

HORIZONS

SOUTH CAROLINA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

VR's Pelfrey cited for achievement

Ricky Pelfrey of Walhalla is the winner of the 2007 Client Achievement Award. He and his VR team were honored at the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Association's 2008 annual meeting.

Pelfrey has multiple sclerosis. The disease began affecting his life in 1988 when he felt numbness in his chest and legs and lost control of his right hand. Another episode left him with blurred vision.

As the disease progressed, he moved from using a cane to a walker. Eventually, he was forced to leave his job as a machine operator and rely on Social Security disability insurance.

Two days before Christmas of 1994 Pelfrey was hit by a drunk driver. His injuries required internal reconstructive surgery. Damage to his right side and leg, which were least affected by the MS, put him in a wheelchair.

In 1999, he came to SCVRD's Oconee-Pickens office in Seneca for assistance in returning to employment.

With financial support from VR, he completed his bachelor of science degree in Business Administration. He worked closely with his counselor and employment coach to find competitive employment and is now successfully employed by SCVRD's Anderson area office as a career planning and employment specialist; he works in the



Ricky Pelfrey, seated, shows off his award. His VR team included, from left, Layneigh Scott, Sandra Ghrist, Rhonda Pitts, Todd Batt, Pamela Cantrell, Darryl Morris and Deanna Norungolo. Not pictured is Tabitha Jackson.

Seneca One-Stop Workforce Center.

Following the job offer, SCVRD's Rehabilitation Technology department installed a lift on his truck so he could stow and retrieve his wheelchair without requiring the assistance of others.

SCVRD staff members who assisted Pelfrey in reaching his goals included Pamela Cantrell, Tabitha Jackson, Darryl Morris and Deanna Norungolo of the Oconee-Pickens office; Layneigh Scott formerly of the Oconee-Pickens office, now at the State Office in West Columbia; Sandra Ghrist of the Anderson office; Rhonda Pitts formerly of the Anderson office, now at the State Office in West Columbia; and Todd Batt of the Rehabilitation Technology department.

Businesses, individual win Governor's Committee honors

The South Carolina Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities honored four businesses and an individual April 17 at its annual awards luncheon.

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

Pitts gets Legislative Award

Rep. Michael A. Pitts, R-Laurens, is the recipient of the SCVRA 2008 Legislative Award.

"He is known as a champion of personal rights and choices, the freedoms and opportunities that we as Americans are given," said SCVRD Commissioner Larry C. Bryant.



Pitts

"One of those opportunities he promotes is for people with disabilities to get their chance to compete in our state's workforce through the vocational rehabilitation program," Bryant said.

"He has not only been willing to support our causes himself, he has actively encouraged the support of his colleagues in the House on many occasions."

Pitts serves on the House Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee and the Ethics Committee.

Committee

continued from page 1

Anna Westbury, a senior at Dorchester Academy in St. George, won the 2008 Journalism Contest.

She won a four-year scholarship to a state-supported institution. She plans to attend to University of South Carolina.

Hardee's #3 on St. Matthews Road in Orangeburg won the Small Business Employer of the Year Award.

The store employs four people with disabilities and has seen former employees move on to work in other food-service businesses or pursue related careers.

Grace Management Group in Spartanburg is the Medium Employer of the Year. The company has hired 10 employees who have hearing impairments. It also has trained some of its managers in American Sign Language and provides job tryouts and on-the-job training opportunities for vocational rehabilitation clients.

Wells Fargo Home Mortgage in Fort Mill is the Large Employer of

the Year. The company has worked closely with the S.C. Commission for the Blind and has hired more than 20 people who are blind. The company also sponsored transportation for many of these employees to get to work from the Charlotte area.

The Walgreens Distribution Center in Anderson was named the 2008 Exemplary Employer of the Year for its outstanding practices in hiring people with disabilities, particularly those with cognitive disabilities.

Walgreens has received national acclaim for its initiatives in providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities and in making the work environment in the distribution center accessible and inclusive.

As a result, people with disabilities represent approximately 38 percent of Walgreens workforce at the center. The company also developed and equipped an offsite training program where clients from the Vocational Rehabilitation Department and the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs have trained for jobs at Walgreens.

