



**Workforce Investment Act
Title I-B
Annual Report**

**Program Year 2007
July 2007 – June 2008
The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board
October 2008**

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ARKANSAS WORKFORCE CENTERS
Bringing People and Jobs Together.™

Mike Beebe
Governor

Kenneth B. Ferguson
Executive Director

October 1, 2008

Brent R. Orrell
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Employment and Training
U.S. Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Mr. Orrell:

The state of Arkansas is pleased to submit our Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Annual Report for Program Year 2007. The information contained in this report is a composite of the workforce efforts, performance, and successes throughout the year.

We wish to thank our many state and local partners for their tireless efforts in making WIA an effective vehicle for helping our citizens make positive changes in their lives through education, training, and other workforce development opportunities. Through the collective efforts of all of our partners and local areas, we strive to offer continuous improvement opportunities and guidance to our local areas in providing successful WIA programs to our citizens.

Many thanks are given to our state Workforce Investment Board Chairperson, Ms. Terrie Baker, and to each member of the State Workforce Investment Board for their continued service and commitment to the successful outcomes from WIA initiatives. We are all committed to the goal of creating workforce ready to enjoy opportunities created by a thriving economy and a dynamic workforce system

Sincerely,



Kenneth B. Ferguson

cc: Joe Juarez, Regional Administrator (Region IV)

WORKFORCE

INVESTMENT

IN

ARKANSAS

PROGRAM YEAR

2007

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Arkansas's Act 1125, known as the Workforce Investment Act has as its primary purpose to outline a workforce development plan for Arkansas and to comply with the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 by providing workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce investment systems.

These systems work together to increase the employment, retention, and earning power of WIA participants and to increase occupational skill attainment resulting in an improved, qualified workforce, a reduction in welfare dependency, a boon to the state economy, and an enhanced, productive, and competitive labor force.

By appointing a workforce comprised of 51 percent business individuals with specific knowledge and experiences, Governor Mike Beebe assured that his council of advisors would also be a network of statewide leaders from every sector effecting economic growth for the state. The Governor took the initiative for WIA to have a profound and lasting impact on the state and its citizens.

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board is the primary instrument for workforce policy and guidance, and its role is vital to the continuous improvement of workforce development. For Program Year 2007 the Governor's Priorities listed below were identified for concentrated focus:

- (1) Arkansas Mature Worker Program/NGA Policy Academy
For Civic Engagement and Employment of Mature Adults
- (2) Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative/Shared Youth Vision Grant
- (3) Collaboration with Arkansas Department of Workforce Services
On the Career Readiness Certificate Initiative

WORKFORCE

INVESTMENT

IN

ARKANSAS

PROGRAM YEAR

2007

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The Arkansas Mature Worker Program/NGA Policy Academy Initiative is designed to develop a vehicle for exploring, implementing, enhancing and/or expanding engagement of, and services to the mature (50+) population of Arkansas in the arenas of 1) employment options, 2) volunteer opportunities, 3) lifelong learning, and 4) wellness (health and social services issues) choices.

The AWIB awarded a total of \$200,000 in incentive funds across the ten local workforce investment areas for PY 2006 performance.

Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative/Shared Youth Vision is designed to provide a regionalized or localized infrastructure for the development of a comprehensive service delivery system to appropriately serve the nine categories of youth in the state.

The Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate program offers a portable credential that certifies that a person has the core employability skills required across multiple industries and occupations. The credential will reduce employee turnover, build job seekers' confidence, increase a graduate's chances for hire and boost economic development.

The Governor's Vision and Mission for the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board was revisited and articulated to present a renewed emphasis on diversity and regional economies as follows:

Vision

A highly trained and diversified workforce that meets the needs of high growth industry, which drives a statewide regionalized economy that is competitive in the global market.

Mission

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will strive to ensure an innovative and demand-driven workforce investment system, in collaboration with educational, business, industry, labor and state agencies, that effectively leverages employment and training resources and collectively responds to the needs of local and regional economies.

The workforce investment system will:

Enable collaboration at a regional level by engaging education, economic development, business and industry as partners;

Foster the development of individualized career pathways; and

Establish an accountable and responsive One Stop workforce network that is sensitive to the needs of a trained and diversified labor market.

