

# SOLUTIONS

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## Learning Through Competition

Program seeks to keep innovation *FIRST*® in Texas

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**On the cover:** TWC-sponsored teams compete in high school robotics competitions to gain real-world experience in science, technology, engineering and math related applications. *Photos courtesy Erin Hagen of FRC Team 3481*

## Texas Workforce Commission

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### Ronny Congleton

*Commissioner Representing Labor*

### Andres Alcantar

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**Tom Pauken**  
*Chairman*  
*Commissioner*  
*Representing Employers*

Over the past decade, private sector employment in Texas has grown by more than one million jobs. The 261,200 private sector jobs created in Texas last year represents an increase of 3 percent, which surpasses the national job growth rate of 1.9 percent.

Texas has weathered the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression better than any other large labor market state, and continues to top the lists of states with the most favorable business environments. Our status as an economic leader is no accident but rather the result of a firm commitment by our state's leaders to keep government spending restrained, taxes low, and regulations both reasonable and predictable.

In order for Texas to remain an economic leader, we must grow the private sector — especially the manufacturing industry which provides well-paying jobs and has undergone a severe decline over the past decade in the U.S. and Texas. Between 2000 and 2010, manufacturing employment in the U.S declined by 5.8 million jobs, or about one-third. Over the same period, U.S.-based multinational companies — which provide 20 percent of private sector jobs — cut 2.9 million domestic jobs while adding 2.4 million jobs overseas. In order to rebuild our manufacturing base and bring jobs home to America, lawmakers in Washington, D.C. should replace our onerous corporate income tax system with a revenue-neutral consumption tax.

In Texas, local school districts should be given the flexibility to address the high demand for skilled workers through increased emphasis on technical and vocational training at the secondary school level. Rather than push all students to attend a four-year university, we should place greater emphasis on opportunities for training in the skilled trades. Global conditions have provided a narrow window of opportunity for the U.S. to regain its former position as the manufacturing leader of the world. The time for change is now, and Texas can lead the way. ■

# Students shine at *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> in Texas robotics competitions

By Debbie Pitts

More than 5,600 high school students across Texas are gaining first-hand knowledge and understanding of real-world science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) applications through the *FIRST* in Texas robotics competitions around the state. These students are members of more than 340 high school teams participating in two levels of competition as part of the internationally known *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) programs.

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) supports programs that steer young people toward high-demand careers, especially those that involve STEM. More than 3,400 participants in *FIRST* robotic competitions during the 2011-12 school year are benefitting from an \$826,510 grant from TWC, which supports 252 competition teams and funded the creation of three new events.

“The investment in *FIRST* combines the excitement of sport with acquisition of science, technology, engineering, and math skills, motivating students to be our future leaders and innovators,” said TWC Commissioner Representing the Public Andres Alcantar. “Strong foundations in STEM are fundamental to success in many middle and high-skilled careers. This robotics-based partnership is a positive step in inspiring our future workforce.”

*FIRST* was founded in 1989 to inspire young people’s interest and participation in science and technology. The programs encompass age-appropriate hands-on activities for students from kindergarten through high school. Elementary and middle school students create teams and participate in LEGO<sup>®</sup> Leagues, while high school teams compete in the *FIRST* Tech Challenge (FTC) and the *FIRST* Robotics Challenge (FRC).

FTC is considered the junior varsity level competition, where teams of up to 10 students receive a robot kit and are challenged to design, build, and program their robots to compete against other teams. Often referred to as a “varsity sport for the mind,” the FRC involves teams comprised of at least 25 students and adult mentors who must raise



A TWC-sponsored FRC team from Brandeis High School in San Antonio worked at their pit station during the 2011 FRC Championship in St. Louis. Pictured from left to right are students Efrain Rivera and Eshan Halekote, along with mentor Gabe Guerrero. Photo courtesy Vicki Rispoli of FRC Team 3481

funds, design a team “brand,” and build a robot to perform prescribed tasks.

“The team mentors are really key to the success of this program,” said *FIRST* in Texas Director John Shellene. “The kids work closely with these engineers and technical professionals. They tell the kids about engineering and what they do, and they make the profession seem less daunting.”

The results of a Brandeis University survey indicate that *FIRST* programs encourage participants to consider STEM-related careers. As compared to students with similar backgrounds and academic experiences, including math and science, *FIRST* participants are nearly four times as likely to pursue a career in engineering, and more than twice as likely to pursue a career in science and technology.

