good job. Thank you and I am also pleased with the timely response to my request.

As I indicated during our phone discussion, we are passionate about the Workforce Readiness Program (WRP) in Shelby County. We hope to provide workforce readiness training to qualified inmates so that when they leave our facility, they will possess the skills to successfully hold down a job and be self-dependent.

Thank you again for your assistance with the video.”

To: **Mary Ellen Grace, Labor Standards**
From: A TDLWD customer

“In August of 2003, I contacted the Department of Labor & Workforce Development in Chattanooga. I talked with **Paula J. Horne [Chattanooga Labor Standards]** about an outstanding vacation pay that I was owed by my previous employer. Ms. Horne treated me with respect and showed genuine concern about my situation. Ms. Horne’s hard work, professionalism, and dedication her job duties achieved a positive remedy for my situation – all in a very timely manner.

I was at a point in my life when I desperately needed someone to help my family and me. Ms. Horne’s kindness was very much appreciated and will not be forgotten.”

To: **Herb Lee, Murfreesboro TDLWD**
From: A claimant

“It is with great pleasure and much gratitude that I write this letter. I am currently a recipient of unemployment benefits. I have had several occasions when promises were made but not executed. I am thankful my call was transferred to **Elizabeth Nichols** in your office. She explained the process to me, answered my questions with patience and sincere interest that was even evident via the telephone. Each time, she apologized for the delay in processing my requests and made certain I provided her with any information that was needed in order to prevent any further delay. Ms. Nichols is definitely an asset to your department.

Please recognize Ms. Nichols for outstanding service and expert job knowledge and for demonstrating a sincere desire to serve Tennessee’s citizens.”

To: **Gail Taylor, Memphis Raleigh**
From: An applicant

“I am a 56-year-old, frustrated, displaced executive, and the very last place on earth I wanted to be was in the ‘unemployment office’ being intimidated by some government employee. Much to my surprise I was met with a friendly greeting and after a not-too-long wait was interviewed by a true professional, **Evelyn Butcher**, in the Raleigh office.

Mrs. Butcher counseled me, was very efficient and extremely knowledgeable, and made an unpleasant experience bearable. Evelyn is truly a compliment to your being able to manage a very fine department.

When calling back to Evelyn to solve an unsolved opportunity, a wonderful lady answered the telephone, **Mary Hall**. I was amazed at her kindness and concern about my situation. She encouraged me and offered to help anyway possible.

My new friends almost make me

want to stay unemployed . . . just kidding!!!

Many thanks to you and your entire staff for being there when an old man needed help.”

To: **Mark Chandler, Field Operations**
From: Chuck Couch, Nordyne

“Too often in our busy lives we are quick to criticize and neglect to compliment service received. I want you to be aware of the outstanding service we are receiving from **Ronnie Gunnels** and his staff at the Northwest Tennessee Career Center in Dyersburg.

As a company starting up in a new area, Mr. Gunnels and his staff have been and continue to be very helpful and supportive in helping us meet our staffing needs. They helped us with our job fair last July by arranging for a facility for us to hold the job fair and also staffed the reception desk. As our operations started requiring staffing, they did a great job of getting personnel for interviews. Now that we are reaching the peak part of our production season and our manpower requirements have rapidly soared, Mr. Gunnels and his staff have continued their outstanding work in helping us meet our staffing needs.

It has been a great pleasure to have the support Mr. Gunnels and his staff have provided and continues to provide in our start-up efforts. With help like this, our move to Tennessee has been made easier.”

Remember that the six most expensive words in business are “We’ve always done it that way.”
– Catherine DeVrye, business writer

White (Cont.)

post-master's work at the University of Tennessee and Middle Tennessee State University.

A native of east Tennessee, he currently lives in Brentwood.

U.I. Awards (Cont.)

ance for Region 3 (the eight-state southeast region of the U.S. Department of Labor), which is the top regional award. The award recognized Tennessee's outstanding management, performance, and leadership of unemployment insurance programs.

"These awards are a wonderful tribute to our staff," said Employment Security administrator Chris Betts. "They were working under tremendous caseloads, the economy being what it was, and all the while maintaining exceptional quality of work. I'm very proud of what they achieved."

Tennessee also won two other awards that recognized continuous improvement and outstanding accomplishments for specific goals in the Unemployment Insurance program. Factors critical to the awards on the benefits side are a state's quality of nonmonetary decisions, the timeliness of decisions, and the time lapse between when the claim is filed and when the claimant receives his first benefit check. On the tax side, measures include the timeliness and proficiency for determining the initial liability of an employer, collections, Wage and Premium Report delinquencies, and field audits of employers' accounts.

Commissioner Neeley praised Chris Betts and his staff in the Division of Employment Security, which operates the Unemployment Insurance program. Neeley and Betts accepted these awards for the department from Pete Fleming of the U.S. Department of Labor in a ceremony held recently in Nashville.

Changes (Cont.)

Call Center, 27 years

Charles P. Husband, Middle Tennessee Career Center, 25 years

Peggy A. Kirk, West TN Career Center at Brownsville, 27 years

Art McFarland, Memphis Poplar, 35 years

Shirley E. Parrish, Nashville Benefit Payment Control, 13 years

Florence N. Parsley, Nashville Special Projects, 34 years

Phyllis W. Powell, Nashville Benefit Review, 28 years

Saphronia E. Smith, Job Service Program and Technical Support, 38 years

Shirley Wade, Labor Fiscal, 11 years

Douglas E. Wright, Nashville Boilers & Elevators, 11 years

State has one of South's best workforce training programs

Southern Business & Development magazine cited Tennessee as one of the top 10 state workforce-training program states in the South (their definition of the South extended to Kansas and Texas, incidentally). The publication said Southern states historically provide excellent state-sponsored workforce training programs in partnerships with business.

Here's what *Southern Business & Development* said about Tennessee, after mentioning the Tennessee Department of Labor & Development as one of their selections:

"The state's community college system has played an integral role in Tennessee's explosive growth. In total, it has provided training opportunities for more than 150,000. Further, Tennessee offers customized employee training through Local Workforce Investment Areas."

Hats off to Elaine Perryman and her staff!

Jim Wells dies

Jim Wells, former director for Information Technology for the department, died April 5, 2004; he was 61.

"Jim was a great team member, my friend, and an asset to this department," said Commissioner Neeley. "He will be greatly missed by all of us."

Jim began working for the then Department of Employment Security more than 34 years ago. He is survived by his wife of 27 years, Judy; two sons; and two grandchildren.

The rule of six

During times of stress and change, people need to hear a message six times before it finally gets through.

You should also consider using as many different methods of communication as possible. Make a formal announcement, circulate a memo, post the information on the Intranet, and mention it in casual conversation.

Source: *Communication Briefings*

Coming next month

- Chris Betts's farewell
- New appointments
- Knoxville activities

Teamwork News



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