



WORKFORCE *Solutions*

S O U T H P L A I N S

SEPTEMBER 2010

FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS

CREATING AN EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES WORKFORCE:

THE INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN HEALTH AT TEXAS TECH

In 1997, when The Institute of Environmental and Human Health at Texas Tech University (TIEHH) was formed to find solutions to tough environmental problems, TIEHH's Director, Dr. Ronald Kendall, envisioned much more. Under Dr. Kendall's leadership, TIEHH expanded operations in 2000-2001 to include a new, state-of-the-art, nonwoven fabric manufacturing and research laboratory. Soon after, lab manager and Associate Professor Dr. Seshadri Ramkumar began developing value-added applications to cotton and other natural fibers using emerging technologies. Through TIEHH's Research and Development, Dr. Ramkumar created 'Fibertect', a world-renowned, patented, nonwoven textiles decontamination wipe unique to West Texas using cotton-based textile research. Proven to absorb fifteen times its weight, raw cotton is used to construct the top and bottom layers of Fibertect to provide structural coherence, while the center layer of fibrous-activated carbon absorbs oil and the volatile compounds used for chemical warfare. Noted by R&D leaders around the world, Fibertect is now billed for use by the U.S. Department of Defense to aid military service men and women in treating toxic chemical contamination, and finding new applications in oil spill situations around the world. As a result of his ongoing research and development of advanced technologies, Dr. Ramkumar is recognized as a world-renowned leader in international collaboration between the business and research elements of the world's cotton industry through science-based market development. His role in conducting the 'Advances in Textiles, Machinery, Nonwovens and Technical Textiles Conference' in the Indian State of Tamilnadu, the epicenter of the nation's textile industry, has greatly advanced technical textiles through research and development performed at TIEHH using American-grown cotton. While India's production levels continue to increase, the country's cotton supply can no longer meet the demands. In partnership with Plains Cotton Growers, Dr. Ramkumar is promoting the high-quality of South Plains cotton, prompting Indian leaders to look to the region as a new source to meet their manufacturing demands. As Green Technology demands increase, TIEHH continually seeks alternative methods of developing value-added applications to cotton and other natural fibers using emerging technologies. Originally employing only seven graduate students and two research scientists in 1997, TIEHH's laborforce has grown to over two-hundred employees, each trained in Emerging Technologies R&D. TIEHH partners with Workforce Solutions South Plains to provide assistance with training & professional development resources, job screening and matching, and Emerging Technologies labor market information.



"There are so many applications of TIEHH's technology using South Plains cotton to create products that have never been considered before. As a result of our ongoing efforts, Texas Tech University is recognized worldwide as a leader in value-added cotton nonwovens research."

- Dr. Seshadri Ramkumar



Shown in one of TIEHH's labs, Dr. Seshadri Ramkumar demonstrates the process of creating a nonwoven textile using West Texas cotton.



TIEHH plays a vital role in developing a skilled, educated workforce to meet the demands of America's Emerging Technologies Industry. Pictured are three Texas Tech University graduate students in Dr. Ramkumar's lab at TIEHH.



Dr. Seshadri Ramkumar facilitates tour of TIEHH Nonwovens and Advanced Materials Laboratory. Pictured with Dr. Ramkumar are Workforce Solutions Chief Operations Officer Rocky Brown and Chief Executive Officer Martin Aguirre.



Dr. Ramkumar explains the nonwoven materials production process to Lisa Spears, Workforce Solutions Public Information Officer while Rocky Brown views the production of nonwoven textiles.

All About Jobs

STATEWIDE WORKFORCE INITIATIVE BENEFITS NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS, CHILDREN

In 2005, the Office of the Attorney General partnered with the Texas Workforce Solutions Network, the Texas Workforce Commission and the region's judicial system to initiate a child support compliance and employment project in Texas. The project, called NCP Choices, was created to provide child support monitoring and ongoing employment services to low-income non-custodial parents (NCP's) who have fallen behind on their child support payments.

