

Teamwork



NEWS

September 2004

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

Bredesen announces national award for Commissioner Neeley



Commissioner Neeley shows off the Eagle Award.

Gov. Phil Bredesen recently announced Commissioner James G. Neeley has won the 2004 Eagle Award. The award honors individuals who soar to new heights in their efforts to serve employers and workers in the United States.

Neeley accepted the award at the National Association of State Work Force Agencies conference in Louisville on Wednesday, September 15. Past recipients of this award include Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge and former U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, along with many governors from across the country.

Bredesen nominated Neeley for the prestigious award. "I have known Jim Neeley for many years. His leadership, insight, relationships and decision-making skills are exceptional," said Bredesen. "Jim's long career working for both employers and workers has been instrumental in bringing new business, industry and jobs to our state."

Recipients of the Eagle Award are recognized for their contribution to workforce development, unemployment insurance, and employment and labor market information services. Individuals must demonstrate outstanding leadership in improving quality and success of workforce services to America's employers and workers.

Commissioner Neeley has served Tennessee's workforce for close to three decades. He was Tennessee Labor Commissioner from 1975 to 1979 under the Blanton administration and in 2002 was appointed Commissioner of the Department of Labor & Workforce Development by Governor Bredesen. He was also the president of the Tennessee AFL-CIO for 24 years. Most recently Neeley was a crucial player in the workers' compensation reform bill that passed in the 2004 legislative session to help bring new business to Tennessee.

"I am proud to be honored for my service to Tennesseans," said Neeley. "Public service has been my life's work. Together with the teamwork of the

(Continued on page 6)

Elaine Perryman dies

Elaine Perryman, administrator for Employment and Workforce Development for the department, died Sunday, September 19, 2004. She had been admitted to Saint Thomas hospital earlier in the week and died from complications from a stroke.



Elaine Perryman

"Elaine was a true team player for this department," said Commissioner Neeley. "Her strong will and tenacity helped her in her role as administrator for the Employment and Workforce Development division. She was a hard worker, and we'll miss her."

Elaine worked extensively with the U.S. Department of Labor and directed and established policy for the state's 13 local Workforce Investment Boards. Among her accomplishments was her work with the State Workforce Investment Board and Local Workforce Investment Areas to develop a model to address the critical need for healthcare workers. Those efforts resulted in funding of more than \$7 million during the past two years and more than 3,000 adults and dislocated workers enrolled in programs leading to certificates and degrees in healthcare.

She worked for the state for four years, serving as administrator for the last year and a half. She earned a B.B.A. from Middle Tennessee State University in 1987 and a M.Ed. in 1992; she was currently working on a Ph.D. She was spotlighted in the most recent edition of *The Alumni Record* of MTSU for "earning a national honor from the Business Relations Group in Washington, D.C.," for her work in developing the Incumbent Worker Program for the department.

(Continued on page 6)



Baldridge training participants are, from left, Cynthia Cox (sitting), TDLWD; Deborah Hester, WIA; Andrea Witt, TDLWD; Betty Benson, Chattanooga State; Paul Thomas, Veterans Center; Pat Davis, WIA; second row, Judy Cate, WIA; Ryan Gooch, trainer, TDLWD Central Office; Annette Cooksey, TDLWD; Jo Ann Morey, Vocational Rehabilitation; Jean Hardy, TDLWD; and Thophles Williams, WIA.

Baldridge training under way in Chattanooga

As part of Commissioner Neeley's Baldridge initiative for local offices, the staff at the Southeast Career Center in Chattanooga recently took part in training for the Tennessee Quality Award. Ryan Gooch, coordinator for Planning and Continuous Improvement, conducted the training.

Partners attending were WIA, Chattanooga State Technical Community College, State of Tennessee Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services, and the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

 **Don't forget**

IAWP Fall Educational Institute

November 3-5, 2004

Fall Creek Falls State Park

(Reservation deadline is **October 15, 2004**)

TDLWD launches TN Teens 2 Work

Tennessee teenagers who are thinking about future careers now have a new resource specifically for them. The Web site, titled *TN Teens 2 Work* produced by the department, can help teenagers plan for a better future in an in-demand career. The Web site was recently featured in the new *American Careers* magazine that is mailed to the families of all 8th graders in Tennessee schools.

“In the governor’s roundtable Jobs Cabinet meetings, employers have often mentioned the magnitude of educating young people and preparing them for future jobs in Tennessee,” said Labor & Workforce Development Commissioner James Neeley. “We believe the new *TN Teens 2 Work* Web site will be important in promoting an educated workforce for the



Kathy Collier, Web developer for the department, is pictured with the new Teens 2 Work Web site, which she designed.

future. These teens will be the workers of tomorrow and this e-government service aims to point them in the right direction.”