See related story, page 3

DDS PRIDE winners honored at banquet

Disability Determination Services held its annual PRIDE Awards banquet in February.

Individual awards went to:

Support Person of the Year—Patricia Pressley, Administration; **Examiner of the Year**—Desiree Myers, Charleston; **Medical Consultant of the Year**—Dr. Joyce Broadus-Lewis, Columbia; **Staff Person of the Year**—Sylvester Jackson, Greenville; **Office of State Claims Excellence Award**—Bridgett Peoples; **Rookie Examiner of the Year**—Eric Dimery, Greenville; **Case Processing Supervisor of the Year**—Teresa London, Columbia; **Staff Supervisor of the Year**—Terry Horton, Charleston; and **Carl Fullbright Exemplary Service Award**—Suzanne Newton, Greenville.

Group awards included:

Special Act of Service—Bob Hammond, Bill Heidkamp, Mary Fletcher, Connie Hollingsworth, David Cato, Vivian Alexander, Allison Lee, Mike Pawley, Jana Gunter, Lisa Robertson, Cyndi Crolley, Deidre Fulmer and Latricia Carroll.

In the **Creative Achievement** category:

Bookmarking Workgroup—Dr. Carl Anderson, Dr. Joyce Broadus-Lewis, Laura Cavese, Beth Chapman, Dr. Katrina Doig, Amanda Godfrey, Melissa Goeringer, Janet Holliday, Dr. Kevin King, Dr. Robert Kukla, Carol McGauran, Dr. Debra Price, Dr. Elva Stinson, Dr. Donna Stroud, Dr. Lisa Varner and Dr. Manhal Wieland.

Orthopedic Evaluation Summary Workgroup—Chris Porter, Dr. George Chandler, Dr. Carl Anderson, Terry Banks and Carole Abshire.



Pressley



Myers



Broadus-Lewis



Jackson



Peoples



Dimery



London



Horton



Newton

Nation's VR directors honor Walgreens' Lewis

The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) honored Walgreens executive Randy Lewis with the NET Business Award at its Spring meeting in April.

Lewis, senior vice president for distribution and logistics, had a dream of creating a Walgreens distribution center that would provide a work environment that would support the successful employment of people with disabilities.

The plan was a first for any major corporation. While Walgreens provided the corporate resources, Lewis, whose son is autistic, made himself available to personally ensure that progress continued.

That dream came true last year when the center went into operation in Anderson.

Lewis's vision to make sure Walgreens offers real jobs with competitive wages and excellent

benefits for people with disabilities created positive life changes for them and their families.

The initiative has branched out to several agencies and other national corporations—all of which benefit people with disabilities.



Lewis

VR staff members honored for local cases

Aiken

Debra Carlin, Luanna Dygas, Patty Mims, Kathy Murray and Jerlyn Lee were recognized for their work with a young man who went back to school because he wanted to go to work.

Although he had problems with verbal communication and short-term memory, he had physical strength, stamina and strong motivation.

Thanks to his VR team, he is working as a stocker at a discount store.

Beaufort

VR staff members Tonya Miller,

Gail Murray, Debbie Newman, Joycesteen Pringle and Melissa Weber worked with adult education instructor Sarah Milo and the local One-Stop navigator to assist their client in reaching his goal as he coped with diabetes, hypertension, morbid obesity and congestive heart failure.

The SCVRD Evaluation Center staff also assisted in this case.

The client had lost more than 100 pounds by the time his case was closed. He was employed as a maintenance person at a local business and has since been promoted through the ranks to general manager of the company.

Berkeley-Dorchester

Mary Carswell, Mack Gaynor

and Sharkea Hicks were honored for their work with a student with a learning disability.

The student was in an abusive relationship and had lost a child. Her VR team helped her move to a women's shelter and assisted her in getting a job as a sales clerk. Since then, she has moved out of the shelter, gotten her own apartment and continues to work at the store.



From left, Tonya Miller, Debbie Newman, Sarah Milo and Joycesteen Pringle assisted with the Beaufort case.

Charleston

Ginger Ash, Marsha Smalls, Anthony Thompson, Deborah Johnson, Jerry Rodgers and Morgan Fancher were honored for their work with a client who was suffering from extreme anxiety.