Workforce Solutions CEO Martin Aguirre said the South Plains region's overall success is greatly attributed to the ongoing efforts of the Workforce Center staff who work diligently to provide NCP's with the resources necessary to obtain employment. "The increased frequency, amount, and consistency of child support payments made by the non-custodial parents have made a very positive impact regionally and throughout Texas. The NCP Choices program has helped to increase employment rates, reduce unemployment claims by NCP's, and reduce the number of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families subsidy recipients. The program helps both the non-custodial parent and the custodial parent maintain economic self-sufficiency."

Following a recent program analysis performed by The Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas in Austin, the economic benefits to the state, to taxpayers, and to the NCP Choices participants and their families were clearly substantial. The report indicates that even a conservative tabulation suggests the economic benefits are roughly twice the costs. The study showed that: Non-Custodial Parents ordered into the program paid their child support fifty percent more often and paid \$54 per month more in child support, resulting in a forty-four percent increase in total collections; Paid their child support fifty-three percent more consistently over time and continue to pay child support more often, in greater amounts and more consistently over time, even two to three years after entering the program; Were employed at eighteen percent higher rates; And, would less likely file an unemployment claim. Additionally, Custodial Parents associated with the NCP Choices program were seventeen percent less likely to receive government subsidies in the first year after the program.

The South Plains program, one of only eighteen NCP Choices programs in Texas, has been in effect since 2008. Since that time, local program coordinators have enrolled 324 NCP's into the program, of which over 77% were placed into employment and, as a result, have paid over \$768,000.00 of child support to the Texas OAG Child Support fund. Workforce Solutions South Plains was recently recognized by the Texas Attorney General as one of three '2010 NCP Choices Top Performer Award' recipients in Texas.

"The increased frequency, amount, and consistency of child support payments made by the non-custodial parents have made a very positive impact regionally and throughout Texas."

-Martin Aguirre, Workforce Solutions CEO

SOUTH PLAINS ECONOMY

A Workforce Perspective

As the summer season draws to an end, millions of Americans will begin to prepare for fall and the upcoming Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays. It is at this time each year that many of us reflect back on our good fortune, giving thanks for our families, friends, faith...and jobs. This year, however, many Americans will focus not on the individual successes of the past year but instead, will only look forward to what the new year may hold for them... A good job with a steady income.

As evidenced by the region's continued economic strength during the recent years of national economic decline, citizens of the South Plains region have much for which to be thankful....Sustained job creation and employment opportunities made available by the region's employers.

"The volatile national employment trends seen over the past year, when compared to the statewide and regional trends, only reinforce the economic stability in Texas and the South Plains region. Our region's continued growth can be attributed to the resilience of our workforce and the diligence of South Plains employers to create jobs even through the most challenging of times," said Workforce Solutions South Plains CEO Martin Aguirre.

The region's annual job openings grew from 129,500 in July, 2009 to 130,400 in July, 2010. At the same time, the area's civilian labor force (CLF) also showed growth of 2,846 or 1.4 percent and the total monthly Nonagricultural Employment grew from 129,700 in to 130,400 jobs. The Professional and Business Services industry held the largest percentage of workers in the South Plains (31.5 percent), followed by Sales and Office Occupations (27.1 percent) and Service Occupations (16.6 percent). The South Plains regional unemployment rate held steady in July of this year, showing a .2 percent decrease over the month (from 6.7 percent in July to 6.9 percent in June).

Comparatively, the total Nonagricultural Employment in Texas over the year showed the state gained 134,600 jobs, an annual increase of 1.3 percent. Texas' CLF estimates were shown as 12,206,414 in July of this year, an increase of 143,350 persons, or 1.2 percent, since July of 2009. The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose from 7.9 percent in July 2009 to 8.2 percent in July 2010.

When compared to the national total nonfarm payroll employment decline of 131,000 in July of this year, and the nation's sustained high unemployment rate of 9.5 percent since July of last year, it is clearly evident that the South Plains region and Texas as a whole continue to rise to the challenges of the national economic decline.

