



PRESS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE: Immediate Release, April 9, 2009
MEDIA CONTACT: Lisa Spears, Public Information Officer
PHONE: (806) 438-0767
EMAIL: lisa.spears@spworkforce.org

REGION'S BUSINESSES, WORKERS RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

(South Plains) During its 8th annual employer awards ceremony, WorkForce Solutions South Plains recognized a number of employers for their efforts to develop and maintain a skilled labor pool in the region. Employer award recipients were nominated based upon their demonstrated commitment to the local communities through coordination and collaborative efforts that significantly improve the area's workforce by ensuring both employers and workers have the resources and the skills needed to remain competitive. Special emphasis is placed upon the results and benefits each have had on to the community, employers, workers and the region. Additional awards were provided to one WorkForce childcare provider, one youth participant, one volunteer board member and one partnering community based organization. The event was attended by more than 350 business, education and community leaders from throughout the region. Keynote remarks were provided by Texas Tech University Chancellor Kent Hance and other featured guests were United States Congressman Randy Neugebauer, United States Department of Labor Joseph Juarez and Texas Workforce Chairman Tom Pauken.

"The successes we highlighted today will strengthen the area's labor pool and ultimately, the South Plains economy," said WorkForce Solutions CEO Martin Aguirre. "This event was originally designed in 2001 to recognize regional employers for their collaborative efforts to significantly improve the region's current or future workforce as a result of innovative employment and training practices. We believe it is important to highlight these successes and congratulate those who have partnered with Workforce Solutions to ensure a well trained, highly skilled workforce is available within the region. It is as a result of these ongoing efforts that allow South Plains employers to remain competitive in the global economy and provide the tools needed for area workers to maintain the skills necessary to compete in the ever-changing workforce."

Following are the award recipients and a brief summary of each success story.

Exemplary Youth Award

ROBERT 'RYAN' CANCINO

Ryan Cancino faced a number of individual challenges and has overcome them through perseverance and discipline. Ryan enrolled in the WorkForce Solutions Youth Zone program in September of 2005 with a goal to pursue a career as an auto/diesel mechanic. His Youth Zone advisor placed Ryan in a summer job with Smith South Plains Ford in Levelland as a mechanics assistant. Smith South Plains was so impressed with Ryan's work ethic that the dealership hired him in a paid internship program that allows him to work while attending Levelland High School, where he maintains a passing grade point average and participated in the school athletics program. Ryan will graduate on time in May, 2009. He has spoken with representatives from Warren Cat, John Deere, the Ford Assist Program, WyoTech and Universal Technical Institute. Ryan would love the opportunity to work on Porsches, BMWs, and other vehicles. Robert "Ryan" Cancino is the epitome of a focused, motivated, young person with a great work ethic and an awesome personality that will take him places. Congratulations to Ryan Cancino, this year's recipient of the WorkForce Solutions Exemplary Youth Award!

WorkForce Solutions Legacy Award

SHARLA WELLS, WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sharla Wells was certified by the Texas Workforce Commission to serve the South Plains Regional Workforce Development Board in 1997 representing Garza County's Private Sector. Her expertise in Early Childhood Development also certified Ms. Wells to serve as the Board's Child Care Representative. Sharla was actively involved in the initial design and development of the organization, working closely with the fifteen County Judges and then Lubbock Mayor David Langston to establish the charter, board bylaws and chief elected official's partnership agreement. Elected as Board Chairperson in 2001, she served in that capacity through 2004 and during her tenure as a WorkForce Solutions Board Member, served a number of standing and advisory committees including the Executive Committee, Child Care Committee, Nominations Committee, Youth Advisory Council, Facilities Committee and Executive Search Committee. When Garza County employers sought assistance through WorkForce Solutions in 2005 to provide additional child care solutions for incumbent workers, Sharla played a pivotal role in the coordination and development of the 'My Special Place' daycare located in Post. She is a graduate of Texas Tech University with a Masters in Education and a Bachelors of Science in Home Economics. Sharla is a former member of the TTU College of Human Sciences Alumni Board, former presenter for the Texas Education Agency, former trainer and co-founder of the Peer Mediation Program, former recipient of the George H.W. Bush Points of Light Award and Texas Home Economics Association Teacher of the Year Award. She has been married to Jim Wells for over forty-two years. They have two children and one set of quintuplet grandchildren.