With VR assistance, the client is now working at a social services center.

Conway

Dillon Bayes, Michael Johnson, Cindy McKenzie and Johnathan Greene were honored for their work with a client who has learning disabilities and autism.

The young man was

working but was having trouble with the hours and transportation. The VR staff members worked with the client and he is now successfully employed as a dishwasher in a restaurant.

Florence

Michael Harrelson, Lide Harlee, Elizabeth Parker, Camilla Jones, Lisa Downer and Obediah Kirven from Florence area office and C.J. Bilka from the S.C. Pathways to Employment Program were honored for their work with a woman who has spina bifida.

SCVRD's Rehabilitation Technology department provided the client with a motorized scooter, which boosted her confidence and self-esteem. She received a number of other services while the support of the staff kept her motivated.

The client is now successfully employed as a receptionist.

Greenville

Staff members from SCVRD offices in Greenville and Anderson were honored for assisting a client who has significant physical and mental disabilities, which were controlled with medication.

Thanks to the efforts of Kerry Reece and Susan Looper from Greenville and Rick Poole and Richard Hall from Anderson he is working at an Upstate distribution center.



From left, Dillon Bayes, Michael Johnson, Cindy McKenzie and Johnathan Greene were cited for their work with the Conway case.

Local

continued from page 4

Laurens

Newberry staffers Pam Smith, Jonelle Boozer, Tim Gary, Donnie Estes, Irene Adair and Johnny Richard were recognized for their work with a special education student.

The client had a high school diploma but was uncertain about what to do next. Following VR services, he is successfully employed as a meat grinder.

Lexington

Steve Hanes, Betty Armstrong, Brenda Miller and Roy Hewett of the Lexington area office along with the staffs of SCVRD's Evaluation Center, Rehabilitation Technology Program and Information Technology Training Center were honored recently for their work with a client who had lost his job because of severe back pain.

The client, who had been employed as a diesel mechanic until he injured his back, was accepted for the Computer Assisted Drafting and Design curriculum at the Information Technology Training Center. VR also assisted with the purchase of hearing aids for the client.

Following graduation, he was hired as a drafter with a local civil engineering firm. The Rehabilitation Technology Program provided an ergonomic chair to help with his back pain.

Marlboro

KaTina Johnson and Jo-Ann Price of the Dillon office and Julia Cannon, James Smith, Judy Fullard, Fran Rivers and Melody Woodle of the Marlboro office were honored for their work with a man who sustained a traumatic brain injury.

The client had not worked since

his injury in a 1999 automobile accident. Following an extensive array of VR services, he is employed as a stocker in a grocery store.

Orangeburg

Ray Cooper, Timothy Adams, Willie Mae Goodwin, Joan McLauren, Carin Connelley, Ivory Canty and Laurel Lown were recognized for their work with a man with challenging physical and mental disabilities.

The client has diabetes, hypertension and problems with his weight. After receiving VR services, he is working in a dining facility. His diabetes is well managed and he continues to work out and watch his diet.

Richland

Brenda Winter, Dru Beckham, Dale Horton, Gardenia Coleman, Jan Campbell, Philip McNeil and Robert Taylor from the Richland area office were honored for their work with a client who had a stroke.

The client has limited range of motion and left-side weakness from the stroke, but had a history of janitorial work and wanted to continue that type of employment.

Persistent efforts on the part of the client and his VR team over a four-and-a-half year period paid off when he was employed as a janitor at an area college.

Rock Hill

Linda Ransom, Anita Halstead and Phil Hall from the Rock Hill area office and the SCVRD

Evaluation Center staff were honored for their work with a client who has epilepsy.

The client's seizures resulted in learning difficulties, memory problems and emotional and social issues. Following extensive services provided by his VR team, he is working at a grocery store and helps close the store on the nights that he works.

Spartanburg

Julie Teague, James Alva Young, Rosa Rogers, Marlene Comer and Jennie Thomas from the Spartanburg area office and Birt Dowling of SCVRD's Evaluation Center were honored for their work with a woman who has neurofibromatosis, learning impairments and additional medical concerns.