The Web site was designed by web developer **Kathy Collier**. She’s been interested in creating a site to educate children for years and recently had the opportunity to work on the project under the

(Continued on page 6)



TN Teens 2 Work Web page

State’s Web site gets high marks

The State of Tennessee provides more high-quality and easy-to-use online services than any other state in the nation, according to Brown University’s 2004 survey of state and federal web sites and e-government services.

Researchers at Brown’s Taubman Center for Public Policy last week assigned Tennessee its number one state ranking after analyzing all 50 states’ Web sites. In assigning its rankings, Brown examined a range of measures including readability, usability, availability of online services and quality control. The new ranking maintains the State of Tennessee’s presence at or near the top of Brown’s survey. The State and its Web site, “Tennessee.gov,” ranked number four in 2003 and number one in 2002.

“We’re pleased that Tennessee.gov consistently ranks in the top tier in the nation when it comes to providing convenient, easy-to-use services and information,” said Governor Bredesen. “Technology is improving virtually every aspect of our daily lives. In state government, we’re focused on fully leveraging it to provide 24-hour, seven-day service in as many areas as possible.”

Tennessee.gov hosts more than three million user visits each month and supports approximately 575,000 e-government transactions each month. The site offers a wide range of online services, including driver’s license renewals, Tennessee State Parks reservations, felony offender information, TennCare eligibility verification for providers, child support payment history, and hundreds of government information resources.

Additional online services under development include

(continued on page 4)

State Web site (cont.)

campaign-finance report filing, business-tax registration and a locator to find licensed child-care providers. Tennessee.gov is a partnership between the State of Tennessee and TennesseeAnytime, a wholly owned subsidiary of e-government firm NIC Inc., Olathe, Kan.

Moving forward, Bredesen said the State will continue working to “build and expand a Web site that’s helpful, reliable, and easy for Tennesseans to use.” The full report on Brown’s e-government survey can be found at www.insidepolitics.org/egovt04us.

Calendar

October and November 2004
Special veterans activities and observances

October 21, 2004
September state unemployment figures released

October 28, 2004
September county unemployment figures released

November 3-5
IAWP Fall Educational Institute
Fall Creek Falls

November 11, 2004
Veterans’ Day
Offices closed

November 17, 2004
October state unemployment figures released

November 24, 2004
October county unemployment figures released

November 25-26
Thanksgiving holidays
Offices closed

December 1, 2004
Service Awards - Knoxville
Radisson Hotel

December 8, 2004
Service Awards - Nashville
Maxwell House Hotel

December 10, 2004
Service Awards - Jackson
Doubletree Hotel

December 16, 2004
November state unemployment figures released

December 23, 2004
December county unemployment figures released

December 24, 2004
Offices closed for Christmas holidays

December 27, 2004
Offices closed for Christmas holidays

December 31, 2004
Offices closed for New Year’s holidays

January 3, 2005
Offices closed for New Year’s holidays

Banish these harmful expressions

When serving customers, words that are intended to be helpful sometimes have the opposite effect. Replace these two loaded phrases with more helpful alternatives:

■ **“Bear with me”** is a phrase that suggests the listener is in for a lengthy and unpleasant wait. A good replacement for “Bear with me” is “One moment, please” or “I’ll be right with you.” Even better, follow the phrase with a specific descrip-

tion of what you’ll do to help the person.

Example: “One moment, please, while I locate your records, Mr. Jones.” By including these details, you indicate to Mr. Jones that you’ve heard his request. And by including his name, you have personalized the message and avoided the “next, please” robotics that customer hate.

■ **“No problem”** is a phrase intended to convey the idea that a person is capable of handling a situation, but sometimes all the listener hears is the word “problem.”

Good alternatives? “Glad to be of help,” “Happy to be of assistance” or “It’s my pleasure.” These phrases convey a degree of happiness and excitement, and they suggest to the listener that a positive outcome is certain.

– “Words to Use, Words to Lose,
www.communicationsdoctor.com

Tip of the month

To help avoid common usage mix-ups in documents, use this simple tip: After running spell-check, use the word processor’s “find” command to look up commonly confused word pairs or groups. *Examples:* your/you’re, to/too, their/there/they’re and its/it’s. In each case, make sure you’ve picked the correct word.

– Source: *Communication Briefing*



Cindy Key talks about the insurance program on the new employee orientation video.

