



Texas Rehabilitation Commission

The Future is Work

2001 Annual Report

THE TRC MISSION

TRC exists to assist people with disabilities to participate in their communities by achieving employment of choice, living as independently as possible and accessing high quality services.

TRC achieves this mission by:

Involving people with disabilities in decisions that effect their lives and services provided by TRC;

Valuing the diversity of people and providing an equal opportunity environment which offers challenging and satisfying work;

Managing programs which are efficient and effective; and

Being an agency that is accountable to the public.



DEDICATION
to JERRY KANE

This annual report is dedicated to Jerry Kane, a long-time friend and advocate for people with disabilities and the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. Kane began his service to this agency in January 1982 when he was appointed by Governor William Clements to serve on the TRC board. Two years later, he was appointed to serve as board chairman, and for more than twenty years, his dedication and service has been unwavering and unmatched.

"Through the leadership and guidance of Chairman Kane, we were able to develop and implement the TRC mission, goals and objectives," says Max Arrell, TRC Commissioner. "Hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities have realized independence and self-support toward this end due to his leadership. Kane's leadership not only impacted TRC consumers, but over the years, he touched the lives of employees, advocates, and the public at large. Second only to his family, Kane dedicated his time and passion to TRC and the mission of this agency."

In April 2001, Governor Rick Perry needed Kane's expertise in another area and asked him to serve on the Board of the Department of Human Services (DHS). Kane's tenure on the TRC Board ended in May 2001, when he was appointed to the Board of the Texas Department of Human Services. While this was indeed an honor for Mr. Kane, he is certainly missed by TRC.

"My life has been blessed for twenty years with good health and a wonderful family," says Kane, "my family in Corpus and Dallas, and my TRC family. The lives each and every employee of TRC touch are enriched in ways only a few shall ever know. The efforts, creativity and compassion displayed in the day-to-day work by the staff at TRC, sincerely and honestly, are difficult for me to describe. I pray that you will be rewarded here and later for the deeds, some observed and many not, that you accomplish each day. I will cherish each of you and your many talents and I shall take with me everything you have taught me in hopes of bringing the same sound, compassionate and empathetic abilities to my new role at DHS. May God bless each and every one of you, your family and your work to make this life a better place for people with disabilities."

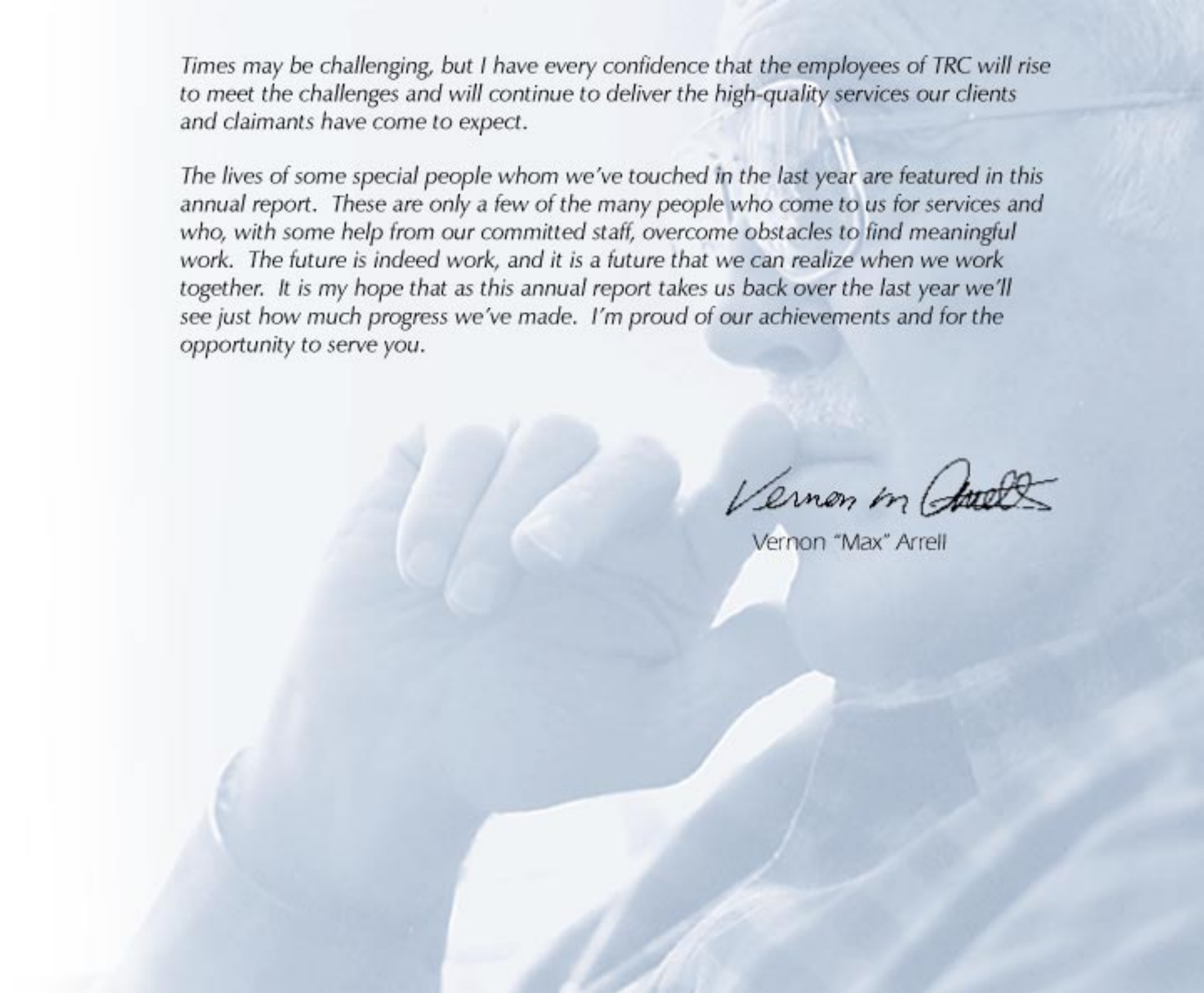
We thank you, Jerry Kane, for making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities and the employees of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission.



COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

The theme of this year's annual report is "The Future is Work." A cornerstone of independence and self-sufficiency is economic security, and work is the means by which that security is achieved. Recent reports show that nearly three-fourths of people with disabilities are unemployed or underemployed. Although statistics such as this might be discouraging, they should also drive the productive employees, advocates, and providers who serve Texans with disabilities to redouble their efforts and to make improvements. No country can afford to waste its human resources and the United States is no exception.