“*FIRST* shows students that high-tech careers can be rewarding and fun,” said Mark Spong, dean of the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science at the University of Texas at Dallas. “It is important to get students thinking about STEM careers that they might not otherwise consider.” ■



Santana Textile workers install high-tech, world-class denim manufacturing machines in preparation for the company's new plant opening this summer in Edinburg. Photo courtesy Santana Textiles

## Santana making its mark

### Denim manufacturing plant to begin production in South Texas

By **Kate Hourin**

Brazilian-owned, Santana Textiles LLC (Santana) is positioning itself to operate the largest denim manufacturing facility in the Americas and the “most modern one in the world,” according to Chief Executive Officer J. Michael Aiken. The company’s new plant is located in Edinburg, Texas.

“We are proud to bring manufacturing back to the United States,” said Aiken. “America depends on these well-paying, middle-class jobs and we hope that Santana helps the U.S. become a manufacturing powerhouse again.”

Santana is scheduled to begin the first phase of operations this summer at its new 33-acre facility in Edinburg with approximately 300 workers and produce 15 million linear meters of denim. The company intends to gradually expand the plant, and in 2016, Santana plans to produce 60 million linear meters of denim annually and employ nearly 800 workers.

The company’s manufacturing process will begin with raw cotton and proceed through the spinning, dyeing, weaving, and finishing operations. The end product will be rolls of denim to be sold to cutting and sewing operations.

Victor de Leon, public information officer for Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley, said the Workforce Board provided customized labor market information and wage data to Santana in hopes of persuading the company to build in the region.

“We continue to provide Santana with recruitment and hiring services,” added de Leon. There also have been several hires through the Texas Workforce Commission’s *Texas Back to Work* hiring incentive program.

“We recently hired another wave of workers for machinery installation and construction,” said Aiken. “These are state-of-the-art, multi-million dollar high-tech machines which require workers with current skills. We want the best talent we can get.”

Among the reasons to build the

plant in Edinburg, Aiken noted the reasonable cost of living; tax and other incentives offered by Texas, the city of Edinburg, and Hidalgo County; along with the close proximity to the U.S. consumer market and Texas cotton. These factors enhance Santana’s “speed-to-market” business model, he said.

“We can quickly react to rapidly changing fashion preferences while boats from China and India are sailing for weeks with out-of-style product,” said Aiken. “Our modern machinery and the huge logistics disadvantage for overseas denim manufacturers make their cheap labor less of a competitive factor in terms of overall product cost to serve the U.S. market.”

The economic impact on the region could be significant.

“The Lower Rio Grande Valley could see millions of dollars pumped into the economy,” said Raudel Garza, spokesman for the Rio South Texas Economic Council. “It’s a major benefit to this region of Texas.” ■

## Fort Hood apprenticeship program gives students a jump-start for their futures

By Laura Ybarra

The Fort Hood Youth Hired Apprenticeship Program (Youth Hired) has helped more than 350 teenagers gain valuable life skills through career and college preparation workshops. The 12-week apprenticeships offered in fields such as education, business operations, indoor and outdoor recreation, fine arts, and automobile repair skills provide participants a career preview.

“Youth Hired apprentices leave the program with valuable knowledge and enhanced skills,” said Tina Smith, who runs Youth Hired and serves as the youth workforce preparation specialist with Fort Hood’s Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS). “The apprenticeship definitely helps students prepare for college, a job, and life in general.”

Youth Hired was created in 2009 to assist the dependents of military and federal government service members stationed at Fort Hood. Participants must be between 15 and 18 years old, and complete three workforce preparation workshops, two secondary-education exploration trainings, and one financial management workshop prior to being placed in an apprenticeship. The workshops cover topics such as résumé building and interview skills. All apprenticeship opportunities are located with Fort Hood-area employers.

Once participants meet the requirements, Smith helps them to determine which apprenticeship best fits their interests. Participants then meet with an apprenticeship supervisor prior to placement. Once students work 15 hours a week for the 12-week apprenticeship, they



Youth Hired program participants receive instruction at a workforce preparedness workshop. Photo courtesy Fort Hood Child, Youth and School Services

receive a \$500-750 stipend, depending on the number of apprenticeships they complete in the program.

