

# HORIZONS

## SOUTH CAROLINA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

### Commissioner Bryant to retire Jan. 2

Larry C. Bryant will retire as commissioner of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department effective Jan. 2, 2009.

A native of Chesnee, Bryant has been with the agency 35 years and its commissioner since January 2002. During his tenure, the department has continued to build upon its long history of national prominence in enabling South Carolinians with disabilities to prepare for, achieve and maintain competitive employment.

Looking back, he's proudest of "getting people to think about how to improve service delivery within the organization," he said. "When you get people to think in those terms, there is a lot of new innovative opportunity."

As commissioner, Bryant implemented a leadership model that empowers supervisors, work teams and individual employees while providing clear guidelines for agency accountability and personal responsibility. He has guided the agency through a period of budget reductions without compromising quality service delivery for clients and has emphasized the strengthening of business partnerships and relationships with other agencies to maximize employment opportunities for clients.

Derle A. Lowder Sr., chairman of the State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation, praised Bryant's leadership through times of significant changes in the program.

*See Bryant, page 2*



*Commissioner Larry Bryant prepares for one of his post-retirement activities as he tries out a bulldozer during the groundbreaking for the Lyman facility. See story, page 3.*

### Quality Award

## SCVRD wins gold

SCVRD's continuous improvement journey reached another successful checkpoint as the department received a Gold Achiever award at the South Carolina Quality Forum's annual conference in October.

The forum assesses public and private organizations for their effectiveness using the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and the resulting successes in key areas of performance.

Third District Congressman Gresham Barrett and Dr. Harry Hertz, director of the Baldrige National Quality Program, made the presentation.

This marks the third time that SCVRD has participated in the awards process, which requires a

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**Enabling eligible South Carolinians with Disabilities to prepare for, achieve and maintain competitive employment.**

# Agency tightens its belt

The S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department took a hefty hit to its state funding in October that will result in some adjustments in how the agency does business.

The agency gets 80 percent of its funding from the U.S. Department of Education and 20 percent from the state. The state funding was cut 14.2 percent, which amounts to approximately \$2 million.

"This is a severe cut that will bring us close to our federal match level," said Commissioner Larry C. Bryant. "A further cut of any size would cost us four federal dollars for each state dollar cut. As it is, we stand to lose federal funding in an amount equal to our current cuts."

He explained that SCVRD must maintain a certain level of state dollars in order to enjoy full federal funding. Any reduction in state funding affects the amount of federal funding.

Under Bryant's leadership, the agency initiated efforts to streamline in anticipation of budget cuts. In addition, he has charged area supervisors with ensuring that legislators have a clear view of the

agency's effectiveness.

Bryant stressed that current cutbacks will be made administratively to minimize the impact on direct service delivery. No layoffs of full-time staff are planned at this time.

Where the cutbacks will be felt:

- Out-of-state travel will be suspended and in-state travel will see a 25 percent reduction.
- Some temporary and part-time employees will see a reduction of hours.
- Van routes will be consolidated.
- Major equipment purchases will be delayed.
- Job vacancy postings will be delayed 60 days unless there is an immediate critical need.

However, Commissioner-elect Barbara G. Hollis is optimistic about the agency's ability to weather the storm.

"We are rich in talent, dedication and passion for what we do," she said "We need to be smart about everything we do, but thanks to Mr. Bryant's leadership, we are positioned as well as we can be."

## Bryant

*continued from page 1*

"His passionate, clear focus on meeting the needs of South Carolinians with disabilities in an efficient, cost-effective manner has been impressive," Lowder said. "He met the challenges of significant budget cuts and the impact of losing seasoned staff due to the TERI program with proactive, innovative strategies."

After he retires, Bryant plans to play some golf and do some work

with his church, Union United Methodist in Irmo. He'll also be involved with construction of the new SCVRD location in Lyman.

"I'm looking forward to expanding our services in the Upstate," he said.

Bryant's parting advice to staff members is to "remember who we are and what our mission is. We need to keep thinking about how we can best serve our clients and the taxpayers."

Barbara G. Hollis of Cayce will serve as the new commissioner.

# Construction begins on Lyman facility

Construction on the new Vocational Rehabilitation center in Lyman, S.C., is under way.

