Get in Game events draw thousands

Thousands of Arkansans found jobs, got tips for starting a business or received other employment services at the Department of Workforce Services’ Get in the Game events held in November at Verizon Arena.

In 2008, DWS hosted the first ever Get in the Game Entrepreneurial Conference and Expo, which drew about 700 people. That number almost doubled in November 2009, with about 1,200 attending the Get in the Game Entrepreneurial Conference.

“We were really pleased with the turnout in 2008,” said DWS Director Artee Williams. “The response we received in November 2009 exceeded our expectations.”

The entrepreneurial conference targeted those wanting to start their own business or expand an existing one. Workshops were held throughout the day, entrepreneurs were available to visit with attendees and more than 50 vendors provided information.

The entrepreneurial conference was

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Edgar, Price named managers

Janet Edgar

Janet Edgar was recently named the manager of the Hot Springs local office.

The Hot Springs office provides employment-related services in Garland, Montgomery and north Pike counties.

Edgar began working for DWS as a summer worker in 1973. Years later in 1988 after moving to Hot Springs, she began working as an intermittent interviewer in the Unemployment Insurance, Job Service and JTPA programs.

A year later, she became the employment relations representative for Garland, Hot Springs and Clark counties. She also has served as an Employment Services interviewer, ES supervisor and ES regional supervisor.

Edgar is a graduate of the Certified Employment Manager Program, DWS Leadership Development Class I and is currently a member of the Hot Springs Leadership Development Class of 23.

She has been a member of the West Central Society of Human Resource Management since 1988 and is currently on the board of the Arkansas

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Recycling program expanded statewide

The Department of Workforce Services is doing its part to help the environment by expanding its recycling program statewide.

DWS has been recycling white paper for many years. The new program now includes mixed paper, cardboard, aluminum and recyclable plastic. At this time, the only things not included are glass, Styrofoam and tin.

“It has been encouraging and very fulfilling to see the response to the newly-expanded recycling program from DWS employees,” said Letti Whitaker, a fiscal support specialist in Logistics/Property and project manager for the program.

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Legacy Project to tell story of DWS’ past

Dr. Carl Sagan once said, “You have to know the past to understand the present.”

The Department of Workforce Services, which has undergone several name changes since its inception in 1933, is attempting to do just that with the DWS Legacy Project.

Janis F. Kearney is serving as the project director and is gathering information about the agency by reviewing historical documents, photos, and talking with previous directors and employees.

“I am very excited about the project and pleased with employees’ interest in what may be the first project of its kind in Arkansas’ state government,” Kearney said.

The project began in September 2009 and is now in its second phase, which includes collecting oral histories and documents and making visits around the state.

“Gratefully, we are receiving calls, photos and documents from both current and former employees from all over the state,” Kearney said. “In just a short time, the project already has an impressive list of oral histories and historical documents from contributors.”

In a recent presentation to employees during the First Annual DWS Training Summit, Kearney reminded employees and retirees that “this project is about you. The mission of the project is to share with the world the rich history and good works of the 73-year-old agency and stories from employees who have continuously impacted the lives of everyday Arkansans.”

During the second phase of the project, Kearney is conducting interviews with local office managers, employees, retirees and program beneficiaries.

“While September 30 is the project-ed completion date, it should actually mark a new beginning for the agency of collecting and maintaining a living history of this amazing agency and its employees,” DWS Director Artee Williams said.

The final product will include an interactive Web link on the DWS Web page and a printed document representing the agency’s history through an introductory narrative, interviews and photos.

Williams recently appointed a Legacy Project Advisory Committee to advise and support the project’s work.

Members include Sharon Robinette, retiree; Arthur Montgomery, retiree; Jessie Cain, UI Benefit Accuracy Measurement; Freddy Jacobs, agency EO director; Al Crumby, retiree; Carolyn Washington, Director’s Office; Skeet Morse, area operations chief in Conway; Dennis Veach, Blytheville local office manager; Kaye Lewis, retiree; Fred Jackson, area operations chief in Malvern; Cecil Malone, retiree; Albessie Thompson, retiree; Dorothy Oliver, training office staff in Pine Bluff; and Kimberly Friedman, DWS communications director.

Employees and retirees interested in contributing to the project are urged to do so.

Please forward a brief essay and photo sharing your history with DWS, memories of the people and programs that impacted you during your tenure with the agency, and how the agency has impacted the clientele in your work area.

Documents may be mailed or hand-delivered. Photos may be scanned and emailed.

All original documents will be returned to owners upon request.

For more information, contact Kearney at janice.kearney@arkansas.gov.

