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Northwest Georgia Employers Recognized

October was Disability Awareness Month, and employers throughout Northwest Georgia were recognized for hiring disabled workers.

At the Gordon County 5th annual luncheon to honor area employees who hire and make accommodations for people with disabilities, the Calhoun **Home Depot** was named Employer of the Year. The runner-up employer was the Calhoun **Wal-Mart**, a winner of the award in past years..

The North Georgia Employer Committee (Fannin, Gilmer, & Pickens Counties) recognized five employers. The employers are: **Gold Kist, Inc.**; **Kismet, Inc.**; **Cheryl's Daycare**; **Appalachian Animal Hospital**; and **Chart Industries**.

L to R: Candy Day, Department of Labor (DOL) ; Tommy Cobb, DOL Vocational Rehabilitation (VR); Lisa Adkisson, DOL, Scott Jackson, DOL VR; Greg Zais, Chart Industries; Eddy Mullinax, Gold Kist, Inc.; Cheryl Bradburn, Cheryl's Daycare; Sherry Orr, DOL VR; Joyce Richards, Gold Kist, Inc.; Alex Westbury, DOL VR; Karen Corum, Kismet Products; Judy Salvaras, DOL VR; Mary Stover, DOL VR.

The Focus on Abilities award winners for Haralson, Paulding & Polk counties included: Alice Fincher, owner of **Fincher's Café** in Haralson County; **Kroger** of Paulding County; and **Goodyear Elementary** in Polk County. These businesses were honored for giving people the opportunity to enhance their abilities and become gainfully employed.

Above are the individual and employer Focus on Abilities award winners for Haralson, Paulding, & Polk Counties

The Rome-Floyd Disability Employment Committee's keynote speaker was Bruce Van Hoorn, owner of **Roman Wheelchairs**. Mr. Van Hoorn was named Employee of the Year in 1995. This year's Employer of the Year is **Wal-Mart Super Center** on Highway 411. Tim Smith, PhD, was awarded the Distinguished Meritorious Service Award; and accepting the Community Work Adjustment Site of the Year award were John and Charlie Schroeder of **Schroeder's Deli**.

Bartow County recognized **Ryan's Family Steakhouse** of Cartersville as their Employer of the Year. The management of Ryan's does not ask about a potential employee's disabilities but is concerned only with a person's ability to perform the duties required for the position.

L to R: Tommy Cobb, Department of Labor (DOL) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR); Debra Hessenbruch, DOL; Simon Kelly, Manager, Ryan's Family Steakhouse of Cartersville.

The keynote speaker of the Whitfield/Murray Disability Employment Awareness Council was Comedian **Will Marfori** who was born with Cerebral Palsy. Will, appearing at the Comedy Catch in Chattanooga the day before the luncheon, graciously donated his services to the event. Will emphasizes that "he is not a disabled person who is funny...he is a funny person who happens to be disabled."

Comedian Will Marfori, keynote speaker, and Hope Welch, Department of Labor Vocational Rehabilitation.

Gail Mann, right, presents the Employer of the Year award to Beaulieu of America, Inc.

The Harold Mann Employer of the Year Memorial Award was presented to **Beaulieu of America**. The award was named for Georgia State House Representative Harold Mann, deceased, who had been very supportive of the Council and its activities.

Need information about Equal Employment Opportunity? Visit the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission web site at www.eeoc.gov/.

Tax Credit Extended Through 2005

On October 4, President Bush signed into law the Working Families Tax-Relief Act of 2004. This legislation extends the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Welfare to Work Tax Credit through December 31, 2005. The reauthorization applies to new hires that begin work for an employer after December 31, 2003 and before January 1, 2006.

The new hire must belong to one of nine target groups for an employers to qualify for WOTC. For more information about applying for the WOTC, contact Karin Loverud at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at 202.622.6080 or visit http://www.uses.doleta.gov/wotcdata.asp.

National Accounting Champion

Terri Hill
National Accounting Champ

Terri Hill, an Alumni of **Northwestern Technical College**, recently was named the Accounting Champion at the Phi Beta Lambda National Conference in Denver, CO. She competed against the top two finishers from each of the 50 States to win the award.