The Arkansas Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant provided outstanding public information and data resource access through several media resources including:

<http://www.discoverarkansas.net> and <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov>, and the *Directory of Licensed, Certified, and Registered Occupations in Arkansas* available at http://www.discoverarkansas.net/admin/uploadedPublications/742_DLO.pdf.

ArkOSCAR (www.arkoscar.org): The Arkansas version of the Occupation and Skill Computer-Automated Researcher.

2007-2008 Career Watch (www.careerwatch.org): career magazine providing students and parents with over 20 areas of interests in the world of work.

High Demand Targeted Jobs – National Governor’s Association (NGA) Skills Matching System: Information on skill needs, projections, wages, training programs, licensing requirements, and designates if it is a high demand occupation in Arkansas.

Career Interests, Training, and Job Outlook System – simplifies the alignment of the Career Cluster/system with occupational specialties.

Affirmative Action (www.discoverarkansas.net or www.discover.arkansas.gov): Supports the state and local workforce areas business, education, economic development, other agencies, and the general public.

Real-Life Arkansas (www.real-life.arkansas.gov): Supports our partners in education and employment, as an interactive “lifestyle budget calculator” for students and job seekers.

The Future Awaits : Teaches young adults pre-employment basics, including resume preparation, how to apply for jobs, appropriate dress, interview tips, and even basic guidance on how to complete federal tax forms.

Arkansas Consumer Reporting System (ACRS) (www.arkansascrs.org): ACRS provides an interactive, customer driven, search engine to review all educational entities within state boundaries.

Projected Employment Opportunities List (formerly the “Demand Occupations List”): Publication that identifies future job opportunities and links them to training programs with the state. It can be viewed at

http://www.discoverarkansas.net/admin/uploadedPublications/397_Projected_Employment_Opportunities_List.pdf.

Workforce Area Profiles: Labor market profiles for each local workforce area can be found on “Discover Arkansas” (www.discover.arkansas.net).

ARKANSAS

WORKFORCE
INVESTMENT BOARD
MEMBERS

PROGRAM YEAR

2007

AWIB Board Members

Ms. Terrie Baker, Chair

Ms. Diane Hilburn, Vice Chair

Ms. Sarah Agee (Governor's Liaison)

Tom Anderson

Senator Gilbert Baker

Dr. Dan Bakke

Mr. Lawrence Bearden

Governor Mike Beebe

Mr. Ricky Belk

Dr. Judith "Dee" Blair

Mr. Herbert Broadway

Mr. David Burnley

Representative Dawn Creekmore

Ms. Linda Delaney

Mayor Richard Deweese

Mr. Larry Featherstone

Mr. Donnie Fowler

Ms. Linda Gray

Director Maria Haley

Mr. Randy Haynie

Mr. Eric Herget

Mr. Alan Hughes

Mr. Donny Jackson

Ms. Sandra Kerr

Mr. Jim Knight

Mr. Hugh Leavell

Judge Steve McGuire

Mr. Dwayne Mays

Director Katy Morris

Mr. Ken Milbrodt

Mr. Eddie Miller

Mayor Charles Northcutt

Mr. J. Michael Norton

Ms. Mary Parham

Director Dr. Jim Purcell

Mr. Michael Rebick

Director John Selig

Senator Tracy Steele

Mr. Hays Sullivan

Director Robert Treviño

Director William "Bill" Walker

Director Artee Williams

Ms. Cindy Young

ARKANSAS

GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES

PROGRAM YEAR
2007

**ARKANSAS MATURE
WORKER PROGRAM / NGA
POLICY ACADEMY**

**FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND
EMPLOYMENT OF MATURE
ADULTS**

**PROGRAM YEAR
2007**

ARKANSAS MATURE WORKER PROGRAM / NGA POLICY ACADEMY

PURPOSE:

To expand the work of the NGA Policy Academy Initiative, developing a vehicle for exploring, implementing, enhancing and/or expanding engagement of and services to the mature (50+) population of Arkansas in the arenas of 1) employment options, 2) volunteer opportunities, 3) lifelong learning, and 4) wellness (health and social services issues) choices.