State legislators, Lyman town officials, architects and SCVRD officials broke ground for the facility on Sept. 30. Construction is expected to be completed by late 2009.

The 25,000-square-foot facility has been in the planning stages for 10 years. Funding for the first stage was allocated last year.

It will house an area office and comprehensive services unit, which will offer physical therapy, occupational therapy, a brain injury program, a pain management engineering on a day basis for people with significant disabilities.

The Lyman center also will offer counseling and guidance and vocational assessment.



*On hand to do the ground-breaking honors were, from left, Dr. Roxzanne Breland, a member of the S.C. State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation, who represents the Fourth Congressional district; SCVRD Commissioner Larry C. Bryant; Sen.-elect Lee Bright of Roebuck; Rep. Joe Mahaffey, R-Spartanburg; former Lyman Mayor Robert N. Fogel; and Lyman Mayor Rodney Turner.*

## Graduate students sought for counselor intern program

The S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department has launched a new program designed to create a pool of qualified potential employees.

The Graduate Internship Program provides paid internships to graduate students who are enrolled in counseling programs that meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standards.

South Carolina institutions with eligible counseling programs include S.C. State University, the University of South Carolina, Francis Marion University, Webster University, South University,

Winthrop University and Clemson University.

Exposure to the Vocational Rehabilitation program provides the student with an opportunity to apply skills and techniques acquired through coursework to a work experience. Interns participate in counselor orientation and in-service training and attend team meetings, workshops and other training sessions.

For more information, contact Kimberly Jones in the SCVRD Human Resources Department, (803) 896-6557 or [kjones@scvrd.state.sc.us](mailto:kjones@scvrd.state.sc.us).

## Gold

*Continued from page 1*

50-page application outlining the organization's practices. All state agencies in South Carolina use the criteria as a framework for annual accountability reports.

The four examiners met with State Office and Evaluation Center staff as well as local staff at the Richland, Lexington, Sumter and Aiken offices.

"This recognition is indicative of our staff's dedication in providing services that enable people with disabilities to successfully establish themselves in our state's workforce," said Commissioner Larry Bryant. A detailed feedback report from the examiner team will be used to address opportunities for improvement in future strategic planning.

## Disability Mentoring Day

# Students get chance to explore careers

More than 150 students with disabilities from around the state got a chance to explore careers they might like to pursue as they participated in Disability Mentoring Day on Oct. 15.

The S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department coordinated the event in South Carolina as part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

"Disability Mentoring Day is a worthwhile experience for both students and employers," said Lucerne Iseman, project manager for the event.

"The students think they know the particulars about their career choices, but the first-hand exploration that DMD provides is always an eye-opener for them," she said.

"The employers, too, benefit from interacting with an individual with a disability on a low-commitment level, while possibly considering a potential employee," she added. "The experience may also diffuse any misunderstandings regarding people with disabilities in the workforce."

In the Midlands, 33 students from Swansea High School, Richland Northeast High School and SCVRD's Information Technology Training Center looked at careers in fields such as veterinary medicine, tattooing, heavy equipment, dentistry, radiology, the military, engineering, business and social services.

Feedback from the students was positive. One liked the opportunity to "experience first-hand an actual job atmosphere." Another "learned so many new things about my

*Nicole Reynolds of Swansea High School helps Dr. Nicholas Chambers examine Max the Shiz Tzu at Van Crest Animal Hospital.*



*Lillie Bracero of Alliance Consulting Engineers Inc. answers a question from Ming-Kwong "Kenny" Lau, left. Lau and Leonard Windom, center, are both students at SCVRD's Information Technology Training Center.*

*Jason Holt of Swansea High School operates a bulldozer at Linder Industrial Machinery.*



career of choice." And a third appreciated "getting to learn more about the job and getting to help."

