

Personnel Monthly

State Personnel Department

Perceptions from the Secretarial Conference

WOW! What a celebration in Orange Beach for the 20th Annual Professional Development Conference! Incredible, wonderful, and awesome, were just a few of the adjectives that attendees used to describe the Conference.

Over 480 Administrative Assistants and Support Staff attended the Annual Conference. The planning committee took the Conference back to its beginnings by introducing a retro 80's theme. One of the attendees commented that she felt that "meeting with State employees from around the State makes you feel like a part of a large family." Another wrote, "...the most valuable aspects of the Conference were feeling appreciated, the fellowship with co-workers from across the State, and the informative classes."

Representatives Steve McMillan and Harry Shiver, along with State Personnel Director Jackie Graham, welcomed the participants and made opening

remarks.

Jeremiah Castille, former University of Alabama football player and father of current Alabama player Simeon Castille, delighted both Alabama and Auburn fans with his colorful stories about his mother and "The Bear." He reminded attendees of the



mentors in their lives and encouraged them to go out and become leaders themselves.

"Celebrating First-Class Professionals and First-Class Performance," presented by Ann Starks of the Department of Education, provided great tips to take

back to the work place.

Our final keynote speaker, Jenny Nolan, whose topic was "Life is Not a Stress Rehearsal," left participants "laughing and feeling stress free while they made their way home," commented one attendee. Another attendee said that her discussion was "so appropriate to everything in our lives, personal and professional—I really enjoyed her—she was a perfect ending to a great conference!"

First time Conference attendees April Ikner and Kerri Trippe of the Department of Rehabilitation Services said, "the highlight of the conference was having the opportunity to interact with other Administrative Support Staff from around the State of Alabama." They also won the 80's costume contest, which they said "was a lot of fun." April said the customer service session was the most helpful to her because it gave her "an extra boost of energy to bring back to Rehab. The class reminded me that the customer service I provide is a reflection on my department as a whole, not just on me. It also gave me a variety of skills to bring back to my job."

We look forward to planning another great conference for next year. In the meantime, be sure to look for photos from the Conference on the Personnel website at www.personnel.state.al.us or click [here](#).

Volume 1, Issue 6
December 17, 2007

Special points of interest:

- Help Us Save You Money!
- Perceptions from the 20th Annual Secretarial and Administrative Assistant Conference.
- Meet Terry Benton
- Donated Leave Requests: Your fellow state employees need your help!

Inside this issue:

Ask Sharon: Thank you	2
Personnel Training Schedule	2
Meet Terry Benton	2
Meet Terry Benton, Cont'd	3
WeSave Update	3
Personnel Department Information	4
Donated Leave Requests	4



Jeremiah Castille and Representative Harry Shiver welcomed attendees.

Ask Sharon Massey: A Special Thank You

Instead of answering employee questions this month, I would like to dedicate this column to all those who made this year's Professional Development Conference possible.

A big round of applause first to our conference sponsors. The Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel donated tote bags for the conference. Leather bound pocket calendars were donated by the Alabama State Employees Credit Union, and pens and note pads were donated by Colonial Bank. Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Alabama sponsored one of the breakfast buffets. We are extremely appreciative of each of these sponsors.

Also, many thanks to Representatives Steve McMillan and Harry Shiver, who greeted participants at the opening session. Their enthusiasm for the Conference was contagious!



The Conference would not have been such a success without our hard-working Planning Committee. Our Committee spent countless hours planning and actually working at the conference. We are so grateful to have these dedicated women on our Committee, and their contributions definitely left a lasting impression on me and the attendees. These special

ladies are: Co-chairs Kelley Black (Personnel) and Nadine Ellis (Corrections); Loria Broughton (Education); Miranda Carr (ADECA); Connie Dennis (DOT); Lisa Harris (Finance); Lori Montgomery (Rehabilitation Services); Melba Pouncy (DHR); Shelia Puckett (Public Health); Sandra Webster (Forensics Sciences); Cynthia Winkler (Revenue); and Norma Taylor (Personnel).

Finally, a very special thank you goes out to all the supervisors, department and division heads, Directors, and Commissioners for allowing their employees to attend the Conference. Without your support we would not have been able to welcome our more than 480 attendees.