Last year the Texas Rehabilitation Commission helped nearly 25,000 Texans with disabilities find or retain employment. This significant accomplishment was carried out during a time of unprecedented economic prosperity, with unemployment at historic lows and with more employers discovering what we have known for many years: people with disabilities can work and want to work. The recent downturn in the economy, made worse by the events of recent months, has raised unemployment throughout the country and shaken America's economic confidence. It is during such times that people with disabilities may find obtaining or maintaining quality jobs particularly difficult. We are committed to ensuring that our clients are prepared for employment in their field of choice.



Times may be challenging, but I have every confidence that the employees of TRC will rise to meet the challenges and will continue to deliver the high-quality services our clients and claimants have come to expect.

The lives of some special people whom we've touched in the last year are featured in this annual report. These are only a few of the many people who come to us for services and who, with some help from our committed staff, overcome obstacles to find meaningful work. The future is indeed work, and it is a future that we can realize when we work together. It is my hope that as this annual report takes us back over the last year we'll see just how much progress we've made. I'm proud of our achievements and for the opportunity to serve you.

Vernon M. Arrell

Vernon "Max" Arrell

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION *program*



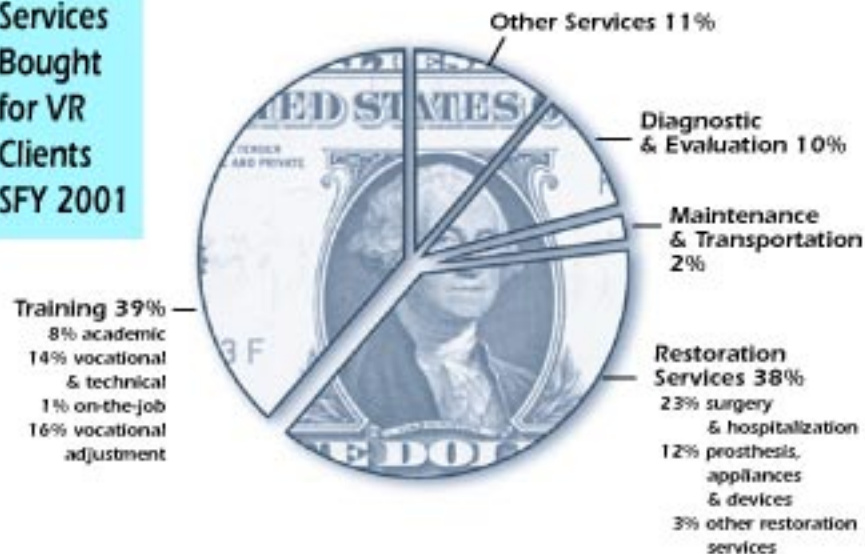
The Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR), a state-federal partnership since 1929, helps Texans with disabilities overcome vocational limitations and enables them to prepare for, find and keep jobs. Together, a client and counselor determine what kind of job the client wants and can achieve. Work-related services are individualized – guided by informed choice – and may include counseling, training, medical treatment, assistive devices, job placement assistance or other services. To be eligible for this program, an individual must:

- Have a physical or mental disability that results in a substantial impediment to employment;
- Be employable after receiving services;
- Require services in order to achieve an employment outcome.

Primary Disabilities Served in State Fiscal Year 2001

Musculo-Skeletal Disabilities	30%
Alcoholism and Drug Abuse	15%
Deaf/Hearing Impaired	6%
Mental Illness	20%
Mental Retardation	3%
Borderline Intellectual Functioning	4%
Learning Disabilities	7%
Cardiac/Respiratory/Circulatory	3%
Digestive Disorders	6%
Epilepsy	1%
Traumatic Brain Injury	2%
Other Impairments	3%

Services Bought for VR Clients SFY 2001



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January

VR HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2001

- There are five regions with 133 field offices and 491.5 counselors across the state.
- In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2001, 142,590 persons with disabilities were served. Of the 120,224 eligible clients, 24,756 were successfully rehabilitated, and 69,848 continued to receive services at the end of the year. TRC served 11.09 percent of the potentially eligible population of Texans with disabilities.
- 80.79 percent of the eligible clients served had significant disabilities.
- Over 16 percent of all referrals were workers injured on the job. TRC returned 3,350 injured workers to employment.
- Latest national data available shows that TRC received 6 percent of the nation's federal rehabilitation funds, yet we were responsible for placing 11.4 percent of the nation's rehabilitants into employment outcomes.

AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS

Employed clients' average weekly earnings after TRC services were more than 3.5 times greater than before receiving services.

Gloria Vega



Gloria Vega loved her career with the El Paso ISD where she had worked for more than 20 years. As the principal of Beall Elementary School, she took great pleasure in her school and interacting with the children, teachers and parents.

But when Vega's health started to decline because of herniated discs, it became increasingly difficult for her to move around the campus and participate or even observe the activities going on in her school.

"Research tells you that if you're visible, better things are happening," said Vega. "But my knees and back were failing and I couldn't move around the campus. I didn't know what was going on with the teachers or the students."

Vega felt like she couldn't take care of her responsibilities at the school and she expressed her concern to the district management. She was told, in so many words, that if she couldn't do her job, she should just retire or quit.

She knew she had to do something. She had become so weak that she had to carry portable oxygen with her.

BRBRBREAKING SPEED LIMITS

TATION PROGRAM

THE FUTURE IS WORK

"I was really struggling," recalled Vega, "and finally a friend told me about TRC. The TRC staff are wonderful - and very people oriented. I felt like they were there to help. Their goal was to keep people working, and that's what I wanted. I loved my job, but I knew I wasn't doing it as well as I could."

"The TRC staff are wonderful ...

TRC helped Vega become more mobile by getting her a scooter and now she doesn't have to worry about moving around the school... "I just get on my scooter and go," says Vega. "I can drop in on the classrooms, check on students on the playground or in the cafeteria and still have energy to spare."

Vega says she is much more enthusiastic now because she can use the scooter to get around and do what she needs to do.

"Now, they have a hard time keeping up with me," laughed Vega. "My staff sees the difference. I know I'm healthier and I don't have to carry the oxygen around because I don't get as tired. I'm breaking the speed limits now and our school scores show it. Last year Beall Elementary was rated 'acceptable' but we were only two points short of being 'recognized'. But watch out for us next year," Vega warned. "We're going for 'exemplary' status and at this speed, I know we'll do it!"



... they are there to help."

2002

Thomas Roome



Tom Roome is not your average guy! That's what his parents were told in 1968 when their son was born with multiple disabilities, including severe cerebral palsy. As Tom grew, it became evident that he had very little control over his body but he could do some things with his left foot. In spite of his severe physical limitations, Tom's parents were determined to make their son's life as normal as possible.