“Youth Hired gives young people an opportunity to learn firsthand how the workplace operates,” said Jane Mohammadi, a librarian at Fort Hood’s Casey Memorial Library who has supervised approximately 10 Youth Hired apprentices. “Most of the teens in the program never had a job or even volunteered outside of school. The program helps them make good decisions for the future.”

A sophomore at Harker Heights High School and Youth Hired participant, Zachariah Pritchard, was one of the apprentices Mohammadi supervised.

“My favorite part of the program was being mentored by someone with

lots of experience in the workforce,” said Pritchard. “It gave me an idea of what a real job is like and reinforced interest in some careers I was looking into, such as law and history. This program is a great way for people in high school to earn money and learn how to balance responsibility.”

Melissa Pritchard, Zachariah’s mother, agrees.

“I cannot emphasize how important I think the Youth Hired program is,” Melissa Pritchard said. “I think it’s an excellent opportunity for teenagers to learn the value of goal setting and the benefits of reaching those goals. I’ve already discussed the Youth Hired program with my younger son, and he’ll hopefully start taking the pre-requisite workshops this summer.” ■

# Ready For Take Off



Photos courtesy Chesapeake Energy Corp.

## Eagle Ford Shale area poised for economic boon as companies expand local workforce

**By Shannon Thomas**

Deep beneath the soil of South Texas may lay the key to long-term economic success and stability for the region, as well as a boost to the state's overall economy.

The Eagle Ford Shale area, a sprawling 24-county expanse in South Texas, is a hydrocarbon-producing formation which is expected to yield vast amounts of oil and natural gas – more oil than other traditional shale areas. The drillable shale play runs across Texas from the Mexican border into East Texas, roughly 50 miles wide and 400 miles long.

According to a recent study by the University of Texas at San Antonio, since its discovery in 2008, Eagle Ford Shale has already accounted for nearly \$1.3 billion impact to Texas' gross state product impact, supported 12,601 full-time jobs, and an additional \$2.9 billion in total economic output impact. By conservative estimates, the study notes, shale activity is expected to account for nearly \$11.6 billion in gross state product, \$21.6 billion in total economic output impact, and support close to 67,971 full-time jobs by 2020.

Those numbers add up to a great demand for skilled workers for area oil and gas companies, and other related industries, which are expanding thanks to the shale's discovery.

"It's not just oil and gas, but all other industries that come along with a population increase," said Rogelio Trevino, executive director for Workforce Solutions South Texas (South Texas). "We are seeing high demand for experienced medical and construction industry workers and anticipate that other industrial sectors will need skilled workers as the area grows."

Oil and gas companies are looking for a variety of skill sets to meet their hiring needs.

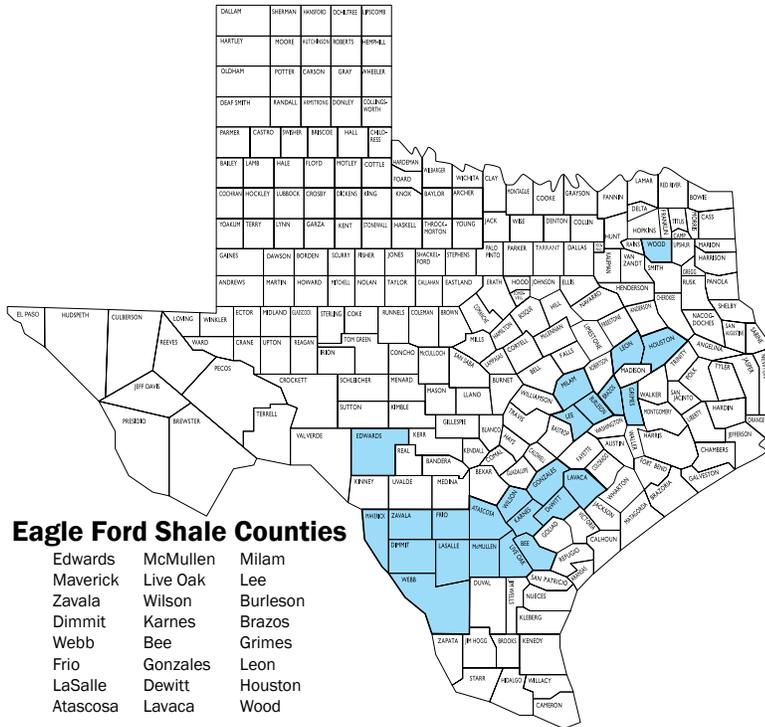
"When folks ask what skills are in demand for the region, I say 'All of the above,'" said Adam Haynes, senior director for government relations and corporate development for Chesapeake Energy Corp., which currently has 152 wells in the area. "We need folks that have basic mechanical engineering experience, welders, folks with electrical skills, people with commercial driver licenses, environmental health and safety

engineers. The list goes on and on."