Happy holidays to all of you, and I hope to see you in training in 2008!

Personnel Training Schedule—January 2008

The following seminars are being offered in January. All training offered by Personnel is free to the employee and the agency. For more information visit the Personnel website at www.personnel.state.al.us. To register for a class, please see your agency's training coordinator. We look forward to seeing you in class!

January 9-10: Dynamics of Supervision—Montgomery

January 10: Sexual Harassment Prevention—Huntsville

January 11: Sexual Harassment Prevention—Huntsville

January 23: Performance Appraisal for Supervisors—Montgomery

January 24: Progressive Discipline—Montgomery

January 29: Interview and Selection—Montgomery

January 30: Family and Medical Leave Act—Montgomery

Meet Terry Benton: Human Resources Employee of 40 Years!

Q: What lead to your job in Alabama State Government?

A: "I entered State service during a time of great social change and when there were tremendous opportunities to make meaningful contributions to our state. President John Kennedy had inspired many of my generation through his challenge to make a positive difference in our social welfare. Employment with the Department of Human Resources (then named Pen-

sions & Security) offered me that very opportunity."

Q: Could you tell us how your career with DHR has developed?

A: "Immediately after finishing college in 1967, I began my career in the Mobile County Office as a caseworker determining eligibility and providing supportive services to Old Age and Disability Pensioners in the south part of the county. My assigned territories in-

cluded Bayou La Batre, Coden, Mon Louis Island, Grand Bay, and Dauphin Island. At that time these communities were less populated and each had such rich traditions and unique cultures. I will always remember how appreciative they were of the assistance provided by the State and of their courtesies to me.

My next position with the State was as a child welfare worker with a caseload of nearly 80 children; today the State

*****Continued on Page 3

Meet Terry Benton, Cont'd.

standard is a more manageable 12 children per worker. The work then can best be described as frenetic. It took decades to develop the array of services that now support these children who are in the care and custody of the State.

After completing my Masters of Social Work, I became a child welfare supervisor for the protective service unit which was responsible for investigating child abuse and neglect reports throughout Mobile County. The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law had recently been enacted. Serving as the supervisor of this Unit required the development of new systems and procedures to handle the increased number of reports.

I was appointed the Director of the Dallas County Department of Human Resources in 1975. The staff in Dallas County was responsive to community needs and a number of innovative service programs were developed through their efforts. The agency had impressive community support that fostered an environment of collaboration and cooperation with churches and other social service agencies.

The Montgomery County Department

of Human Resources appointed me as their County Director in 1986."

Q: Could you tell us about your position?

A: "Personnel responsibilities for a large county DHR office involve supporting supervisors and managers in carrying out their demanding roles. I continue to staff complex cases with workers from the various programs. A large portion of my time is dedicated to working with other agencies, nonprofits, and local government, in developing initiatives to meet the social service needs of our community. The agency administers a number of financial programs including the child support, food assistance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and JOBS programs. The child welfare program includes the child abuse and neglect units, family services and daycare. The adult unit provides adult protective services to vulnerable adults. The Department serves nearly 60,000 Montgomery County citizens each year."

Q: What do you believe are the greatest rewards associated with working for the State?

A: "I receive immense satisfaction from recognizing that the efforts of so many hardworking and dedicated state employees are making such a positive difference in our community. It is also a privilege to have been appointed to a position that offers me the opportunity to work with and also to support the career development of so many dedicated and talented co-workers.

I am extremely proud of the quality of work that has been achieved through the economic assistance programs oftentimes contributing to the State being able to receive financial incentives from the Federal Government. I am equally proud of our service staff for their work in complying with the RC Consent Decree. Montgomery was the first large county to assert and maintain compliance enabling us to be an integral part of the historic child welfare reform process and the State's ultimate release from Federal Court supervision."

Q: Now for the big question...Alabama or Auburn?

A: "Roll Tide!"

WeSave Update

As announced last month, State Personnel is bringing the WeSave Program to Alabama State employees. We are pleased to announce that the employee discount program is currently scheduled to roll out in March of 2008. On the roll out date, each employee will receive three WeSave cards to use at local participating vendors. Under this program, you may give the additional cards to your spouse or children.