The client was determined to pursue post-secondary training. VR provided financial assistance and classroom accommodations during

the time the client attended college to earn her baccalaureate degree.

She is successfully employed as a therapeutic assistant at a community health center.



From left, Brenda Winter, Dru Beckham, Dale Horton, Gardenia Coleman, Jan Campbell and Philip McNeil were honored for their work with the Richland case.

Sumter

Pam Company, Clara Cooper, Beth Baker, Laura Spears and Leroy Nixon of the Camden sub-office and Tom Mayne from the S.C. Pathways to Employment program were recognized for their work with a young man who has autism.

Following VR services, the client participated in on-the-job training at a gym and was hired as an athletic equipment custodian.

Business partners generate opportunities

SCVRD areas honored business partners who have been especially helpful to our clients over the past year during the SCVRA conference.

Receiving special recognition were **ADP Tax Credit Services** of Florence; **CCS of South Carolina Inc.** of Florence; **Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp.** of Gaffney; and **Hengst of North America** of Camden.

ADP Tax Credit Services was recognized for looking beyond the disability and focusing on the potential of the individual. ADP, which offers employer-related business process management services, has hired nine VR clients in the past two years, six of whom are deaf and three who have physical disabilities.

ADP has offered sign language classes for their hearing employees and provided accommodations for those with physical disabilities.

The Marlboro office recognized CCS of South Carolina for its commitment to support people with disabilities. A division of CleanWorld USA, the industrial cleaning company has hired more than 25 clients from the Marlboro office and provided numerous community-based evaluations over the past three years.

Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp. of Gaffney was recognized for providing a variety of learning opportunities for Gaffney clients. The 30 to 40 clients a day who work on the Freightliner contract learn skills ranging from basic warehousing, including forklift operation and repackaging, to computer use, line sequencing and production preparation. More than 40 clients have gone on to become successfully employed after working on the contract.

Hengst of North America is a German-based automotive filter manufacturer with a facility in Camden. More than 20 VR clients work on the Hengst contract at the Camden Work Training Center and others work off-site at the Hengst facility. The company has hired seven VR clients for full-time jobs.

Also recognized were:

The **Stoplight Deli** of Aiken for its willingness to work with VR clients. Co-owner Diane Rutherford teaches them work skills and interpersonal skills while providing community-based evaluations and on-the-job training. She also has hired several clients.

Walgreens was the Anderson area's business partner of the year for its commitment to hire people with disabilities at its new distribution center.

The drug store chain built the distribution center to accommodate people with disabilities and pledged that they would represent at least a quarter of the projected 800-person workforce. Today, people with disabilities represent 38 percent of the workforce.

Grand Illusions, which makes Pit & Pendulum kits, was the Beaufort area's Business Partner of the Year. Clients at the Beaufort Work Training Center learn work skills by weighing and packaging glass beads for the company in addition to inspecting and packaging Pit & Pendulum kits.

Andy Enterprise was honored for its nine-year association with the Berkeley-Dorchester Work Training Center. Andy Enterprise grinds synthetic plastics and polystyrene material. Clients at the work training center learn valuable work skills by cleaning, inspecting and preparing the materials for grinding.

The Crothall Company, which

operates the housekeeping department at the Medical University of South Carolina, was Charleston's Business Partner of the Year. The company has provided on-the-job training for VR clients since 2006 and has employed 10 clients during the past year. It also is willing to go the extra mile to facilitate a client's job success.

Ebtron was honored for its partnership with the Conway Work Training Center. The company manufactures thermal dispersion airflow products. Clients at the training center learn valuable work skills as they build cable for the company.

Ebtron also has hired some clients in addition to participating in community-based evaluations.

Control TFS East was Greenville's Business Partner of the Year. The company, which provides housekeeping services at Haywood Mall in Greenville, has hired nine VR clients with a wide array of disabilities.

Sealed Air of Simpsonville was recognized for its willingness to work with people with disabilities. Formerly Cryovac, the company is a worldwide leader in perishable food packaging technologies. Six to 10 clients a day learn valuable work skills as they work on the Sealed Air contract at the Laurens Work Training Center.

Harsco Track Technologies was the Lexington area's business partner of the year.