To address industry needs, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and five area workforce development boards are creating strategies to help connect employers and potential workers. Workforce Solutions Alamo, Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend, Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent, Workforce Solutions Middle Rio Grande, and South Texas have staff with industry knowledge who are focused on helping Eagle Ford Shale employers recruit the skilled workers they need.

In addition, the recent Eagle Ford Shale Consortium Conference, titled "Creating a Sustainable Pathway" brought together oil and gas industry leaders with local community leaders, education partners, and workforce officials to help maximize economic, education, and employment opportunities for the area. The conference was held in San Antonio March 1-2, 2012.

"The Eagle Ford Shale presents a great opportunity to create well-paying jobs for Texans and it has led to a high demand for workers with training in the skilled trades," said TWC Chairman



## TexasEnergy.jobs

TWC has collaborated with the nonprofit employer group DirectEmployers Association (DE) to develop TexasEnergy.jobs, one of the latest enhancements to TWC's arsenal of online job resources linked to its comprehensive job-matching website WorkInTexas.com. Employers can easily post their jobs on TexasEnergy.jobs and businesses can post their openings on their own company sites either by becoming a member of DE or using the "Include My Jobs" feature on the DE website: [www.US.jobs](http://www.US.jobs).

Tom Pauken. "This conference provided a chance for business leaders and policymakers to work together to make sure that the workforce needs of the region are being met."

In January, nearly 6,000 job seekers attended the Eagle Ford Shale Job and Vendor Fair in Laredo, hosted by the City of Laredo and other partners, including South Texas. Participating employers included Halliburton, Chesapeake Energy, and Lewis Energy Group, among others. The fair resulted in 133 confirmed hires.

"TWC is using every resource at its disposal to help qualified job seekers find jobs in the Eagle Ford area," said TWC Commissioner Representing Labor Ronny Congleton. "This area of the state has traditionally seen higher unemployment rates, but the tremendous growth due to the shale will help out-of-work Texans find well-paying jobs."

Not only will Texans find jobs, but area communities are poised to benefit from the increased economic development opportunities.

"The economic benefits driven by growth in the Eagle Ford Shale area are notable," said TWC Commissioner Representing the Public Andres

Alcantar. "The addition of jobs in many business sectors will positively impact these Texas communities for the long term."

To address long-term needs of the Eagle Ford area, training for new and incumbent workers will be a focus. The Workforce Solutions network also will look at creating additional Eagle Ford Shale conferences and symposiums to bring together education partners, industry representatives, workforce development boards, and other statewide resources to identify best practices and create an integrated strategic plan for growth.

"Community colleges are making an important contribution, as far as future needs are concerned," said Trevino. "One of our community colleges in Laredo has already expanded its oil and gas industry training to include an onsite oil derrick so students can get hands-on instruction."

Overall, Chesapeake Energy's Haynes said the area will expand to accommodate the hiring needs that Eagle Ford Shale will generate.

"The government statistics might not have caught up yet, but there is a ready workforce here," Haynes said. "However, we need more people with more skills. If you want a job in this area, you will be working today." ■



Job seekers gather at the recent Eagle Ford Job and Vendor Fair held in January in Laredo. Companies hired 133 workers. Photo courtesy Workforce Solutions South Texas

## TexasInternship.jobs helps employers recruit new interns

New website is a free-to-use online resource for those exploring new careers

By Debbie Pitts

Texas businesses have a new way to recruit talent for the next generation of workers thanks to a first-of-its-kind online tool offered by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) in collaboration with the nonprofit employer group DirectEmployers Association (DE). TexasInternship.jobs provides employers with a no-cost way to promote their available internship positions.

“TexasInternship.jobs is a free and easy-to-use resource that effectively connects students with professional internships across the state,” said TWC Commissioner Representing the Public Andres Alcantar. “We encourage employers and students to take advantage of this service and begin making the mutually beneficial career connections that internships provide.”