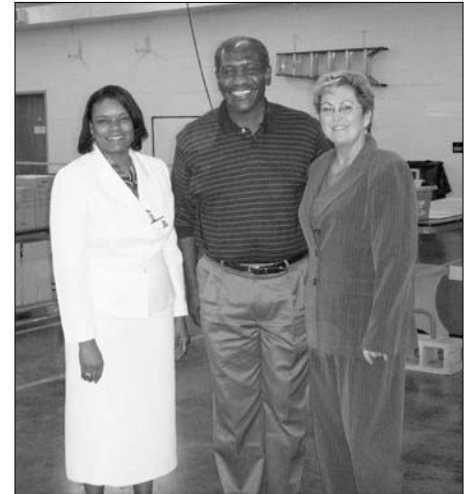
Most of the recommendations involved allowing more time with the mentors.

Mentors in the Midlands included: Dr. Jimmy Duensing, DMD; Linder Industrial Machinery; Lexington Medical Center; Lexington

Department of Social Services; Van Crest Animal Hospital; Fort Jackson; the Purple Lotus tattoo parlor; Alliance Consulting Engineers Inc.; B.P. Barber & Associates; City of Columbia; Richland County; VA Hospital; S.C. Retirement Systems; Palmetto Health Baptist Hospital; Colonial Life; Blue Cross/Blue Shield; and SCVRD.

# Open houses spotlight SCVRD facilities

SCVRD offices around the state held open houses during October in conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness month. Here are pictures from some of them.



*Aiken area supervisor Alethea Harry, left, poses with Rep. Bill Clyburn, D-Aiken, and Rhonda Pitts, SCVRD area development director, at the Aiken area open house.*

*Tom Jackman, left, SCVRD rehabilitation technology manager, explains the types of assistive devices available to Kim Killian of Valley Forge Flag Company while counselor Lacie Thompson chats with area case service manager Patricia Gilliard at the Berkeley-Dorchester area open house.*



*Rhonda Pitts, left, SCVRD area development director, and Steve Heape, a Camden area counselor, show Rep. Laurie Slade Funderburk, D-Kershaw, around during the Camden area open house.*



*Neal Getsinger, left, SCVRD assistant commissioner for field operations; Carol Anderson, Florence area supervisor; and Derle A. Lowder Sr., chairman of the S.C. State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation; pose with Ralph C. Fennell Jr., superintendent of the Williamsburg County schools, at the Williamsburg Work Training Center open house.*

## 37 celebrate state service anniversaries

Thirty-seven SCVRD employees recently celebrated landmark state service anniversaries.

Celebrating 30 years were: Penny Bethea, Elizabeth Cale, Sally Daniel, Pat Green, Lana Griffin, Janet Holliday, Philip McNeil, Rachael Richardson and Carol Teal.

Marking 20 years were: Karen Adkins, Kay Asbill, Vicki Belk, Mary Burnett, Teresa Butler, Clara Cooper, Teri Eakins, David Faile, Rashidi Fawcett, Patricia Gilliard, Diane Hare, and Andy Harrell.

Also, Barbara Hollis, Anne Iriel, Barbara Kinard, Michael Laney, Margaret Mack, Shirley Mains, Vickie Manning, Nancy Mitchum, Anita Monts, Perry Pitts, Donna Quigley, Elaine Singleton, James Smith, Deborah Triplett, Mark Wade and Brenda Winter.

## 2009 Governor's Committee Journalism Contest open

The 2009 Journalism Contest is accepting entries until Jan. 20, 2009.

The theme for the contest, sponsored by the S.C. Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, is "America's People, America's Talent...America's Strength!"

It is open to South Carolinians 16 to 19 years old who have not entered a post-secondary school before March 1, 2009. Entrants must be high school juniors or seniors or otherwise qualified to begin post-secondary education no later than the 2010-2011 school year. They do not have to have a disability to enter.

The contest is administered by the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation

Department. Entries are judged by a panel of professional journalists.

The winner receives a four-year scholarship to the South Carolina state-supported institution of his or her choice, provided he or she is otherwise qualified.

The scholarship pays for undergraduate tuition and fees, which may or may not include room and board. It may be canceled if the recipient does not maintain general scholastic and conduct standards established by the institution.

Entries must be postmarked no later than Jan. 20, 2009. For more information, contact the SCVRD Public Information Office, (803) 896-6833 or go to [scvrd.net/g\\_whatnews.html#eventsitem1](http://scvrd.net/g_whatnews.html#eventsitem1).

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NEW

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