Harsco came to VR last year looking for employees to work on a contract to build railroad track grinders for China. The company's need for electricians and mechanics was tailor-made for VR's new Skilled Workforce Apprenticeship

Continued on next page

Mandeville awarded Medal of Excellence

Kerry Mandeville is the 2008 recipient of the Commissioner's Medal of Excellence.

Mandeville, who officially retired in April, has come back part-time as program manager for the Youth Employment Services Grant.

He came to SCVRD in 1976 as a counselor



Mandeville

in Sumter, where his passion for his clients quickly set him apart. Although he moved to the State Office in 1980 as a program specialist, he has never lost his commitment or connection to people with disabilities, Commissioner Larry C. Bryant said in making the presentation.

"That commitment has been foremost in any assignment he's held, from training director to director of Case Services to area development director," Bryant said.

"His attitude has always been to do whatever needs to be done for the best benefit of our clients and our agency, without regard for position or personal gain. That attitude has given him many opportunities to advance in his career.

"Kerry is the ultimate professional and team player. He's a rich source of institutional knowledge and has the admiration of all who have worked with him, myself included," Bryant said.

Partners

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Training (SWAT) program and a partnership was born.

The program provides on-the-job training and clients acquire transferable skill sets with which to shape a career.

Carpenter Specialty Wire Products was recognized for its work with people with disabilities. For the past year and a half, Orangeburg VR clients have built wood pallets for the company and several clients have served apprenticeships to gain skills in a manufacturing operation.

Teleperformance, which provides Internet support for BellSouth DSL customers, was Richland's Business Partner of the Year. It was recognized for its willingness to assist people with disabilities. The company has hired a number of VR clients and also assisted with job shadowing, job mentoring and job placement.

Outback Steakhouse of Rock Hill was recognized for its willingness to work with people with disabilities. It has hired a young man who has a traumatic brain injury and his motivation and optimism is opening doors for other clients.

Harsco named VR Partner

Harsco Track Technologies of West Columbia is the winner of the 2007 VR Partner Award.

Last year, Harsco didn't know much about SCVRD but it had a \$350 million contract from the Chinese Ministry of Railroads to build 40 railroad track grinders. Harsco needed 75 to 100 new employees to build the machines that reshape worn rails to railroad specifications.

Harsco's need for electricians and mechanics was tailor-made for the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department's new Skilled Workforce Apprenticeship Training (SWAT) program, which offers clients the opportunity for a career with good pay and good benefits.

Clients are screened through the use of WorkKeys, a battery of tests that measures individual skill levels in such topics as locating information, reading for information and applied mathematics. An increasing number of employers are using WorkKeys to ensure that new employees have the skills necessary to do the job.



The SWAT program provides apprenticeship training designed to produce skilled workers who are competent in all aspects of a job.

The client learns on the job through a mentor in addition to attending classroom instruction provided by SCVRD.

Because the SCVRD clients have already been screened, Harsco saves time. It also saves training dollars because SCVRD pays a substantial portion of the training stipend.

The structured training period may last about three or more months, during which the client acquires valuable skills from which he can build a career.

SCVRA associations honor their peers

SCVRA associations honored their peers during the conference.

Those recognized were:

Kerry Mandeville was named the Administrators' Association Professional of the Year. He is program manager for the Youth Employment



Mandeville



Broadus-Lewis

Services Grant.

Dr. Joyce Broadus-Lewis, medical services supervisor for the Columbia Disability Determination Services office, received the Barry Cooper Leadership Award from the S.C. Association of Disability Examiners.

MeLinda Osburn, employment



Osburn



Baxter

coach in Spartanburg, received the Direct Client Services Professional of the Year Award.

Pearl Baxter, information resources consultant in the State Office, was named the Technical Services Professional of the Year.

And Chris Porter, team case processing supervisor for DDS in Greenville, was named the Professional Staff Association's Professional of the Year.



Porter

Placement institute 'excellent' training

An uncertain economy and a tight labor market are presenting real challenges for SCVRD counselors trying to find jobs for their clients.

"With the economy like it is now, employment is down for people without disabilities," said Ali Cato, case services specialist. "You can imagine what it is for people with disabilities."