Exemplary Child Care Provider Award

WEE CARE CHILD CARE CENTER OF PLAINVIEW

Receiving the award: **Angel Morren, Executive Director**
Arlene Bailey, Assistant Director

Wee Care of Plainview has been a WorkForce Solutions Child Care Service Provider since 1991. The center has two locations and is supported by the United Way of Plainview. Wee Care staff adjusted the hours of operation to accommodate the needs of their customers, local men and women who live and work in the Plainview area. Two large Plainview employers, Excel Corporation and Wal-Mart Distribution Center, employ over 2,850, and most of their employees do not work 8-5. Wee Care extended their hours to accommodate the needs of these and other customers. In 2006, the Wee Care Child Care Center in Plainview began to participate in the Texas Early Education Model and is committed to increasing school readiness of children entering kindergarten. The director and staff are to be commended for their commitment to provide quality child care that meets the needs of their customers. Congratulations Wee Care Child Care Center of Plainview for receiving the 2009 Exemplary Child Care Provider Award!

Current Workforce Award

SUHOR INDUSTRIES dba WILBERT VAULT

Receiving the award: **Sylvester 'Sly' Jackson, West Texas Regional Manager**

West Texas Wilbert Vault has a long history of business success in Texas. Originally, the company used WorkForce Solutions to list jobs openings for truck drivers, manufacturing laborers, and backhoe operators. Due to continued success between the partnership, West Texas Wilbert Vault collaborated with Workforce Solutions and the State of Texas Office of the Attorney General Child Support Division to provide employment opportunities through the region's Non-Custodial Parent Program. Since the inception of the program, which assists non-custodial parents in obtaining gainful employment, over \$192,000 in child support has been returned to the custodial parents for child support owed. West Texas Wilbert Vault is being recognized today because of its collaboration with WorkForce Solutions' Non-Custodial Parent Project for its continued efforts to employ individuals who have had difficulty finding employment. This company went above the usual 'job posting only', working hand in hand with WorkForce Solutions to provide On-the-Job training opportunities and permanent employment for many of the individuals referred to them. While basic in nature, the working relationship between West Texas Wilbert Vault and Workforce Solutions is indicative of what can occur between employers, jobseekers, and the Regional Workforce System. Not only has this endeavor allowed West Texas Wilbert Vault fully man its operations, but has also allowed clients who might otherwise have difficulties obtaining employment maintain a job, a regular paycheck and ultimately allow them to fulfill their child support obligations. Congratulations to West Texas Wilbert Vault – this year's Current Workforce Award recipient!

Future Workforce Award

SOUTH PLAINS ACADEMY

Receiving the award: **Alejandro Ruiz, Academy Director
and Diana Ramirez, BCIS Instructor and Career
Guidance Instructor**

South Plains Academy is a unique Alternative Education facility in which staff, students, parents and the local community have a deep sense of work ethic and students are free to explore their full potential. South Plains Academy has incorporated a new Work Based Learning Program that is aimed at addressing and resolving workplace and life skills. As a result of the program's enormous success, the Academy has implemented a career center directly on campus to better assist students with all career and employment goals. In an effort to prepare the youth for their future, South Plains Academy staff and WorkForce Solutions Career Counselors interact with the students to address employment challenges, explore and develop and career goals and identify all available resources. Academy Director Alejandro Ruiz partnered with WorkForce Solutions in March to host the school's first-ever job fair. A number of local employers participated in the event and students were given a first-hand look at the interview process, the types of jobs available, the skill sets needed to gain these jobs and the average salaries paid. The event was so successful that other South Plains schools in the Student Alternatives Program, Inc. system of Texas are now in the process of duplicating the initiative in their local areas. Congratulations to the staff and students of South Plains Academy for receiving the 2009 Future Workforce Award!

Industry Sector Outreach Award

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER ANITA THIGPEN PERRY SCHOOL OF NURSING

Receiving the award: **Dr. Alexia Green, Dean
and Debra Flores, RN and Promotoras Project Director**

Under the direction of Debra Flores, RN, the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Anita Thigpen Perry School of Nursing has developed a ten-month *Promotoras* training certification program that better prepares nursing students to enable their rural healthcare clients with the healthcare, employment, social and community services needed. The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Anita Thigpen Perry School of Nursing and the Larry Combest Wellness Center collaborated to develop the outstanding, one-of-a-kind curriculum for this program and the TTU HSC Anita Thigpen Perry School of Nursing coordinated with other schools to gain accreditation for program instructors. Nursing students who participate in the classes are taught to work as community liaisons between low-income families and their healthcare providers. Initially, they are taught to address the patient's physical and mental health needs, followed by developing social goals as applicable, including employment goals. WorkForce Solutions representatives are given the opportunity to educate the nursing students concerning available employment and training services and resources. The presentations and materials provided by WorkForce solutions have been an added benefit as the Promotoras students are able to promote and better utilize the WorkInTexas job matching system when working with their rural healthcare customers. Since November 2007, a total of 15 Promotoras students have completed the program, pending only state certification. Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Anita

Thigpen Perry School of Nursing has both coordinated training as well as expanded opportunities for South Plains citizens by developing and engaging others in the *Promotoras* program, ultimately leading to better healthcare and social skills for all of rural West Texas. Congratulations to TTU Health Sciences Center Anita Thigpen Perry School of Nursing!