With the help of a personal attendant, Tom attended regular school classes with other children his age. Even though his body didn't work so good, mentally he could think and reason as well as anyone. He graduated from high school and, with the help of TRC, attended the University of Texas Southwest Medical School. In 1992, Tom graduated with honors with a B.S. in Rehabilitation Science. Continuing his education, he attended the University of North Texas in Denton and got his M.S. in Rehab Counseling in 1995.

After trying unsuccessfully to get a job in the rehabilitation field, Tom went back to his TRC counselor, Larry Hughes, and they decided that he might be able to build web sites. So, Tom went back to college to learn more about this new and progressive field. While attending Richland College, Tom took a class in Authorware, and recalls saying to his instructor, "I can teach this."

Perseverance

Pays Off!

His instructor, Lolita Gilkes, was also the Dean of the Multimedia Department, and several months later she asked Tom if he was serious about his comment and offered him a job. Now Tom teaches two online classes through Richland College and goes to the college to teach a lab once a week. Using his left foot and recognition software provided by TRC, Tom is able to develop his lessons and guide his students through the course work.

Tom has a busy schedule for the fall. He will be teaching the two online courses and taking a couple of classes himself to keep his skills competitive.

"Life hasn't been easy for Tom, but he has persevered through every obstacle that has come his way," says Sandy Roome, Tom's mother. "When he ran into an obstacle and needed help, he called Larry and TRC was always there to help."

"When he needed help..."

This wasn't an easy closure," says Larry Hughes. "We've bought Tom two wheelchairs, adaptive devices that allow him to control his chair with his foot, and computer technology and software with foot controls. In addition to counseling and guidance over the years, TRC also provided Tom with an education to help him be competitive in the world of work. But patience has paid off. We've run into some obstacles along the way, but we're here for the duration and to do anything we can to help him overcome his severe limitations to become employed and more independent."



**"TRC was
always there ..."**

2002

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

program



Roome

Client Satisfaction Findings

Satisfaction with services is an important measure of our success. The best way to find this out is to go to the source: our clients. This year, 14,214 former clients were polled through a telephone survey and results indicated:

- 92.4 percent were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience with TRC.
- 97.12 percent said they were treated with courtesy and respect.
- 91.44 percent said they had a part in the planning of services.
- 91.04 percent of working clients were satisfied or very satisfied with their employment.

Placements in SFY 2001

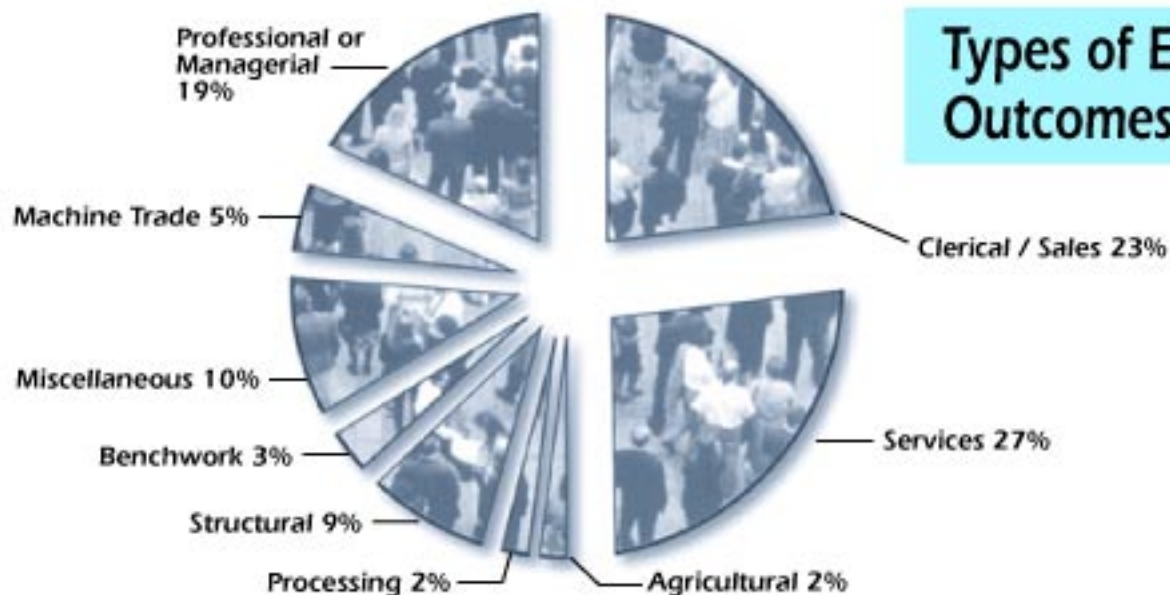
Competitive Employment — 96%

Other Employment 1%

Self-Employment 2%

Sheltered Employment 1%





BENEFITS OF VR

- By retirement the average rehabilitated client will repay the cost of services at least 11 times through taxes paid.
- For every dollar spent on VR, clients generate \$20 in personal taxable income through the remainder of their work lives.
- VR is 78.7 percent federally funded and matched at 21.3 percent by the state.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

April

THE FUTURE IS WORK 2002

Abrey Briggs

An intelligent, very capable young woman with a great sense of humor, Abrey Briggs thought she held the future in the palm of her hand. The 25-year-old US Army enlistee awaited the day she would report to active duty. Just weeks before her departure date, however, Briggs sustained an injury that held hostage her future in the US Army as well as life itself.

"I was out swimming with friends and fell out of a raft and hit my head," recalls Briggs. "God was really winking over my shoulder and I'm really lucky to be alive. If the injury had been just one inch further in either direction I would have been dead."

Briggs suffered a C6-7 incomplete cervical fracture that left her paralyzed. For the next few years, all of Briggs' energy went toward recovering and coping with her physical condition. TRC helped her through Warm Springs Rehabilitation Hospital and connected her with the Center on Independent Living (COIL) where she now works as the Survey Supervisor and does job coaching and training for the COIL survey team.

EXTENDED REHABILITATION SERVICES

The Extended Rehabilitation Services (ERS) program is state-funded. It provides an array of employment support services to individuals with significant disabilities, who require special and intensive services to function in the community and workplace.

Because of the nature and significance of their disabilities, these individuals would not be able to obtain and/or maintain employment without the supports provided by ERS.

Although ERS offers the choice of sheltered employment, emphasis is placed on community integrated employment (CIE) opportunities.

*Regaining
Independence*

"I really enjoy my job at COIL," says Briggs who was recently elected to the Board of Directors for Coalition of Texans with Disabilities. I'm glad to be working again."

Going to work was certainly progress, but Briggs still yearned for the independence she once had. Public transportation wasn't always dependable for her and she wanted to be able to get in and out of her apartment without assistance. Don Weng of COIL asked TRC Extended Rehabilitation Services counselor, Aris Lopez, if he could help. TRC provided an automatic door opener and modifications to Abrey's van so she could begin driving again. "I was amazed at how fast TRC's ERS got things rolling," recalled Briggs. "I am really very happy every time I look at my van, I get so excited because that gives me more independence."