We are very excited about bringing WeSave to Alabama, and we are asking for your input and assistance. Because YOU are

the ones who are going to benefit from the program, we would like for you to email us the names of the local shops and restaurants that you frequent. Because this program will be statewide, we are looking for merchants in every city in Alabama. Please send an email with the names and locations of the various shops and restaurants in which you are interested to newsletter@personnel.alabama.gov.

Thank you for your assistance with the employee discount program!



The WeSave booth at the Professional Development Conference.



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The Alabama Merit System law created the Personnel Department to be administered by a Personnel Director who answers to an independent board. The Board currently consists of five members who serve staggered six-year terms. Two members are appointed by the Governor, one by the Lieutenant Governor, one by the Speaker of the House, and one member is an elected classified state employee who is subject to all merit system rules and regulations.

By law the Board is required to meet once each month. Its principal functions are to:

- *adopt and amend rules and regulations;
- *adopt and modify classification and pay plans;
- *hear the appeals of employees who have been dismissed;
- *represent the taxpayers' interest in the improvement of personnel management in the state; and
- *advise and assist the Personnel Director.

The Personnel Department is divided into 9 major areas: Classification and Pay; Examination; Certification; Payroll and Personnel Audit; Information Technology; Training; Legal; Administrative Law Judge; and Special Projects. Please remember, the Personnel Department is here to protect the merit system, and to serve as a resource for State employees and the citizens of Alabama!

The Personnel Board is scheduled to meet on January 16, 2008 at 10:00 am in the Board Room on the 3rd Floor of the Folsom Administrative Building in Montgomery. The meeting is open to the public.

Donated Leave Requests



To assist those who have qualified for catastrophic sick leave, State Personnel is listing the names of those state employees who are in need of donated leave. The following individuals need your help:

- ▶ Gayle Allen with Human Resources;
- ▶ Beverly Anderson with Revenue;
- ▶ Melissa Baxley with Industrial Relations;
- ▶ Cassandra Belyeu with Tourism and Travel;
- ▶ Virginia Brooks with Public Safety;
- ▶ Jena Anne Campbell with Corrections;
- ▶ Yu-Chien Chou with Finance;
- ▶ Kissi Coley with Public Health;
- ▶ Tabatha Cornelson with Transportation;
- ▶ James Farris with Revenue;
- ▶ Traci Floyd with Revenue;
- ▶ Marie Flynn with Manufactured Housing;
- ▶ Clara Frost with Mental Health;
- ▶ Olympia Gadson with Corrections;
- ▶ Jacqueline Gaines with Human Resources;
- ▶ Mary Joan Greene with Public Health;
- ▶ Pamela Haney with Human Resources;
- ▶ Gloria Higgins with Human Resources;
- ▶ Angela Johnson with Corrections;
- ▶ Annie Johnson with Human Resources;
- ▶ Sherry Johnson with Transportation;
- ▶ Cleo Jones with Mental Health;
- ▶ Terry Jones with Revenue;
- ▶ Sheila Lane with Human Resources;
- ▶ Debra Luckie with Pardons & Paroles;
- ▶ Barbara Mills with Human Resources;
- ▶ Dorothy Montgomery with Corrections;
- ▶ Alisia Morgan with Corrections;
- ▶ Angela Myrant with Mental Health;
- ▶ Les Nicholson with Revenue;
- ▶ Brynn Pierce with Public Health;
- ▶ Arthur Russell, Jr. with Transportation;
- ▶ Bonnie Russell with Transportation;
- ▶ Samson Salako with Public Health;
- ▶ Diane Smith with Human Resources;
- ▶ Mary Smith with Public Safety;
- ▶ Robert Smith with Conservation;
- ▶ Lillian Snipes with Human Resources;
- ▶ Kelli Stever with Industrial Relations;
- ▶ Jackie Ward with Attorney General; and
- ▶ Myra Webb with Historical Commission.

For more information on how to donate leave to one of these individuals, please visit the State Personnel Department website at www.personnel.state.al.us. To donate your leave to a qualified employee, please visit your personnel manager and request a Form 25A or [download](#) it from the State Personnel website.