TexasInternship.jobs is the latest development in TWC’s cache of free online resources linked to its extensive job-matching website WorkInTexas.com. Employers can post their available internships in one of three ways:

1. Any Texas employer can register and log onto WorkInTexas.com and post their paid internships by completing one simple online form.
2. DE members can post their Texas positions on their own company online job board and use the word “internship” in the job title or job description.
3. Nonmembers can go to the DE website, [www.US.jobs](http://www.US.jobs), and use the “Include My Jobs” feature to have the job automatically appear when the word “internship” is used in the job title or job description.

The dot-jobs (.jobs) designation allows job and internship postings to show up through online search engines, like Google.

“The level of exposure that TexasInternship.jobs will provide for employment opportunities is huge,” said Chad Sowash, vice president of business development for DirectEmployers. “This resource allows employers to select from a large pool of qualified applicants and identify great candidates for each internship.”

TexasInternship.jobs will provide students with access



TexasInternship.jobs provides a comprehensive listing of available internships across the state that lead students to real-world work experience. Photo by iStockphoto/Thinkstock

to information about internships in their chosen field, allowing candidates to search for positions by job title, location, and employer.

Last fall, TWC, DE, and the National Labor Exchange worked together to develop Texas.jobs, a comprehensive search engine which links job seekers to the approximately 100,000 job openings viewable on WorkInTexas.com. TWC and DE partnered to create WorkInTexas.jobs, which allows job postings on WorkInTexas.com to appear in online searches. In addition, the new WorkInTexas-veterans.jobs site was developed to help Texas veterans translate their military experience to jobs in the civilian world. All of these job-search resources are easily viewable on smartphones and other mobile devices. WorkInTexas.jobs also features social media links, allowing users to quickly share job postings through Facebook, Twitter, email and other mediums.

“We are pleased that TWC and DirectEmployers have made this resource available,” said Jonathan Rosenberg, ConocoPhillips director of recruiting. “This will be a tremendous benefit to us as we look for talented individuals to come and learn about our industry by working with our company.”

Employers should be aware that wage and hour laws must be adhered to for internship positions. Information about U.S. Department of Labor regulations with regard to paid and unpaid internships can be found at: [www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm](http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm). ■

# High-Schooled and Highly Skilled

Academy at Alamo Colleges gives students bona fide experience in manufacturing

By Rachael Pierce

Summertime may mean ‘livin’ easy’ for a lot of teenagers, but for students enrolled in Alamo Colleges’ Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Academy (ATMA) it’s an opportunity to gain knowledge about potentially lucrative careers in the skilled trades. For eight 40-hour weeks, ATMA students are laying the groundwork for their futures in the manufacturing industry.

Ricky Aguilar is one of these students. During the traditional school year, Aguilar attends high school classes while also taking college courses every morning at ATMA, such as robotics, manufacturing processes, and the fundamentals of electricity.

“I got to do a lot of things that most 16-year-olds don’t get to do,” said Aguilar. “I can say that I built a truck.”

Last summer, as Aguilar completed his internship at Toyota he realized he had a unique experience as an ATMA student, something most of his peers haven’t obtained.

Over the course of the two-year program, ATMA students earn between 27 and 35 hours of college credit, in addition to work experience received during the paid internships. Currently, 56 high school seniors and juniors are enrolled at ATMA.

Established in 2004 and designed as an industry-driven program, the manufacturing academy gives high school students a unique opportunity to gain authentic work experience through a curriculum designed around skills currently demanded by manufacturing companies. ATMA’s programs help prepare students for both higher education and entry into the workforce, where they may hold well-paying jobs as maintenance technicians, team assemblers and operators, or manufacturing technologists, to name a few.

“We have college-proven, career-ready students when they walk out of high school,” said Gene Bowman, executive director for Alamo Area Academies. “Our students are high-tech, high-skilled talent at 18 years old.”

Students are immersed in contextual learning at ATMA, where they receive a mixture of lecture and lab experience. Bowman noted ATMA students reinforce what they learn during labs in school through their internships at manufacturing companies.

“ATMA’s program is helping meet the demand in the workforce by developing students’ skills and experience,” said Bowman.



During his internship at Toyota, ATMA student Ricky Aguilar learned how to use a robot teach pendant, which allows Aguilar to give the robot instructions to move into various positions within the workspace.

*Photo courtesy of Bruno Garcia, Toyota*

For ATMA student Jahvon Holmes, his internship at ITM (Instruments Technology Machinery) in Schertz gave him a bounty of rewards, including an advantage in college.

“My internship gave me a great job and I’m getting college credit, so it’s double success,” said Holmes.