"In ERS we really try to get the services quick because that is keeping the clients employed," says Aris Lopez of TRC. "Abrey just told me what she wanted to do. Its my job to help her do it as quickly as possible."

"If you have a smile in your heart, it makes a difference in how successful you are," said Briggs. "I'm determined to be successful at my job, at my hobbies, and just life in general and TRC has been there to help me do that."

"I was amazed at how fast TRC's ERS got things rolling."

Benefits of ERS

- ERS services provide the job supports necessary for individuals with significant disabilities to maintain employment.
- More than 83.3 percent of ERS clients are employed in Community Integrated Employment earning an average of \$5.82 per hour.
- Persons with significant disabilities maintain employment and become tax paying members of the workforce.

ERS Highlights for 2001

- There are 22 ERS counselor and support staff teams available to serve individuals needing ERS services.
- ERS services are available throughout the state.
- In State FY 2001, TRC served 1518 people in this program; 1265 in CIE and 253 in alternative sheltered workshop settings.



2002

Shane Downey

Shane Downey was on top of his game at the age of 23. Newly married and living in Florida, Shane was one of three men selected to represent the United States at the NBTA World Baton Twirling Championship in Birmingham, England. That year, he attained national recognition by placing 8th in the men's competition at NBTA. At the same time, Shane was busy attending college, and working as head coach at North Florida Gymnastics, a goal he had long aspired to.

About a month after the World Championship, Shane was in the gym, doing a tumbling pass he had performed at least a hundred times, when something went terribly wrong. Shane landed on his face, dislodging two vertebrae. At first, while still lying on the mat, Shane was able to maintain his lighthearted sense of humor, thinking he was not in any danger. Soon he realized that he was in serious trouble as he was unable to feel his legs. Shane was life-flighted to the emergency room where waiting specialists would discover the grim fact that he was paralyzed from the neck down. After two weeks, Shane was released from the hospital to be transferred to a rehabilitation center. After 90 days, Shane was finally able to go home, only to return to the hospital a few days later because of pneumonia. This time he was hospitalized for one month. Returning home the second time, Shane began trying to rebuild his life, starting with basic skills such as eating and brushing his teeth. His bride, who was attending school full time and working part-time, was to be his primary caretaker. But due to overwhelming stress, the situation soon led to separation and eventually a divorce.

Upon returning home to live with his parents in Shiner, Texas, Shane found an extremely supportive family and a caring community who rallied behind him.

**DEFYING
the ODDS**

BILITATION SERVICES



But with no insurance, medical coverage, or professional guidance, the outlook was still bleak. Shane then met TRC counselor Lynn Silver, liaison for Warm Springs Rehabilitation Hospital, and pieces of the complicated puzzle started to fit together at a rapid pace. On January 3, 2001 Shane, sponsored by TRC, entered the inpatient rehabilitation program at Warm Springs Rehabilitation Hospital in Gonzales. Shane was provided with multiple rehabilitation services including guidance, counseling, and much needed rehabilitative equipment. With a renewed sense of hope, Shane moved on to planning his future with goals of independent living, and eventually even a college degree followed by a career in Sports Psychology.

Where will he be in five years? Shane says, "I should be close to finishing my masters degree. And I look forward to being married and having kids of my own, which is the biggest goal in my life." With the same undaunting determination and positive attitude it took to attain World Championship status, Shane will let nothing stop him from defying the odds, to regain the same quality of life he once knew.

Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services

The Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services program provides time-limited services for persons with traumatic brain injury and traumatic spinal cord injury. CRS clients may receive inpatient comprehensive medical rehabilitation services, outpatient services and post-acute brain injury services. This program does not provide long-term, ongoing services.

CRS was funded by the 72nd Legislature through a percentage of court costs collected from misdemeanor and felony convictions. TRC counselors provide assistance with assessment and evaluation, case management, development of comparable benefits, and assistance with support services consistent with the goal of independence. TRC counselors may also assist clients in becoming eligible for services under another TRC program.

Benefits of CRS

Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services help clients with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries live more independently in the family and the community. This program provides the crucial link in the recovery of as much function and independence as possible after severe injury while encouraging others to:

- Make informed choices about needs and goals and
- Make plans for the future.

CRS Highlights for 2001

- In State FY 2001, TRC served 444 clients in the CRS program.
- Average cost of services is about \$22,587 per person served.



2002

James Skains



James Skains is a very extraordinary man! He does just about anything any other 38-year old guy does. He works and supports himself and his family. He drives himself where he needs to go. He hunts, fishes, mows and edges his own yard, swims, dives off the high diving board, races remote cars, and the list goes on.

So what's the big deal? Skains was born with no legs, only one arm and three fingers.

"From the first day I saw James," said Keith Stanford, area manager in the TRC Waco field office, "he was an inspiration to me. He rolled into the TRC office in 1981 in an old raggedy wheelchair he had picked up at a garage sale. After our meeting, he went out to his pickup truck, transferred himself to the tailgate, lifted the wheelchair into the bed of the truck, swung himself up on the side and around into the cab - and drove off! I couldn't believe it. I knew right away that this was a 'can-do' guy."

Skains' high school counselor had told him about TRC so he went in to see if he could get help transitioning into college. TRC paid for his training as a machinist at Texas State Technical College (TSTC) and ordered him a new wheelchair. He received the chair just prior to traveling to Washington D.C. to accept an award as "Handicapped College Student of the Year" by Vice President George Bush in 1983.

From Transition To

TRANSITION PROGRAM

Lifelong Employment

"I asked him if he wanted to practice rolling this new direct-drive wheelchair," recalls Stanford. "He transferred from that old garage-sale chair onto the new chair, he took off into the parking lot, spun a few wheelies, and said, 'Hot dog! I'm going dancing tonight.'" Skains danced all the way to DC and back.

When Skains graduated from TSTC, in 1983, he and his new wife headed to San Antonio where he accepted a job as a machinist at Kelly Air Force Base. He worked there for five years and was named "handicapped employee of the year" three years in a row.

After five years and a divorce, James left his job at Kelly and moved back to Waco so he could raise his son near his family. James never anticipated the difficulty he would face getting another job. Most prospective employers didn't know how to deal with his disability. It took a full year, but one company took the gamble and it paid off big.