New orientation package for new employees helpful for all

When **Jackie Berg**, administrative services assistant in Personnel, came to work in June of this year, she was given a packet to read that contained 167 pages of material, along with the required insurance information.

“Now new employees still have material to read on the www.tnui site, but we’ve condensed that measurably and the supervisor no longer has to print off of the information – now just 16 pages that must be signed and returned,” said Jackie. “Employees still receive the complete insurance packet to review and select their plan preference.”

Jackie said it was great teamwork. As a new employee, she observed the large amount of paper new employees receive and

mentioned how expedient it would be to make the new employee packet more approachable.

She got together with **Cindy Key**, insurance and payroll coordinator, and **Rhonda Moore**, personnel analyst, and worked on revising the way material needed to be viewed by new employees.

“We’ve made access of printed material easier by the push of one button, instead of 16 buttons,” Jackie said. “The savings to the department is 137 pages of material that does not have to be printed, but can be easily accessed for reading. The new employee’s supervisor has a how-to-use letter and can leave the employee alone to read the electronic information and to get familiar with the Intranet site (www.tnui.net).”

(continued on page 6)

TDLWD salutes older workers

Governor Bredesen proclaimed September 19-25, 2004, Employ Older Workers Week in Tennessee. The proclamation was part of a national effort to honor America’s working seniors for their dedication, determination and motivation to contribute to today’s workforce.

“There is a large population of older workers in our state, and they represent a strong and valuable part of our workforce,” said Commissioner Neeley. “We as Tennesseans should do all we can to ensure the success of this often overlooked job-seeker. I’m pleased that our state’s Senior Community Service Employment Program is proving successful in making sure older workers have opportunities available to them.”

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) currently offers services at six Tennessee Career Centers across the state: the Senior Services Career Center in Memphis; the West Tennessee Career Center in Jackson; the Clarksville Career Center; the Tennessee Career Center, Cumberland County; the Tennessee Career Center, Campbell County; and the Northeast Tennessee Career Center. The program serves more than 100,000 seniors each year nationally and close to 1,200 in Tennessee.

Eligible low-income participants aged 55 and older are offered wages while they train for work outside the program. SCSEP provides community employers with trained, job-ready, mature applicants who possess a strong work ethic.

The department’s older worker coordinator is **Paulette Osborne**.

Teens site (cont.)

direction of Communications Director **Milissa Reier**son. The site features job outlook information to 2010, Tennessee's top employers, skills assessment and links to Tennessee universities, community colleges and technology centers, as well as grant and scholarship information.

If teenagers are looking for part-time work while still in school, the Web site offers information on child labor laws, dressing for success, résumé preparation and interviewing tips. The site is easy to use and also offers a question and feedback area for teens to contact the department for specific information.

TN Teens 2 Work informational posters for Tennessee middle and high school counseling offices will be mailed in November. To visit the Web site, go to www.tennessee.gov and click on the **TN Teens 2 Work** logo.

New orientation video (cont.)

A critical part of the packet is a new employee video that lasts 15 minutes. It is also viewed from the www.tnui.net site from the "new employee orientation" under the Personnel tab. Produced by Communications Director **Milissa Reier**son with the help of **Jeff Hentschel** in the Communications office, the video highlights current information every new employee should know, including insurance and flexible benefit plans and personnel policies.

The information under "new employee orientation" at www.tnui.net, including the video, is useful for career employees as well. Be sure to check it out!



Pictured at the Eagle Award presentation are (from left) Rick Searcy, Mark Chandler, Commissioner Neeley, Bob Henningsen, Dart Gore, and Don Ingram.

Eagle Award (cont.)

men and women of the Department of Labor & Workforce Development, I continuously strive to improve the conditions for both employers and workers in our state."

Editor's note: Elaine Perryman, who died recently, spearheaded the effort to nominate Commissioner Neeley for this award.

Catch "Let's Go to Work" during October

Check the TDLWD Web site www.tn.gov/labor-wfd for the schedule of "Let's Go to Work" television show in your area. The program scheduled for October features the Department of Transportation's help services and some other interesting activities of that department. A feature story on the program will appear in next month's *Teamwork News*.



Perryman (cont.)

Those who worked with Elaine knew her as a mentor, supporter, and advocate for lots of people. She will be remembered for her willingness to help others. She was a member of Tullahoma First United Methodist Church and had been involved with mission work in Estonia, Mexico City, and Honduras.

She is survived by her mother, daughter, son, sister, brother, and four grandchildren. A memorial service was held September 24, 2004, at Tullahoma First United Methodist Church.

Teamwork News

Department of Labor & Workforce Development;
February 2001; authorization no. 337287;

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