Service to Community Award

ASSIST HUMAN NEEDS, INC.

Receiving the award: **Lucy Brown, President**

Assist Human Needs was formed in 1991 as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization by a group of citizens from a cross section of Lubbock and fourteen surrounding counties. This is a fully volunteer operated organization whose Board members respond to the unmet needs of individuals referred by the agencies of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Adult Protective Services and WorkForce Solutions South Plains. The Board members of Assist Human Needs have years of experience and expertise in social and community service. The citizens served by Assist Human Needs include ex-offenders, disabled, unemployed, underemployed, those in poverty, the homeless and the hungry. The organization receives funding from various sources including the CH Foundation, the Lubbock Area Foundation and Wal-Mart and grant funding is utilized solely for the benefit of the needy. In collaboration with WorkForce Solutions, the organization assists with specific employment needs such as transportation, work clothes, car repair, medications, training assistance and food while the individual works to secure employment. Assist Human Needs fills gaps when no other source of assistance is available. Congratulations to Assist Human Needs, this year's recipient of the 'Service to Community' Award!

Service to Workers Award

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY CAREER CENTER

Receiving the award: **David Kraus, Director University Career Services**
Dr. Michael Shonrock, Sr. Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Texas Tech University Career Services provide a number of quality programs, services, and activities to support the career development and job search needs of over 28,000 university students, alumni, student parents, and University Administrative personnel. University Career Services developed 'Raider Jobs', an on-line university employment registration system designed to provide access to job postings, on-campus interviews, and applications for jobs across the nation. Raider Jobs is a full-service placement tool that aids in matching the student's education levels, skill sets and career goals with employer's criteria. Texas Tech University Career Services support local, regional, national and international employers and university students through job and career fairs, workshops and other relevant activities such as this year's first annual Texas Tech Career Connection, which places special emphasis on employment opportunities for students available in Lubbock and the surrounding area. Additionally, University Career Services designed Raiders Jobs to allow for any employer, including the workforce development board, to register any job opening into the university job matching system. As a result of this unique system, Workforce Solutions is able to post a number of job

openings registered by regional employers through WorkInTexas.com, allowing employer's job openings to be viewed and interested applicants are directed to apply through WorkInTexas. This partnership allows for a number of professional-level job openings in the area to be filled by TTU students seeking employment and faculty seeking to be recruited to a new job or career. Congratulations to David Kraus and the staff of Texas Tech University Career Services.

Employer of the Year Award

O'REILLY DISTRIBUTION CENTER OF LUBBOCK

Receiving the Award: **Paul Fagan, Lubbock Distribution Center Mgr.**
Mandy Hamilton, HR Supervisor

O'Reilly Automotive Inc. is one of the nation's largest specialty retailers of automotive aftermarket parts, tools, supplies, equipment and accessories; operating over 3,000 O'Reilly Auto Parts stores in 38 states. In 2007, with support from area legislators and City officials and by way of the collaborative efforts of the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, the City of Lubbock, the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Solutions, O'Reilly's elected to make Lubbock home of its newest 200,000 square foot distribution facility, now located in the Lubbock Business Park. The facility maintains state-of-the-art material handling systems and voice directed, streamlined work processes, designed to minimize duplication and increase productivity. During the preliminary employment phase, WorkForce Solutions South Plains assisted the management team at the O'Reilly's with new employee orientations, recruiting, screening, matching and referrals. The dynamics of the O'Reilly culture — 'hard work, respect for the employee, a safe working environment, competitive salaries and benefit packages' — drew a diverse group of applicants, including dislocated workers, post-secondary students, retired and active military and those seeking a career change. The project represents initial employment opportunities for approximately four hundred workers and \$15.4 million in annual salaries. This area wide collaboration, combined with the twenty-million dollar investment by O'Reilly's and four billion dollars in expected sales revenue of 2010, has indeed helped to strengthen the South Plains economy. Additional benefits to the community are the increased number of skilled workers available in the region, as O'Reilly employees are trained in a number of industry specific occupations. Congratulations to O'Reilly Distribution Center of Lubbock for being selected as the Workforce Solutions 2009 Employer of the Year!