**One company
took the
gamble
*and it
paid off
big.***

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

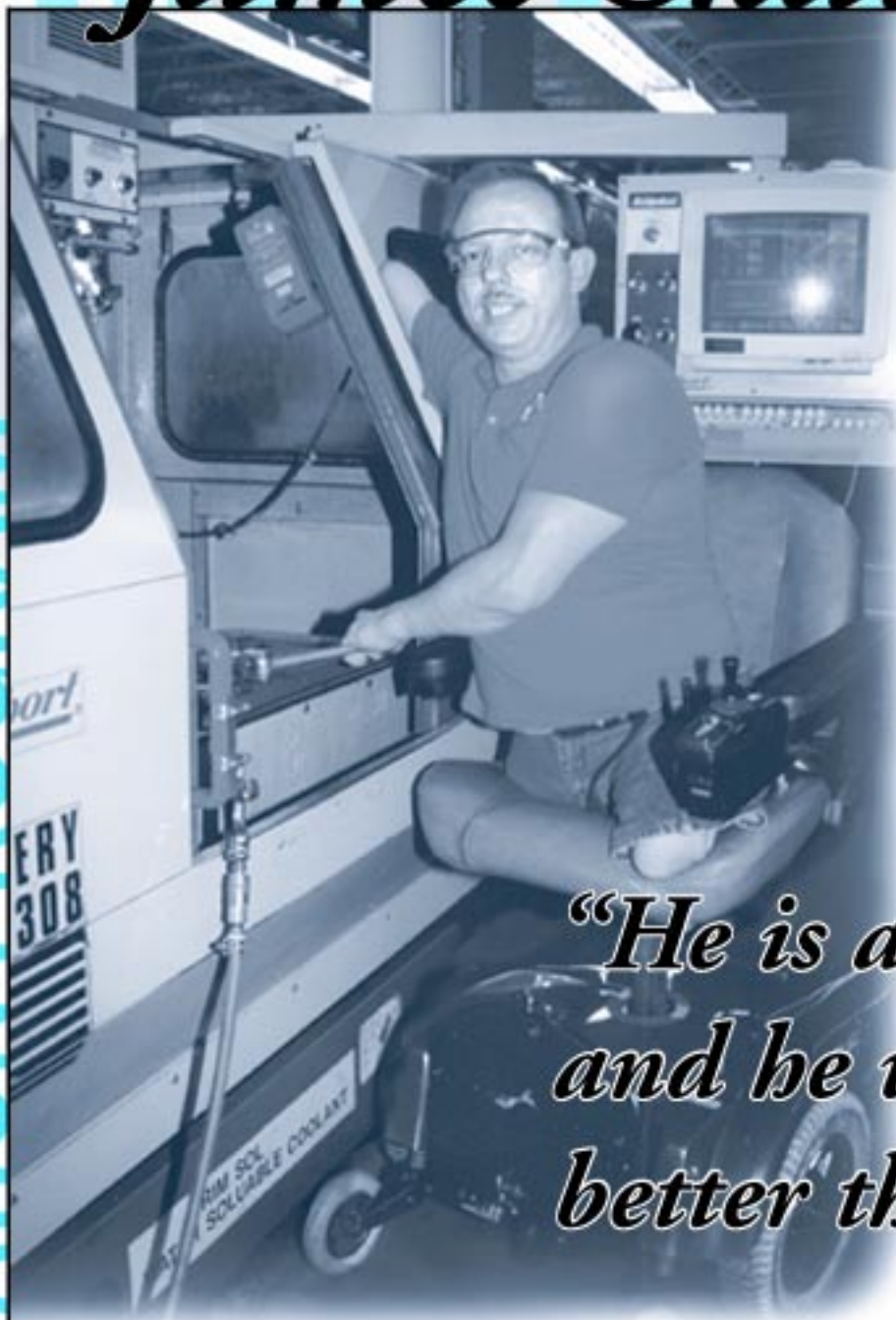
July

2002

THE FUTURE IS WORK

James Skains

TATION PROGRAM



“He is a great employee and he works as well or better than anyone else,” said Ronnie Gibson, Skains’ supervisor at Huck Fasteners. “I may come to work feeling bad, but when I see James, it completely turns my day around. He makes me realize that I have a lot to be thankful for.” Gibson says he sometimes forgets that Skains has a disability so he has to be careful not to give him something that he cannot do safely. “No matter what I give him to do,” said Gibson, “he figures out a way to do it.”

Skains works the late shift at Huck Fasteners where he has worked for 13 years. He makes a comfortable living and plans to work there until he retires or can’t work anymore. According to Skains, the key to his success is that his family didn’t treat him differently.

“He is a great employee and he works as well or better than anyone else.”

“The doctors told my mom that if she wanted me to be a normal person, treat me normal and give me a whipping when I needed it,” Skains smiled. “And she sure did.”

Skains remembers helping in the garden, playing with his brothers - who showed him no mercy - and the neighbor kids.

“My brothers even put me in the dryer when I was a kid, so I had to learn to hold my own,” said Skains. “I got around on a skateboard so most of the kids couldn’t even keep up with me. As a matter of fact, I didn’t even know I was different until I was six years old and started school. As far as I’m concerned, if you’ve ‘gotta’ do it, you just do it,” says James.

With that attitude and some support from TRC - he’s doing it!

“If you’ve gotta do it ...

***... You
Just
Do It!”***



2002

Amanda LaCombe

Amanda LaCombe (Mandy) was born with Scoliosis and had the first of many back surgeries when she was only two and a half years old. She made it through the early school years and when she graduated from high school she was eligible for services, TRC helped her go to court reporting school at Alvin Community College near Houston.

In her last semester of school, Mandy had a car accident and sustained a C-4 C-5 spinal cord injury that resulted in quadriplegia and stopped short her court-reporting school attendance. She spent the next few months in rehabilitation at TIRR in Houston. When Mandy's physical condition stabilized, she began to think about her future. The physical limitations that came with paralysis wouldn't allow her to return to her anticipated court-reporting career.

"I was really disappointed that I had lost a career I had worked toward for years," said Mandy. "So I had to start trying to figure out what I was going to do next. I had always been good at English and typing, so I started a proofreading service for court reporters and stenographers."

In addition to proofreading, she has had success as a motivational speaker. That career works okay for Mandy, but she has a desire to do more. For about a year and a half, she has been working on a special project to develop a non-profit organization similar to McDonald House to help families during medical trauma. She is presently taking some business classes and auditing classes in the Entrepreneurial Program at the University of Houston.

*A Work In
Progress*

"I believe that life really tests you. I guess I am just a work in progress," said Mandy. "It has been a rough five years for me and TRC has really been a blessing. At first, they were going to give me a career - a career where women may make upward from \$100,000. Even after I broke my neck, they helped me go to therapy and provided my bathroom equipment, an active/passive bike and a pulley system so I can exercise regularly."

When Mandy got ready to drive, TRC took care of the vehicle modifications that gave her more independence. Now, Mandy goes to school, to therapy, and has a social life.