GOALS:

Establish a permanent Mature Worker Program as an Arkansas Workforce Development Initiative by embedding the organization of specific efforts into the existing infrastructure of state workforce agencies (primarily the Department of Workforce Services and Arkansas Workforce Investment Board)

Provide multiple portals that enable all Arkansas' 50+ seniors to access services related to workforce connections, health-related needs, life-long learning and civic engagement opportunities

ACTIONS:

Design website with four access portals
Build network of linkages to related resources
Explore additional avenues for information access

Designate mature worker specialists in each of the ten local workforce areas
Develop a Training Manual for the MW specialists
Schedule rollout of training module for area staffers

Launch Public Relations & Promotion Campaign
Design Logo
Develop brochure/materials for outreach
Roll out website
Convene "Mature Worker" Speaker's Bureau

Expand scope of Work Life Balance Awards
Encourage and Increase number of applications from employers for "Mature Worker" friendly recognition
Provide linkage to AARP Workforce Assessment Tool within MW section of employer application for Work Life Balance Award

Design and produce Employer Toolkit
Obtain assistance from LMI unit of DWS for development of Information charts and data to assist employers in assessment of the available workforce

Explore additional venues for information dissemination and access

BENCHMARKS:

Timelines accomplished

EXPECTANCIES/RESULTS:

Increased job listings/placements for targeted population

Observation of and Governor's proclamation for "Hire the Older Worker" week

PRODUCTS:

Logo

Brochure

Toolkit

Training Manual

Speaker's Bureau

Website

Outreach campaign

ARKANSAS
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
COLLABORATIVE
(AYDC)

PROGRAM YEAR

2007

ARKANSAS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE/SHARED YOUTH VISION GRANT

The purpose of the Shared Youth Vision Grant is to provide a regionalized or localized infrastructure for the development of a comprehensive service delivery system to appropriately serve the nine categories of youth in the state.

The process to achieve that purpose will be done through the development of a local or regional youth development collaborative that uses the AYDC collaborative model. The process will include creating a local youth vision, a youth vision statement, asset mapping, SWAT analysis, and the assessment of a leadership-planning-implementation infrastructure that will be the foundation for achievement of the local vision.

The process includes the setting of goals and action plans that are outcome driven. Formation of two local/regional collaborative efforts is complete and additional local collaborations will follow.

ARKANSAS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE (AYDC)

The Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative (AYDC) is the entity leading the effort to develop the Arkansas State Youth Vision program. The AYDC was formed out of the challenge given to the state following the first Federal Youth Vision Forum held in Phoenix, Arizona, in December 2004. The Collaborative was formed in April 2005 from a core group of interested state agency liaisons, community leaders, and local workforce area administrators, and has continued with strong participation from state agencies, service providers and volunteers. To date, the Collaborative has conducted seven quarterly meetings to advance the mission, vision, and strategies listed below. The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) acts as the lead and oversight agency of the AYDC.

The AYDC vision is to enable all youth-serving entities, statewide, to freely share information and resources to create and sustain a comprehensive system that provides youth easy access to the services and support that will prepare them to be productive members of society. It's mission: to promote all partners (public agencies, private entities, churches, community and faith-based organizations, and family members) to actively seek input from employers and youth, and jointly focus their resources on meeting the needs identified and subsequently to connect youth with high quality secondary and postsecondary educational opportunities and high-growth and other employment opportunities.

The AYDC has established the following objectives:

- Develop and coordinate policy, within existing policy structures, to address the needs of disadvantaged youth;
- Maximize interagency collaborations to utilize the significant expertise within specific Federal agencies;
- Develop innovative approaches that efficiently and effectively respond to serving youth;
- Enhance the quality of service delivery and improve efficiencies; and
- Improve the outcomes for the youth served by the Federal agencies.