Toyota is among ATMA’s corporate partners that provide students hands-on experience through internships.

“The education model of the academy is very sound, and combined with the certification programs, it gives students a good foundation for basic technical skills as interns and as they move forward into the workforce,” said Eric Barnett, manager of Toyota Production System (TPS) and Kaizen Group for Toyota.

At Toyota, interns partner with trainers, participate in safety trainings, and visit each of five major manufacturing shops at the plant where actual time is spent on the manufacturing line.

For Bruno Garcia, assistant manager of TPS and Kaizen Group for Toyota, the most rewarding part of working with ATMA students is seeing them ready and ahead of schedule to grasp hold of their futures.

“To be able to show students what the work looks like and to help them look at their options is the most gratifying part of working with them,” said Garcia. ■

## *WorkInTexas.com gets a whole new look*

The Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) job-matching resource, WorkInTexas.com, recently received a makeover that has updated its appearance, and also streamlined its functionality for a more user-friendly experience. Originally launched in 2004, WorkInTexas.com has grown to be one of the largest job-matching networks available to Texas employers and job seekers. The site records an average of 100,000 available job listings each day and contains more than 600,000 job seekers' résumés.

"This is the first re-release of our system since we launched," said Scott Eychner, TWC's manager of employment services and unemployment insurance policy. "We plan to continue to roll out new features and upgrades to keep the site relevant and easy to use." The upgraded site features an easier login, real-time website statistics, a scrolling news bar, and easier navigation.

TWC recently partnered with DirectEmployers Association and the National Labor Exchange to create WorkInTexas.jobs, which allows job postings on WorkInTexas.com to appear in online searches, thus increasing the visibility of each posted job opening. The site can be viewed easily on most mobile devices.

"Jobs featured on WorkInTexas.com now have nearly a 400 percent better chance of being found since we added the dot jobs (.jobs) site," Eychner said. "So the employers we serve receive significantly more exposure for their job postings, giving them a greater pool from which to find qualified job candidates."



A San Jacinto College student learns how to drive and properly maintain commercial trucks. Photo courtesy of San Jacinto College

## *Heart of Texas hosts Annual Awards of Excellence Banquet*

Workforce Solutions Heart of Texas hosted its Annual Awards of

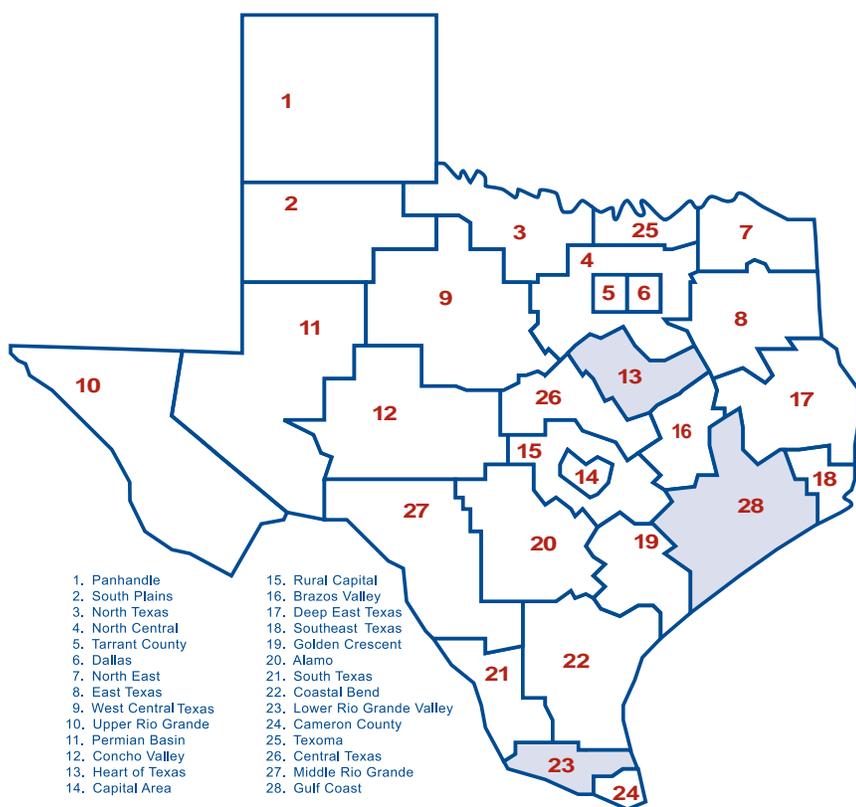


Excellence Banquet in January, which honored businesses, contributors, and program participants of the Heart of Texas region. The banquet was attended by 150 guests who add value to their communities and who have partnered with or benefitted from the services provided by the Workforce Solutions Centers, workforce development board, and partners throughout the region.