Mandy has another goal - to walk again. She began therapy again last November and drives herself to Cleveland, Texas three times a week to participate in pool therapy. The other two days, Mandy attends classes at the University of Houston. "Without my transportation, I would not be able to do any of that," smiled Mandy. "Being able to drive has brought me so much independence. It has changed my life and brought me so many opportunities that would have been impossible without it."

"It has been a rough five years for me and TRC has really been a blessing."

Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Planning Services

As a part of the VR Program, TRC VR counselors provide consultative and technical assistance to public school personnel in planning the move from school to work for students with disabilities. Each TRC region has a Regional Transition Specialist to assist VR counselors in coordination with schools, independent school districts and Regional Educational Service Centers. This program provides a framework for TRC, the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Texas Education Agency and other agencies to coordinate services to support transition of students with disabilities from schools and/or institutions to the community.

Benefits

- VR counselors assist eligible students to plan for post-graduation employment opportunities.
- VR counselors encourage appropriate referrals from local schools in the last two years the student is in high school.

TPS Highlights for 2001

- As a result of collaborative efforts with schools, TRC received 6,258 referrals in State FY 2001.



2002

THE FUTURE IS WORK

Eric Stenson

LIVING SERVICE



Eric Stenson broke his neck in a wrestling accident when he was a junior in high school. As a result, he has been quadriplegic since he was 17 years old. Stenson's mother took care of him for seven years after his accident. But when TRC Independent Living counselor, Vernon Hickerson, met Stenson, he had lived on his own for three years, his wheelchair was broken and he had been housebound for almost two years. His personal attendant cared for his every need since he was not able to do anything for himself. But Medicaid only paid an attendant for six hours a day, so the rest of the day Stenson was on his own. He could not get himself up or down, he could not feed himself, turn the television off or on, nor answer his phone or door. If an emergency arose, Stenson was helpless and very vulnerable.

"I called TRC to get some help with my wheelchair," recalls Stenson. "But when Mr. Hickerson came to see me, he told me there were devices that could help me do some of the things I had not been able to do for years."

TRC provided Stenson with a head-controlled wheelchair that permits him to answer his telephone, open and close his front door and turn the TV off and on.

Regaining some control again

A voice-activated computer system and computer table facilitates Stenson's communication with friends and family through the Internet, and a shower chair allows him to sit in the shower and let water run over his body again.

"Since TRC came into my life, things have been much better," said Stenson. "I have a lot more control over my environment than I ever thought was possible. TRC has given me hope again. I've even been able to go to the park and even travel to Houston. I never knew some of these sophisticated gadgets existed and now the future looks a little brighter because I've regained some control over my life again."

Independent Living (IL) Services and Centers

Independent Living (IL) Services and Centers provide a broad array of services that promote increased independence, self-sufficiency and enhance quality of life for persons with significant disabilities.

IL Services may include counseling and guidance, durable medical equipment, communications aids, prostheses, rehabilitation technology, and training with an outcome of achieving the greatest degree of independence possible.

Consumers control the decision-making, service delivery, and management of community-based IL Centers. IL Centers promote practices that increase self-help, self-advocacy and actively develop peer relationships and role models. Core services of IL Centers may include information and referral, IL skills training, peer counseling, advocacy and ensuring equal access for individuals with varying significant disabilities to services, programs, and resources within their community.

"Since TRC came into my life, things have been much better."

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

October

Jane Solomon

Jane Solomon is an educated woman who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis as a young adult. She worked for many years and tried to live as normal of a life as she could. Eventually the dreaded disease took its toll on her, and after 18 years, she moved into a nursing home where she could get the physical assistance her body required.

In 1982, a friend in the nursing home told her about TRC. She called the office and within a few days a counselor from the Independent Living program came out to see her. That started a relationship that has helped Solomon have a better quality of life over the past 19 years.

"TRC has helped me with a lot through the years," says Solomon, "but the most significant thing has been the system I use to control my environment. I was not able to answer my phone or even turn my television off and on without help. My TRC counselor, David Freemyer, came to see me and told me he thought I needed a computer-based system to help me connect with my environment."

Freemyer set the wheels in motion. He worked with assistive technology practitioner Erik Strader with Integrated Rehabilitation Systems, Inc. who figured out how someone who could only move her head could use one of the new systems available. Freemyer ordered the unit that includes an infrared head-tracking system that is attached to her glasses. Solomon is now able to interact with the environmental interface computer system and can independently answer her telephone, control her lights and television, type e-mails, letters and surf the web.

*Opening up
the Universe*

"The system is the great equalizer," says Erik Strader. "The access to it is the neat, fun part for me. Whether I write a report or if Jane or Christopher Reeves writes a report, it is the same sort of information and the same results. It's just a matter of how to get to it."

"It is just such a joy to have this now," smiled Solomon. "I may be in this nursing home, but TRC and this computer has opened up the universe for me."

ILS Benefits

- IL Services and IL Centers help people with significant disabilities to continue living independently in the home and community.
- Services are provided statewide to persons with the most significant disabilities.
- IL client-service funds offer assistance to people who have no other resources.
- Resource and referral services allow persons with significant disabilities who might otherwise be underserved or unserved to access services.

ILS Highlights for 2001

- Currently there are ten state-supported IL Centers. Four of the centers operate satellite IL Centers in nearby cities.
- In State FY 2001, twenty IL counselors and IL rehabilitation services technicians provided services to 2,397 eligible clients throughout the state.
- In State FY 2001, 5,300 clients were served through IL centers.

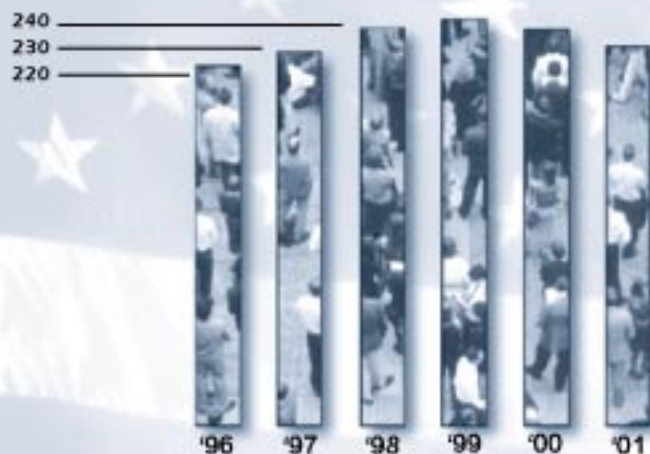
"TRC has helped me with a lot through the years."

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

November

2002

DISABILITY DETERMINATION *services*



DDS Cases Processed in thousands



Total Monthly Payments in millions

Disability Determination Services, funded entirely through the Social Security Administration (SSA), establishes eligibility for Texans with severe disabilities who apply for Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income. Texans with disabilities apply for benefits at their local Social Security office and their applications are forwarded to DDS for determination.