A Rehabilitation Issues Institute in April titled "Mission Possible: SCVRD. . .The PLACement to Be," was designed to address that issue.

"The purpose of the institute was to rejuvenate, refresh and motivate," Cato said. "And I think it did. We got a lot of positive feedback."

Topics included the importance of taking care of referral sources, building rapport with the client, arriving at a realistic vocational

objective and providing services the client needs.

A section on placement strategies addressed finding job openings and marketing resources in addition to videos on how to and how not to handle employer contacts.



Participants also heard panel discussions from the employer and client perspectives.

"The majority of our clients need some form of assistance to

find appropriate employment," said Rhonda Pitts, area development director.

"The whole idea is to do it right from the beginning," she said. "Focus on what the client really wants and needs."

Responses to the institute were all positive. A sample:

"Excellent training. . .needed more time."

"Great institute."

"Good content. Very evident a lot of work and thought went into the development and presentation."

"The class was wonderful. I walked away with several ideas and projects that I would like to try at my office."

"Gave new ways of looking for jobs, matching jobs and placing clients."

Highlights from the SCVRA Legislative Breakfast



Pat Green, left, SCVRD area development director, with Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, D-Orangeburg.



House Speaker Bobby Harrell, R-Charleston, left, chats with Darline Graham, SCVRD business development specialist, and Commissioner Larry Bryant.



Rhonda Pitts, SCVRD area development director, with Sen. Thomas Alexander, R-Oconee.



Shirley Jarrett, DDS deputy director, talks with Rep. Dan Cooper, R-Anderson, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.



Rep. Rex Rice, R-Pickens, left, with David Turnipseed, Greenville area supervisor.



Rep. Laurie Slade Funderburk, D-Kershaw, talks with John Hornsby, Sumter area supervisor.

Enthusiasm, ability make Kruger a success

Benjamin G. Kruger of Lugoff is the winner of the Richard M. Kuffel Excellence in Education Award.

Kruger, who has autism, came to the Camden area office in 2004 when he was a 19-year-old junior in high school. He had trouble making decisions and needed guidance and support.

He participated in Job Readiness Training the summer before his senior year. He learned to stay focused and on task. He has a great attention for detail, which made him the perfect

trainee on any contract that required inspection.

After graduation, the employment coach helped Ben find a job at a newly opened gym. The owner was a former teacher and had worked with special needs students. He agreed to give Ben a chance, assigning him to clean equipment, wash towels and greet customers.

Ben is now 22 and has been working for about a year. He is popular among his coworkers for his friendly, outgoing attitude and recently spoke

at the Mayor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities luncheon.

The Kuffel award is named after a former SCVRD client services consultant **Kruger** who was instrumental in shaping the agency's school transition program.



11 SCVRD safety coordinators earn certification

Eleven SCVRD Safety Coordinators, earned OSHA (Occupational Health and Safety Administration) 10-Hour Certification on May 1 as part of the core training for their positions.

The training provides an introduction to OSHA policies, procedures and standards as well as general industry safety and health principles covered in the Occupational Safety and Health Act. The material to be learned is extensive, and it is necessary to earn a passing grade on a final test.

Neil Lown, SCVRD Safety and Risk Management Specialist taught the OSHA 501 training course.

Earning their certificates were Keith Rabon, Lorrie Vaughan, Everett Land, Sophia Streater, Bernard Salley, Kenneth Feagins, Lanie Robinson, Lu Harris, Ellen Neely, Todd Blake, and Alton Johnson.

Agency safety coordinators who previously earned OSHA 10 Hour Certifications include George Sessions, Richard Hall, Garry Elrod, James Smith, Jonathan Hardison,

Tom Hooper, Jerry Rodgers, Janet Spires, Michael Laney, Ernie Lathrop, Michelle Prevost, Floyd Donald, Steve Hanes, David McManus, Willie Mae Goodwin, John Face, Phil Hall, and Alan Altman.

By training safety coordinators in OSHA standards as well as in local safety practices, SCVRD has demonstrated a strong commitment to compliance with federal and state safety standards. The agency is committed to providing a safe working environment for its clients and staff.

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department reports that it printed 5,300 copies of this newsletter at a cost of \$1718, or about \$.32 a copy.



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