Texas Workforce Commissioner Representing the Public Andres Alcantar was the keynote speaker at the event, which was sponsored by NRG Energy Inc., Falls Community Hospital and Clinic, Experience Works, Insurance Licensing Services of America Inc., and the Cen-Tex Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

The following individuals and businesses were honored for their outstanding service:

- Employer of the Year: Associated Hygienic Products
- Employer of Excellence Awards: Double B Foods (Bosque County); Falls Community Hospital & Clinic (Falls County); CEFCO Convenience Store (Freestone County); Family Medical Diagnostic Center (Hill County); Community Education Centers / Limestone Detention Center (Limestone County); and Cargill Foods (McLennan County)
- Outstanding Child Care Service Provider: Oak Lawn Baptist Day Care Center
- Outstanding Program Participant: Deawatheia Manson
- Outstanding Youth Participant: Shameka Mays
- Outstanding Workforce Professional: Candy Morgan
- Honorable Elenor Holmes Service to Community: Honorable Cole Word



## San Jacinto College receives grant for truck-driving students

San Jacinto College was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the U.S.



Department of Transportation to address a nationwide demand for truck drivers. The grant

will fund tuition for 48 San Jacinto College enrollees in the Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) program in 2012. The program had an increase in applications after being awarded the grant in November.

“The first thing people ask when they call about our program is whether there is financial aid available,” said John Stephens, San Jacinto College’s CMV program director. “The fact that we can offer them this grant has encouraged more students to enroll. So far 20 people have applied for it.”

As Stephens proudly notes, the

CMV program has a 100 percent job placement rate for its graduates.

“Not only are there jobs out there for truck drivers, but they offer great pay and benefits,” Stephens said.

“Most of my students graduate from the program and earn about \$40,000 per year, with opportunities to grow with the company.”

## U.S. Department of Labor awards BRAC grant increment

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) recently awarded a \$3,058,366 National Emergency Grant (NEG) increment to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to continue providing reemployment services to about 1,450 individuals affected by the realignments and closures of military facilities throughout Texas. These facilities include Fort Bliss in El Paso, Fort Hood in Killeen, the Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant and the Red

River Army Depot in Texarkana, and multiple bases in San Antonio.

On March 1, 2011, \$6,116,896 in NEG funds were approved by DOL. A total of \$3,058,530 was released initially to TWC to serve military personnel and their spouses who were impacted by the decisions of the 2005 Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission, as well as local dislocated workers needed to fill critical labor shortages in communities experiencing growth due to base realignment and closure actions. This increment completes the total grant amount.

## Lower Rio Grande Valley hosts resource fair for veterans



Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley (Lower Rio Grande) hosted a resource fair

for veterans in February at the Greater Mission Chamber of Commerce (Mission Chamber). Together with its partners—the Mission Chamber and U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar—Lower Rio Grande used the fair as an opportunity to bring the veteran community, including spouses and family members, together to provide them with access to information about many veteran resources. Approximately 100 veterans attended the fair.

In the exhibit hall, vendors and partners showcased their services specifically geared towards veterans and their families. Among the 26 exhibitors were the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Texas Veterans Commission, and South Texas College. Job opportunities, benefits enrollment, and educational opportunities were among the topics discussed at the fair.

A barbecue cook-off and live entertainment kept attendees entertained and made it a family event.



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www.wfsolutions.com

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www.setworks.org

**Alamo**  
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www.urgjobs.com

**Coastal Bend**  
(361) 885-3016  
www.workforcesolutionscb.org

**Heart of Texas**  
(254) 296-5300  
www.hotworkforce.com

**Permian Basin**  
(432) 563-5239  
www.workforcepb.org

**West Central**  
(325) 795-4200  
(800) 457-5633  
www.workforcesystem.org

**Rural Capital Area**  
(512) 244-7966  
www.workforcesolutionsrca.com

*The Texas Workforce Commission, in partnership with 28 local workforce development boards, forms Texas Workforce Solutions.*



**Texas Workforce Commission**  
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