Benefits

- Federal dollars brought to Texas through disability benefits reach about \$337,814,000 per month.
- The TRC DDS maintains offices in Houston, Irving, and Austin for face-to-face interviews with people who have been determined to no longer be eligible for disability benefits.

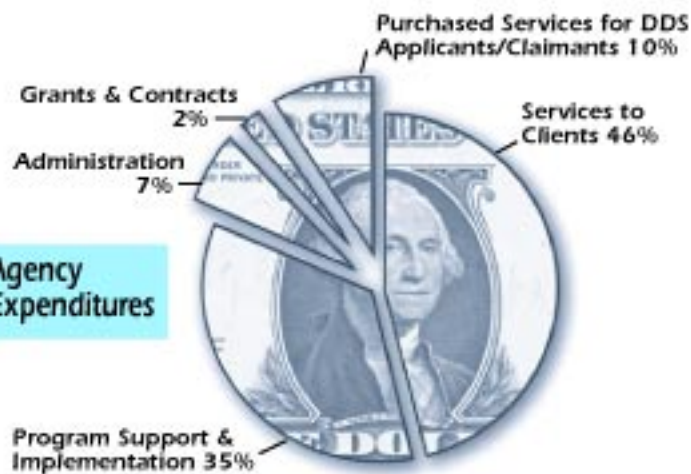
DDS Highlights for 2001

- In Federal FY 2001, DDS processed 232,465 disability cases for Texans.
- For Federal FY 2001 DDS reached 95.7 percent accuracy rate as audited by the SSA.
- SSA has consistently rated the Texas DDS number one among the eight largest DDS's when considering key performance measures.

TRC ADMINISTRATION

Not all of our employees work directly with our clients in the field. Four areas provide vital services to our front-line force s under the administrative support umbrella. *Financial Services* provides the data, information, allocation, payment and accounting to ensure TRC financial accountability and efficiency. *Administrative Services* provides behind-the-scenes support in the following areas: human resources, buyer support, and operations support services. *Automated Services* provides planning and support for TRC's information resources, including computer hardware and software, network operations, Internet/intranet, telecommunications, and information services. *The Office of the Commissioner* provides the vision and executive leadership for the agency. Offices under the Commissioner include management audit, management information services, civil rights, medical services and planning. TRC also provides administrative support to the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. The Council is a 30-member board dedicated to ensuring that all Texans with developmental disabilities have the opportunity to be independent, productive and valued members of their communities.

Agency Expenditures



SFY 2001 Total Funds



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

December

2002

County Listings

THE FUTURE IS WORK

HABILITATION

County	Weekly Income (average in dollars)		Total Successfully Employed	Total Eligible Served	County	Weekly Income (average in dollars)		Total Successfully Employed	Total Eligible Served	County	Weekly Income (average in dollars)		Total Successfully Employed	Total Eligible Served
	Before Services	After Services				Before Services	After Services				Before Services	After Services		
A					Comal	103	333	92	561	Gray	112	261	42	139
Anderson	84	289	39	285	Comanche	70	295	12	57	Grayson	135	329	200	928
Andrews	73	195	14	60	Concho	0	0	0	6	Gregg	124	266	194	960
Angelina	107	251	101	491	Cooke	132	335	41	229	Grimes	131	269	21	81
Aransas	80	286	33	157	Coryell	73	273	54	223	Guadalupe	110	325	111	618
Archer	108	347	16	62	Cottle	124	106	3	13	H				
Armstrong	0	280	1	10	Crane	48	323	4	17	Hale	148	278	66	309
Atascosa	50	299	29	185	Crockett	0	361	4	11	Hall	114	226	6	32
Austin	211	349	38	220	Crosby	49	248	4	31	Hamilton	99	290	5	31
B					Culberson	163	203	12	32	Hansford	210	292	7	15
Bailey	191	213	5	23	D					Hardeman	74	267	11	40
Bandera	141	415	29	166	Dallam	112	228	9	34	Hardin	40	370	30	208
Bastrop	119	359	62	351	Dallas	80	382	2523	12953	Harris	57	351	3824	18708
Baylor	106	263	15	41	Dawson	167	257	13	49	Harrison	123	323	173	1021
Bee	152	293	33	157	Deaf Smith	212	275	25	103	Hartley	201	322	6	14
Bell	95	320	273	1254	Delta	28	395	4	42	Haskell	120	342	12	65
Bexar	60	299	1759	8111	Denton	106	419	427	1924	Hays	70	327	115	686
Blanco	78	324	10	37	DeWitt	99	241	31	123	Hemphill	26	201	4	18
Borden	0	0	0	1	Dickens	300	300	1	9	Henderson	78	325	82	386
Bosque	59	314	12	54	Dimmit	89	146	11	54	Hidalgo	120	266	562	2748
Bowie	138	280	112	578	Donley	245	543	2	16	Hill	76	303	45	237

Brazoria	71	354	215	1092	Duval	65	224	19	87	Hockley	80	247	19	89
Brazos	114	300	167	773	E					Hood	82	381	68	258
Brewster	90	296	13	86	Eastland	121	425	16	80	Hopkins	213	331	53	253
Briscoe	158	201	3	12	Ector	104	301	174	761	Houston	76	250	17	126
Brooks	91	161	13	36	Edwards	53	139	3	11	Howard	88	216	63	291
Brown	101	257	44	223	Ellis	160	393	104	569	Hudspeth	0	604	1	9
Burleson	163	268	23	79	El Paso	85	263	777	3678	Hunt	116	327	138	760
Burnet	138	360	40	212	Erath	86	335	92	365	Hutchinson	97	217	27	128
C					F					I				
Caldwell	53	299	46	289	Falls	110	306	15	56	Irion	130	424	1	4
Calhoun	137	105	22	100	Fannin	88	273	48	258	J				
Callahan	124	288	19	71	Fayette	189	288	32	121	Jack	179	376	7	51
Cameron	127	254	336	1710	Fisher	0	240	1	10	Jackson	75	260	25	88
Camp	198	266	9	56	Floyd	173	244	14	55	Jasper	110	317	35	159
Carson	95	272	6	33	Foard	36	250	1	6	Jeff Davis	0	295	3	10
Cass	102	322	34	183	Fort Bend	62	359	263	1420	Jefferson	58	298	367	1553
Castro	204	253	16	49	Franklin	112	305	9	54	Jim Hogg	159	270	10	39
Chambers	66	367	15	108	Freestone	53	354	16	53	Jim Wells	88	268	45	197
Cherokee	107	331	74	378	Frio	66	203	28	88	Johnson	77	392	170	617
Childress	81	277	4	23	G					Jones	146	281	29	129
Clay	176	315	18	63	Gaines	183	235	13	34	K				
Cochran	123	243	6	22	Galveston	58	342	363	1745	Karnes	123	324	24	119
Coke	26	247	7	25	Garza	154	257	5	15	Kaufman	125	415	61	324
Coleman	111	320	8	34	Gillespie	134	312	15	93	Kendall	135	430	9	74
Collin	107	421	396	2008	Glasscock	446	446	2	7	Kenedy	0	0	0	0
Collingsworth	138	214	7	22	Goliad	159	291	14	42	Kent	0	300	1	4
Colorado	130	259	14	105	Gonzales	128	285	37	187	Kerr	77	312	62	346

