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Business Partnership Network News Spring 2006

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Business Partnership Network NEWS

Volume 2, Number 2

Spring 2006

The Vocational Rehabilitation Business Partnership Network's mission is to provide leadership in disability employment awareness.

Members:

- ARS of South Carolina
- Ablest Staffing
- Alfmeier Corp.
- Anderson Adult Education Center
- Aprons, Etc.
- ARAMARK
- Arvin Meritor Inc.
- Arvin Meritor Heavy Vehicle Systems, LLC
- BlueCross/BlueShield of South Carolina
- Briteline Extrusions Inc.
- Calcina Agency
- CeramTec of North America
- Charleston Marine Containers Inc.
- Charleston Specialty Foods
- City of Greenville
- CMMC, LLC
- Colonial Life and Accident Insurance Co.
- Compact Automation Products, LLC
- CPT MED Inc.
- Crabco
- DeRoyal Textiles
- Durotech International Inc.
- Electrolux Home Products North
- Emitec, Inc.
- Extended Stay America
- Ezell Hardware
- Girl Scout Council of the Pee Dee Area
- Good Success Consulting Group, LLC
- Hawthorne Services Inc.
- Home Builders Institute
- Karst Inc.
- Kelly Services Inc.
- Kimlor Mills
- KMS Inc.
- Lowe's Companies Inc.
- Marlboro County Economic Development Commission
- McCrary Construction
- Miss Scarlett's Pet Bakery
- Nestlé
- North America Rescue Products Inc.
- Orangeburg County Development Commission

Continued on page 2

Vanguard call center touts benefits of hiring people with disabilities

Sometimes in business, it's not only what you know, it's who you know.

That was the case six years ago for the S.C. Commission for the Blind and Vanguard Car Rental USA in Goose Creek. Today, that relationship has expanded to include S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department clients "to everyone's benefit," said Kara Prasch, Vanguard Human Resources director.

Vanguard's call center in the Lowcountry is one of three handling reservation bookings and customer service calls for National and Alamo car rental services nationally and internationally. The other two are in Salt Lake City, Utah, and India.

Prasch said six years ago a blind man decided he wanted to work at the Goose Creek center and wouldn't take no for an answer. He called every day for two months. Finally, the company agreed to give him a try if the commission would help with equipment and software, which it did.

From that associate "being so pushy," a relationship grew between the commission and the company, which led to more jobs for blind people, Prasch said.

Prasch, who formerly worked for a downtown Charleston hotel,



Tony Hazelton

said she had had good experience hiring people with disabilities there. So when Vanguard was looking for flexible, part-time employees to take up the slack during busy times, she thought of Vocational Rehabilitation. It didn't hurt that the payroll director Tony Hazelton is a former VR client.

The partnership with SCVRD began in February and since then the benefits have

See Vanguard, page 2

Disability Awareness Training slated July 27

An Employers' Disability Awareness Training will be held July 27 from 9 a.m. until noon in Greenville.

Sponsored by the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Association's Business Partnership Network (BPN), the training will be held at the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department's Greenville area office, 105 Parkins Mill Road.

Topics will include:

- Hidden Disabilities in the Workplace
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Issues in the Workplace

- Reasonable Accommodations
- Ergonomics in the Workplace
- Assistive Technology

Tours of the Greenville and Pelham Road Work Training Centers will provide new insights into how productivity can be increased through a partnership with SCVRD.

BPN members and their staffs are invited. Please RSVP to Brenda Williams at (803) 896-6582 or bwilliams@scvrd.state.sc.us. Seating is limited.

Business partners earn recognition

Several South Carolina companies earned recognition recently for their partnerships with the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

CeramTec North America was named SCVRD's Laurens/Greenwood Business Partner of the Year at the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Association's annual meeting in April.

CeramTec North America manufactures hermetic and technical ceramic products and performs substrate lasering at its Laurens plant.

The company has been working with SCVRD's Laurens Work Training Center for more than seven years, outsourcing more than 30 different packaging and inspection jobs for its products.

As clients at the center work on the contracts, they develop work skills and behaviors that will enhance their employability.

CeramTec also has hired 10 VR clients in the last year.

Also in April, CeramTec, the Bi-Lo Corp. of Mauldin and North East Services HDE of Columbia were nominated for a Palmetto Business Partnership Award by a committee of SCVRD delegates.

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Commissioner—Larry C. Bryant

Editor—Sharon H. Kelly

JRS and EAP programs team up

Combining SCVRD's Job Retention Services (JRS) program with an established Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can provide employees and employers with the most effective approach to solving workplace issues, human resources personnel from Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina learned recently.

The S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department sponsored a statewide videoconference June 6 to explain the differences between the programs and how each can be used to complement the other.

The JRS program is a free, confidential approach to helping employees whose jobs may be in jeopardy because of a disability. An EAP is a private company supported by employer dollars that uses a team approach to resolving workplace issues and reinforces company policies.

JRS can address disabling conditions such as anxiety, depression, physical impairments and drug and alcohol abuse through

the network of resources provided by SCVRD. Resources include counseling and guidance; medical or psychological evaluation and/or treatment; training in personal and social skills; and job site modification or accommodation.

Blue Cross has instructed its EAP to refer all employees with any kind of disability to SCVRD for screening before purchasing any kind of direct service that might be supplied by VR.

"This early collaboration is going to result in an increase in workplace productivity in addition to savings for the company," said Anthony Davis, staff compliance and diversity training coordinator for Blue Cross.

New BPN officers named

New officers of the VRBPN for 2006 are: President, Willie Fuller of Lowe's; Vice President, Gayel Wigfall of Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina; Secretary, DeCole Gallman of SCVRD; and Treasurer, Robbie Stabler of SCVRD.

Vanguard

continued from page 1

been evident on both sides.

People with disabilities "meet our needs and we can meet their (employment) needs," Prasch said. "They're reliable and we know we can count on them.

"The reward for us is that we get to

see how we're changing lives," she said.

Out of 500 employees, 30 have disabilities and 12 more are blind, she said. Twelve people with disabilities are registered for the next training class.

"The call center is a family atmosphere, so we all look out for each other," Prasch said.

Members, continued:

Palmetto Rural
Telephone Coop
Parker Management Co.
Parkway Products Inc.
Richard M. Campbell Veterans
Nursing Home
Ritchco Inc.

Ritchie Engineering
Roylco
Saluda County Planning and
Economic Development
SCANA
Sodexo
Source Substrates
The Spinx Company Inc.

Thrifty Car Rental
University of South Carolina
Vanguard Car Rental
Wachovia
Walgreen's
Westinghouse Savannah River
Site
Wholesale Glass Distributors