AYDC has been very successful during its short time of existence, and to its credit, the following milestones have been achieved:

- Launched a youth specific website used to keep youth, parents, professionals and collaboration members informed of best practices and outcome strategies to target the state's youth.
- Conducted the AYDC Youth Workforce Development Summit in partnership with the Arkansas Coalition for Juvenile Justice.
- Selected as one of sixteen states in the United States to participate in an advanced Federal Technical Assistance Forum in Atlanta, GA.
- Adopted "Youth of Promise" in lieu of "neediest youth" to define the targeted youth.

- Established eligibility to receive additional federal investment resources to rollout, at the local and regional level, an infrastructure for meeting the needs of the neediest (Youth of Promise) of the state.
- Established plan to initiate a state solutions desk to provide assistance to service providers and agencies regarding service needs and possible requests for waivers to accomplish overarching case management and service delivery.

ARKANSAS

CAREER READINESS
CERTIFICATE (CRC)

PROGRAM YEAR

2007

Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate

Frequently Asked Questions



What is an Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate (CRC)?

An Arkansas CRC is a portable credential based upon the WorkKeys® assessments that demonstrates to employers that an individual possesses the basic workplace skills required for 21st century jobs.

Getting a CRC will allow an individual to show prospective employers that he or she possesses the basic skills they are looking for.

Even if a job seeker has a GED, high school diploma or post secondary degree, the Arkansas CRC further verifies that he can handle tasks such as finding information, reading instructions and directions, and working with numbers – that are common in today's workplaces.

What is KeyTrain®?

A product of Thinking Media, KeyTrain® is the first step toward achieving an Arkansas CRC. KeyTrain® is a targeted curriculum written specifically to help people master the applied workplace skills as defined by WorkKeys®. As an ACT Level 1 publisher, KeyTrain® provides curriculum that is based on the WorkKeys® targets for instruction and meets ACT's quality standards.

KeyTrain® includes instruction for all levels of WorkKeys® and pre-WorkKeys® skills. It is available via the Internet, CD, or print versions. The Internet and CD versions include a powerful management and student tracking system that allows for easy administration and detailed reporting of students' progress in the program. The KeyTrain® curriculum aligns with all 9 of the ACT WorkKeys® assessments and also has 200 lessons for pre-employment workplace career or soft skills instruction.

KeyTrain® and WorkKeys® are "workforce development tools" to ensure "no worker is left behind."

What is WorkKeys®?

The WorkKeys® job skills assessment system is a product of ACT, Inc., the developer of the ACT assessment that is commonly used for college entrance testing. The WorkKeys® employment system is a comprehensive procedure for measuring, communicating and improving the common skills required for success in the workplace. WorkKeys® measures foundational skills in the following areas:

- Reading for information
- Applied Mathematics
- Locating Information
- Applied Technology
- Business Writing
- Listening
- Observation
- Teamwork
- Writing

What are the Target Areas and Levels of an Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate?

The Arkansas CRC focuses on three targeted skills:

- Reading for Information
- Applied Mathematics
- Locating Information

Reading for Information—comprehending work-related reading materials, from memos and bulletins to policy manuals and governmental regulations.

Applied Mathematics—applying mathematical reasoning to work-related problems.

Locating Information—using information from such materials as diagrams, floor plans, tables, forms, graphs, and charts.

What is the challenge facing Employers?

Numerous surveys have demonstrated a gap between the current workforce and the job skills required by employers. To reduce the cost of remedial training and lost efficiency, more employers are implementing pre-employment assessments to identify these skills prior to hiring.

What are the requirements for successfully completing the assessments?

You should contact your local ADWS/AWIB office to determine the specific scores required in your area. However, most areas require a score of 4 in Applied Mathematics, 4 in Reading for Information and 4 in Locating Information. WorkKeys® scores are not related to grade-level equivalents or any other scoring system.

How can the AR CRC help meet the needs of employers?

The Arkansas CRC program uses results from the WorkKeys® assessments to award certificates in three categories: **Gold level** signifies an individual has scored at least a level 5 in each of the three core areas (Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information) and has the necessary skills for **90 percent** of the 14,000 jobs profiled in the WorkKeys® database. **Silver level** signifies an individual has scored at least a level 4 in each of the three core areas and has the necessary skills for **65 percent** of the jobs in the WorkKeys® database. **Bronze level** signifies an individual has scored at least a level 3 in each of the three core areas and has the necessary skills for **35 percent** of the jobs in the WorkKeys® database. The Department of Workforce Services will provide the client with a certificate that includes the Governor's and Director's of ADWS and AWIB signature. Additionally, the client will receive a wallet size certificate. The certificate is a portable credential, allowing employees to use it anywhere in the nation. The certificate can **complement** diplomas, degrees, and resumes, and gives job seekers an advantage in the interview process.