County Listings

County	Weekly Income (average in dollars)		Total Successfully Employed	Total Eligible Served	County	Weekly Income (average in dollars)		Total Successfully Employed	Total Eligible Served	County	Weekly Income (average in dollars)		Total Successfully Employed	Total Eligible Served
	Before Services	After Services				Before Services	After Services				Before Services	After Services		
Kimble	58	286	9	31	Orange	71	341	93	462	Travis	104	378	943	4796
King	0	0	0	1	P					Trinity	166	222	10	90
Kinney	104	216	4	27	Palo Pinto	63	308	29	117	Tyler	58	378	25	98
Kleberg	85	218	31	128	Panola	190	346	22	167	U				
Knox	77	251	8	36	Parker	83	370	108	441	Upshur	92	301	29	225
L					Parmer	203	223	5	14	Upton	36	186	4	15
Lamar	118	270	134	636	Pecos	240	243	31	97	Uvalde	116	263	32	154
Lamb	214	264	16	49	Polk	59	192	43	236	V				
Lampasas	118	338	36	141	Potter	101	262	178	858	Val Verde	94	243	49	183
La Salle	69	179	14	40	Presidio	182	267	7	29	Van Zandt	93	321	43	220
Lavaca	67	341	17	91	R					Victoria	130	274	137	803
Lee	195	290	12	64	Rains	71	340	14	53	W				
Leon	188	386	23	96	Randall	112	328	106	522	Walker	191	317	80	413
Liberty	47	358	54	265	Reagan	0	350	2	16	Waller	92	296	27	120
Limestone	84	275	18	66	Real	72	332	6	21	Ward	269	309	12	57
Lipscomb	0	275	2	14	Red River	127	224	21	89	Washington	183	339	23	161
Live Oak	97	316	16	73	Reeves	126	209	16	61	Webb	161	257	271	1212
Llano	71	353	17	94	Refugio	75	284	4	49	Wharton	153	332	60	291
Loving	0	0	0	0	Roberts	0	419	1	2	Wheeler	256	266	6	25
Lubbock	128	274	432	1823	Robertson	108	249	14	74	Wichita	71	285	385	1588
Lynn	208	238	12	35	Rockwall	119	424	33	157	Wilbarger	86	351	26	86
M					Runnels	126	241	18	76	Willacy	110	247	36	159
McCulloch	121	339	7	31	Rusk	116	309	31	236	Williamson	97	381	197	1010
McLennan	95	305	216	1137						Wilson	71	320	27	126

ATION

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

McMullen	0	0	0	1	S	Winkler	236	262	3	44				
Madison	144	395	6	37	Sabine	188	295	10	47	Wise	86	381	57	249
Marion	165	269	15	68	San Augustine	160	186	10	42	Wood	100	334	37	210
Martin	90	319	4	18	San Jacinto	131	321	17	92	Y				
Mason	234	234	4	12	San Patricio	126	247	96	386	Yoakum	107	255	7	31
Matagorda	119	377	54	362	San Saba	165	246	8	43	Young	116	337	41	204
Maverick	80	153	54	254	Schleicher	167	267	3	17	Z				
Medina	68	354	35	158	Scurry	97	271	10	60	Zapata	111	226	35	137
Menard	0	327	1	8	Shackelford	126	267	5	16	Zavala	136	219	22	65
Midland	104	284	156	644	Shelby	89	279	24	113	TOTAL			24,756	120,224
Milam	128	313	22	102	Sherman	0	296	1	3					
Mills	164	311	5	19	Smith	99	322	250	1422					
Mitchell	45	178	4	25	Somervell	91	321	9	60					
Montague	77	287	40	154	Starr	106	266	59	268					
Montgomery	127	321	324	1766	Stephens	89	298	16	76					
Moore	162	341	12	51	Sterling	0	130	1	6					
Morris	84	270	18	78	Stonewall	248	338	3	16					
Motley	255	133	2	9	Sutton	0	352	2	13					
N					Swisher	110	271	13	77					
Nacogdoches	100	282	58	267	T									
Navarro	104	287	66	370	Tarrant	79	386	1818	8504					
Newton	18	314	7	35	Taylor	138	282	163	763					
Nolan	61	265	33	174	Terrell	0	0	0	1					
Nueces	98	280	436	2051	Terry	115	288	10	46					
O					Throckmorton	67	260	1	10					
Ochiltree	110	149	9	37	Titus	81	269	27	172					
Oldham	123	150	1	11	Tom Green	71	283	130	644					

STATE FY 2001

Vernon M. Arrell
Commissioner

Sylvia Hardman
*Deputy Commissioner for
Legal Services*

Charles E. Harrison, Jr.
*Deputy Commissioner for
Financial Services*

Leon L. Holland
*Deputy Commissioner for
Administrative Services*

George E. Schneider
*Deputy Commissioner for
Automated Services*

Dave Ward
*Deputy Commissioner for Disability
Determination Services*

Mary Wolfe
*Deputy Commissioner for Field
Operations/External Affairs*

TRC Board

A. Kent Waldrep, Jr. - Chair
Plano, 1989 - 2001

Ray A. Wilkerson - Vice-chair
Austin, 1989 - 2001

Diane M. Novy, Ph.D.
Houston, 1992 - 1997

Matthew T. Doyle
Texas City, 1994 - 1999

Beverly Stribling
San Angelo, 1998 - 2003

Credits

Glenn Neal
Director of External Affairs


Michael Peal
Design/Layout

Ted Candler
Media Services Director

Abble Cole
Reproduction Coordinator


Kathie Elkins
Proofing/Editing/Writing

Prissy Pense - Editor
Writing/Editing/Photography

 *Our thanks to numerous others who provided story ideas
and gathered statistical information used in the report.*



*During this year, we remember
the lives lost on September 11, 2001.*



**This report is published annually by the
Texas Rehabilitation Commission.
Inquiries may be addressed to:**

**Texas Rehabilitation Commission
4900 North Lamar Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78751-2399
Telephone: 1-800-628-5115**

**You may also view this annual report
on the Internet at: *www.rehab.state.tx.us***

*The Texas Rehabilitation Commission is an equal
opportunity employer and service provider.*