Terri, laid off from her job in 2001, received financial assistance from the Workforce Investment Dislocated Worker Program (WIA), the HOPE Scholarship, and Pell Grant to update her skills. With her new diploma and national championship, Terri plans to pursue her career in business and hopes to remain in Northwest Georgia.

You may contact **Diane Mayes** or **Susan Doesburg** at Northwestern Technical College (706.764.3562 or 800.735.5726) for more information

www.Business.gov

The U.S. Small Business Administration has launched a new web site for businesses --- **www.business.gov**. The site guides businesses through the maze of government rules and regulations and provides access to services and resources to help businesses start, grow, and succeed. The site also provides business information by region and by industry.

Entrepreneurship Program

Coosa Valley Technical College (CVTC) tentatively plans to begin offering Entrepreneurship Programs in Spring 2005. Initially three classes will be offered that will culminate in Technical Certificates of Credit. Craig McDaniel, President, noted that the classes were "a natural addition to the strong economic development efforts CVTC has always maintained and particularly given its successful **Business Expansion Center** operation."

Since 2001, the Business Expansion Center has provided entrepreneurial support offering space for a number of businesses, assistance in business operation as well as mentoring by professionals throughout Floyd, Gordon, and Polk Counties.

Those interested in more information about the classes or the Business Expansion Center may contact **Ronnie Wallace** at the CVTC Business Expansion Center at 706.295.6383 or email rwallace@coosavalleytech.edu.

Congratulations Dalton Employer Committee

The **Dalton Employer Committee** was recognized as Employer Committee of the Year at the recent Annual Employer Committee Conference held in Savannah. Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond noted the many committee projects and community involvement of the committee when presenting the award.

During the past year, the Committee awarded several scholarships to area high school seniors and volunteered with the Chamber of Commerce Education is Essential Big Buck$ Workshop. The committee also dedicated their time, energy and financial support to Oakhaven, the Boys and Girls Club, and Whitfield-Dalton Day Care Center

This past year the Committee offered mini seminars for businesses with issues such as Small Business Legal Compliance, Mediation in Business, Bullies in the Workplace, Legal Issues Affecting Employers, and Immigration Issues Affecting Employers.

Anyone wanting more information about the award or committee activities may contact Kathy Williams at the Dalton Career Center, 706.272.2301.

Beaulieu of America

Kathy Williams, Dalton Department of Labor (DOL), and, Carol Drinks, Georgia DOL, train Beaulieu of America employees to use America's Job Bank (AJB). Businesses interested in AJB training may contact the employer representative at their local Department of Labor office.

WorkKeys Conference

The **WorkKeys** Southeastern Regional Conference will be held January 26-28, 2005 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel, Myrtle Beach, SC. This year's theme is "Improve Your Bottom Line One Person at a Time." The conference is geared to business and industry, economic developers, and labor representatives as well as workforce development professionals, secondary educators, and colleges.

A brochure and information are available through the Midlands Technical College web site, www.mtctraining.com.

We Employ America (WEA)

We Employ America is a national cooperative marketing and advertising campaign developed as a response to the decline in strength of American employment in manufacturing, research, development, accounting, programming, diagnostics, engineering, and service. The WEA logo exists as the unifying component of the campaign, enabling consumers to instantly identify the product offerings of WEA participants.

Membership is available to a company with a minimum of one product that meets WEA criteria. To bear the We Employ America mark, a product must have at least 65% of the total cost of the components, manufacture and packaging incurred within the United States. A member company may only use the WEA mark in association with qualified products unless all of that company's products meet the 65% standard. In that case, the WEA mark can be used in association with the brand itself.

For more information, visit the WEA web site at www.WeEmployAmerica.com.

The Business Informer is a quarterly publication of the Northwest Georgia WIB and the Coosa Valley / North Georgia Council of Chief Elected Officials. For more information about our business services contact Gwen Dellinger, Workforce Development Director, Coosa Valley RDC, PO Box 1793, Rome GA 30162-1793, 706.295.6485 or 800.332.1965 or Karen Howell, Workforce Development Coordinator, 706.277.7466, Vandy88@aol.com. Suggestions or articles to contribute - contact Karen..
An Equal Opportunity Program.

Happy Holidays