What do we do if students test below the minimum WorkKeys Skill Levels?

For individuals who do not initially achieve the Arkansas CRC, assessment results will indicate the targeted training needed to achieve the skill levels necessary to obtain a certificate. The Department of Workforce Education/Adult Ed will offer developmental courses for the clients who do not successfully reach the required level in KeyTrain® instruction and/or WorkKeys® assessments.

What about technical support and responsiveness?

KeyTrain® answers all calls in 15 minutes or less. 365 days a year, 24/7 call 1-877-842-6205 when you need assistance. For information or assistance regarding KeyTrain®, WorkKeys®, and AR CRC contact Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, phone: 501-683-4708 or 1-866-757-2999, e-mail: crc@arkansas.gov.

ARKANSAS

LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREAS

SUCCESS STORIES

PROGRAM YEAR
2007

Eastern

Darius Toney



Darius Toney, a senior at West Memphis High School, has been a participant of the Arkansas Workforce Center Youth Program since June 6, 2006. Darius has participated in several activities such as Leadership Development, Team Building and Money Management. Since being enrolled in the program, Darius has worked two summers as a Summer Camp Counselor for the Boys & Girls Club. As a result of his hard work, Darius was able to purchase his first car. He is excited about attending college next fall, and says he now knows that with hard work, anything is possible. Darius is truly an Eastern Arkansas Star!

Eastern



Tammy Hunt

Tammy Hunt, a single mother, first visited the Arkansas Workforce Center on April 24, 2006. She was hoping to find more than part time work to help support her family. While visiting the center and working on her resume, Tammy was introduced to a center representative and enrolled into Occupational Skills Training. She was within two years of receiving her B.S. in Social Work at Arkansas State University (ASU).

Tammy's dream became reality May 10, 2008 when she graduated from ASU with her B.S. in Social Work. Tammy is now employed with the Department of Health and Human Services as a Family Services Specialist.

Eastern

Christina Barger

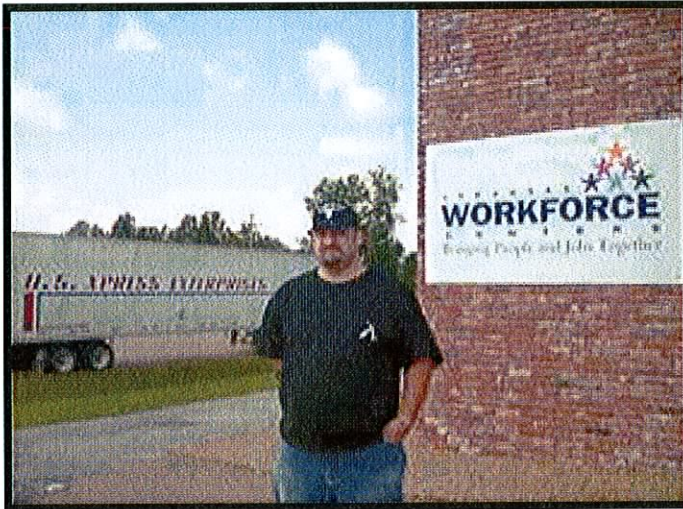


Christina Barger was a participant of the Workforce Investment Act Adult Program. Christina came into the Arkansas Workforce Center unemployed and expressed her desire to improve her employability skills. She had not been successful with job searches and realized a need for training. Christina was determined eligible, enrolled in the WIA Adult Program in January 2008, and was selected to be part of the 2008 Nursing Assistant Program Spring Class at Crowley's Ridge Technical Institute. She started Nursing Assistant classes in February 2008 and successfully completed in April 2008.