You also can send documents to Attn: Janis F. Kearney ESD-DWS Legacy Project Department of Workforce Services/TANF #2 Capitol Mall – Room 416B P.O. Box 2981 Little Rock, AR 72203

Recycle

Each local office has started its own recycling program. In the Little Rock facilities, including the Central Office, two green bins are located in each of the break rooms. One is for aluminum cans, the other for recyclable plastic.

Employees are encouraged to rinse recyclable food containers before putting them in the green recycle bins and to avoid putting garbage or other non-recyclables in the bins.

In the Central Office, magazines, catalogs, newspapers and all types of mixed paper can now be put in the red canvas carts on every floor. This does not include wax-coated paper, food wrappers or carbon paper. Also, janitorial staff will now collect cardboard boxes from hallways, break them down and put them in specially-designated carts near the rear door.

“It is so amazing to see how changing just a few actions can add up to tremendous savings for our environment and lessen the ecological demands that we place on renewable and non-renewable resources,” Whitaker said. “We all have to work together to keep Arkansas the ‘Natural State.’”

The recycling program is just one way DWS is conserving energy to help the environment, as well as comply with the Governor’s Strategic Energy Plan. The plan outlines energy conservation efforts for state agencies. More information about other efforts will be provided in the future.

For more information, e-mail Whitaker at leticia.whitaker@arkansas.gov, Kathy Dragoo at kathy.dragoo@arkansas.gov or Steve Hicks at steve.hicks@arkansas.gov.
DWS training summit held

DWS hosted the First Annual Training Summit Dec. 18 at the Clear Channel Metroplex.

Employees from around the state attended and received program updates from senior management.

DWS Director Artee Williams gave an overview of agency accomplishments during 2009, and Janice Kearney provided information about the DWS Legacy Project, a 12-month project documenting the agency’s history.

In addition to agency updates, Randy Frazier, a motivational speaker, conducted a workshop about good customer service.

Employees also donated canned goods for the Arkansas Food Bank Network. DWS collected 1,147 pounds of food, which will provide 920 meals for hungry Arkansans.

13 DWS employees receive awards for service to veterans

The Department of Workforce Services recently recognized 13 employees for their service to veterans.

Employment Services employees, local veterans’ employment representatives and disabled veterans’ outreach program specialists were recognized and received cash awards from the Veterans Program budget.

Dempsey Murphy, an LVER in Jacksonville (picture not available), received first place in the LVER category and was awarded $1,850. Jesse Boyd, from Russellville, won second place and received $1,350. Joseph Didden from Mountain Home, Russell Cook from Searcy and Edward Johnson from Rogers tied for third, with each receiving $900.

DVOP staff recognized were Nancy Smith from Jacksonville, who won first place; Larry Woodle from Conway, who won second; and Connie Bane from Malvern, who won third.

ES staff who received awards were Richard Reed from Fayetteville, who won first; Clint Henderson from Jonesboro, who won second; and Rebecca Huckabee from Hope. Joshua Taylor from Camden and Jerry Hayes from Little Rock, who all won third.

“All of the recipients deserved this special recognition for their service to veterans,” DWS Director Artee Williams said.

This was the first time an incentive award program was implemented for employment services to veterans. Funds for the program amount to 1 percent of the total grant amount allocated to the state each year. These funds cannot be used for any other purpose.

Local office managers nominated staff for the awards. An awards committee then reviewed the recommendations from the local office manager, area operations chief and Arkansas JobLink data documenting their service to veterans.

Future awards will be based on the number of veteran clients who obtain employment during the first and second quarter after they exit from their job service enrollment. All Workforce Center partners are eligible for the ES category. Only DVOPs and LVERs are eligible for their categories.

For more information regarding award criteria, contact Rex Platt with the DWS Veterans Program at (501) 682-1544.
BENTON — Drew Samuelson, the son of Alana Samuelson, an unemployment insurance interviewer, was named Youth Citizen of the Month in November by the Benton Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council. Drew, a sophomore at Benton High School, also is one of 12 finalists for the 2010 Arkansas Community Service Awards sponsored by the Department of Human Services, Division of Volunteerism. He was nominated by the Saline County Habitat for Humanity and has been a member of Habitat for Humanity, Youth Habitat for six-and-a-half years. The banquet will be in July.

Megan Alexander, a fiscal support specialist in UI Accounting, recently received a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the University of Phoenix.

Amy Zhang, a UI budget specialist, recently received a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the University of Phoenix.

Jessica Moye, the daughter of Danny and Lynn Moye, was selected for All State in volleyball for a second year. Jessica, a senior at Lutheran High School in Little Rock, also was selected for All Conference in District 3A and was a member of the 3A State Tournament Team for the 2009-2010 school year. Danny Moye is an information systems coordination specialist.

Letti Whitaker, a fiscal support specialist in Logistics/Property, was inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. Whitaker will receive her associate degree in science this summer and plans to pursue a bachelor’s degree in business at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.


Derrick Spearmon, a UI workforce specialist, welcomes Derrick Spearmon Jr., who was born Oct. 7, 2009. Derrick Jr. is the grandson of Mary Stegall, an automated adjudication specialist.

FORT SMITH — Amber Ruckman, a workforce specialist, returned to work after five months of military duty with the 188th Guard Unit from Fort Smith. She was stationed in Kyrgyzstan during her deployment. When she returned, she presented the Fort Smith office with an American flag that was flown Sept. 16, 2009, over Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The flag flew on a KC-135R Stratotanker during a combat refueling mission by the U.S. Air Force.

VETERANS — Walter Zgleszewski, a local veterans’ employment representative in Hot Springs (right), recently met Raymond Jefferson, the assistant secretary for Veterans Employment and Training (left), at the National Veterans Training Institute in Denver.

August 18, 2009. He weighed 6 pounds 9 ounces and was 18.5 inches long. Lindsay Crawford is a DWS workforce specialist.

PINE BLUFF — The Pine Bluff office staff pledged $500 to Habitat for Humanity and volunteered for the organization. William Campbell, the Pine Bluff office manager, serves on the Jefferson County Habitat for Humanity Board. The organization recently completed its ninth house. Other volunteers include Shelley Dickson and Tracye Rabun.

ROGERS — Ashton Yarbrough, the granddaughter of Jeannie Bowen, an automated adjudication specialist in Rogers, won the title of Miss Heart of the Ozarks Outstanding Teen in February. She will compete for the title of Miss Arkansas Outstanding Teen in Hot Springs this summer.

WALNUT RIDGE — Augustus Wicker, the son of Andrea Wicker, an automated adjudication specialist, recently won first place in a chess tournament at his school in Hoxie. He participated in the Northeast Arkansas Regional Tournament, where he won two games, lost two and one ended in a stalemate.
Retirements

Herman Sanders, DWS Program Operations Manager, Labor Market Information and Analysis, Sept. 30, 2009
Martha Tucker, DWS Program Operations Manager, Little Rock UI Operations, Sept. 30, 2009
Thomas Davis, DWS Program Supervisor, Hot Springs, Sept. 30, 2009
Ben McClain, DWS Workforce Specialist, Charge Unit, Oct. 30, 2009
Brenda Green, Fiscal Support Specialist, Employer Accounts Services, Oct. 30, 2009
Artie Graham, DWS Workforce Specialist, Camden, Nov. 30, 2009
Roscoe “Butch” Hilliard, Human Resources Manager, Personnel Administration, Dec. 31, 2009
Marie Hilliard, DWS UI Claim Technician, Non-Mon Pilot Project, Dec. 31, 2009
Linda K. Lewis, Training Project Manager, Director, Dec. 31, 2009
Troy Gray, DWS Workforce Specialist, Non-Mon Pilot Project, Dec. 31, 2009
Virginia Cox, DWS Field Manager II, Jacksonville, Dec. 31, 2009
Rebecca Ray, DWS Program Supervisor, Helena, Dec. 31, 2009
Vicki Ross, DWS Manager II, Monticello, Jan. 31, 2010
William Morton III, DWS Program Supervisor, Blytheville, Feb. 28, 2010
Randal Kingston, DWS Field Manager I, Paragould, Feb. 28, 2010

Deaths

Valada Smith, a former interviewer at the Newport local office, died Nov. 19, 2009.
Jerry Morris, an interviewer at the El Dorado local office, died Dec. 23, 2009.
named area operations chief for area six.

Price has worked for DWS since January 2006, when she transferred from the Department of Human Services in Searcy.

While at DHS, Price worked as a community development specialist and case manager for the Transitional Employment Assistance program for 17 years.

Prior to becoming manager, Price worked as a workforce specialist in the Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services programs. She worked as a TEA case manager in White and Cleburne counties for two-and-a-half years and was in charge during the absence of a local office manager.

Price and her family are life-long residents of White County. She is active in the community and serves on several local advisory boards.

“I am very excited and feel blessed to be the field manager for the Searcy office,” Price said. “I believe we have the best staff in the state, and I look forward to the challenges of the year ahead.”