Christina began her employment as a private nursing assistant for a family friend. She later gained full-time employment at LHC Arkansas Home Care as a Home Care Provider and expressed how grateful she was to have received training that allows her to enjoy her occupation and become self-sufficient.

Eastern

Stacy Gossett



Stacy Gossett came into the Arkansas Workforce Center to conduct a job search. He inquired about the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult Program and truck driving school after viewing information about the high demand for truck drivers.

Stacy contacted C-1 Trucking to complete his admission process and later returned to the center to inquire about tuition assistance. He was determined eligible, and enrolled in

the WIA Adult Program in January 2008.

Stacy began truck driving classes in January 2008 and, in February 2008, he received a Professional Truck Driver Training Certificate from C-1 Truck Driver Training Center. He later became employed by U.S. Express as a full-time truck driver. Stacy stated that he has been able to travel as far as the border of Mexico and enjoys his occupation as a truck driver. Stacy is very grateful for the WIA assistance he received.

North Central

When Kim Moore graduated from high school, she immediately began attending college. However, she was unsure of her career path and decided to drop out to work for a few years. She tried out a variety of jobs and eventually discovered a passion for nursing. With WIA assistance, Kim enrolled at Arkansas State University. She worked diligently for the first two years to ensure that her grades would qualify her for admission into the nursing program.

Kim's 3.54 grade point average landed her a spot in the AAS Nursing program. Kim worked full time at White County Medical Center (WCMC) while attending college. In the spring of 2008, Kim graduated and received her credentials as an LPN. She continues to work at WCMC as a nurse while pursuing her RN degree. Kim says that "she is very appreciative of WIA assistance and could not have completed her LPN program nor continued on to pursue an RN degree without WIA assistance."

Southwest

Jennifer Brown, a single mother of two beautiful boys in Fordyce, Arkansas, was faced with many barriers while pursuing a Physical Therapy Assistant degree at South Arkansas Community College in El Dorado. The high cost of gasoline was one of her major barriers. She stated, “Without WIA assistance, traveling 100 mile roundtrip each day, I would not have been able to afford the gas and finish school”.

Determined to succeed and to be a good role model for her children were the primary reasons that kept Jennifer going. She stated, “I always knew what my goal was but I didn’t know how I was going to accomplish it.” She graduated Cum Laude in May 2008. Jennifer is currently employed with Jefferson Regional Medical Center in Pine Bluff, Arkansas as a Physical Therapist Assistant.

Northeast

Veronica Clayton lost her job due to a plant closure. She decided to return to school to get her Associate of Applied Science degree. She graduated in 2002 with her A.A.S. Degree in Office Technology. Although she now had her two-year degree, she was not where she wanted to be financially. In 2003, she decided to return to college to get her Bachelor of Applied Science in Business Administration. Veronica applied for WIA assistance and was accepted into the program. The road to success was difficult. She was working, attending college, and taking care of her son, but she was determined to obtain her degree.

Veronica eventually graduated with a B.A. in Business Administration. She is currently employed as a WIA Case Manager in Northeast Arkansas. She says that she is now motivated more so than ever before because she has accomplished the goals she set out to achieve. Veronica has a clearer vision of what she plans to do with her life. Veronica says, "Working for WIA is a great opportunity, not only do I have a career, but I love working with people with similar circumstances."

Northeast

Crissie Overshine is a mother of three and the wife of a military soldier. After learning that her husband would not be deployed again after his second tour, she decided that this would be the perfect time for her to pursue her educational goals. Crissie applied to and was accepted into the LPN program at Arkansas Northeastern College (ANC) in Paragould.

Unfortunately, three weeks before classes began, Crissie's husband was called to report for his third deployment. Disappointed, but very determined to attend college and receive her LPN certification, she decided to move forward with her plans. Crissie was unable to receive a Pell for the summer semesters, but fortunately she had learned about the WIA program at the LPN student orientation.

She contacted the Arkansas Workforce Center about financial assistance. With lots of support and encouragement from family and friends and the financial assistance from WIA, she graduated from ANC and received her LPN license. Crissie now works at the Northeast Arkansas Clinic in Jonesboro. She said she is right where she wants to be and is just waiting for her husband to come home safe.