Occupational Categories	Count	South Plains Regional Percent	Texas Statewide Percent
Mgmt., Professional Occs.	52,979	31.5	33.3
Service Occupations	27,901	16.6	14.6
Sales and Office Occupations	45,478	27.1	27.2
Farming/Fishing/Forestry Occs.	3,930	2.3	0.7
Constr., Extraction Occs.	16,817	10.0	10.9
Production, Transport. Occs.	20,941	12.5	13.2

"Our Business Services professionals work diligently to ensure the region's employers have the skilled, qualified workers they need in order to remain competitive in today's job market. Since June of 2009, Workforce Solutions South Plains has helped to fill over twenty-thousand job openings created by the region's employers. These efforts, combined with the training initiatives funded by the TWC and Workforce Solutions, have proven to be very beneficial for area employers and job seekers alike," said Workforce Solutions South Plains Business Services Manager Nate Bratcher.

From June, 2009 through June, 2010, Workforce Solutions South Plains has assisted over eleven-thousand unemployment insurance claimants, of which over eight-thousand have been placed into employment. The total number of job seekers assisted by Workforce Solutions South Plains during the same twelve month period are over 27,550. And, through the Texas Back to Work Program, over forty employers have participated in training activities which have increased the skill levels of over eighty-five workers in the region. Through the new program unveiled this year, over \$55,000 has been rewarded to the region's participating employers.

The stability of the South Plains economy has been recognized throughout Texas and nationally. Most recently, the Texas Metropolitan Statistical Area rankings, reported by the Texas Workforce Commission in July of this year, show the Lubbock MSA is ranked number four among all other MSA's in Texas in terms of holding the lowest sustained unemployment rates (Lubbock MSA and Bryan College Station tied at #4 with an annual unemployment rate of 6.7 percent). The report also shows that the Lubbock MSA is ranked number two in the state for monthly job growth, and ranked number eight in Texas for annual job growth.

"As we celebrate the many successes of the past year, we should also be mindful of the many benefits of residing in the South Plains region of Texas. The overall twelve-month employment picture only contributes to the philosophy that the South Plains is truly one of the best places in the nation to live and to work," said Mr. Aguirre.

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TEXAS METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA RANKINGS
Total Nonagricultural Employment

July 2010

Unemployment	Rate	Monthly Growth	Rate	Actual	Annual Growth	Rate	Actual
1 Midland	5.7%	1 Amarillo	0.5%	500	1 San Angelo	3.0%	1,300
2 Amarillo	5.8%	2 Lubbock	0.0%	0	2 College Station-Bryan	2.9%	2,700
3 San Angelo	6.6%	3 Corpus Christi	-0.5%	-800	3 Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos	2.5%	18,600
4 College Station-Bryan	6.7%	3 Odessa	-0.5%	-300	4 McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	2.0%	4,200
4 Lubbock	6.7%	5 Abilene	-0.6%	-400	5 Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood	1.9%	2,300
6 Abilene	6.8%	5 Dallas-Plano-Irving	-0.6%	-13,000	6 Dallas-Plano-Irving	1.3%	26,100
7 Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos	7.3%	7 Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown	-0.7%	-17,000	7 Corpus Christi	1.0%	1,700
8 Waco	7.5%	7 Wichita Falls	-0.7%	-400	8 Sherman-Denison	0.7%	300
9 San Antonio-New Braunfels	7.7%	7 Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos	-0.7%	-5,700	8 Lubbock	0.7%	900
10 Longview	7.8%	10 Brownsville-Harlingen	-0.9%	-1,100	8 Odessa	0.7%	400
10 Texarkana	7.8%	10 Fort Worth-Arlington	-0.9%	-7,600	8 El Paso	0.7%	1,800
12 Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood	7.9%	10 Midland	-0.9%	-600	12 Longview	0.6%	600
13 Tyler	8.0%	10 Sherman-Denison	-0.9%	-400	12 Fort Worth-Arlington	0.6%	5,200
13 Victoria	8.0%	10 San Antonio-New Braunfels	-0.9%	-7,800	14 Waco	0.5%	500
15 Wichita Falls	8.2%	10 College Station-Bryan	-0.9%	-900	14 Abilene	0.5%	300
16 Odessa	8.3%	16 Victoria	-1.0%	-500	16 Texarkana	0.4%	200
17 Corpus Christi	8.4%	16 Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood	-1.0%	-1,300	17 Tyler	0.2%	200
18 Fort Worth-Arlington	8.5%	18 Longview	-1.1%	-1,000	18 Laredo	0.1%	100
18 Dallas-Plano-Irving	8.5%	18 San Angelo	-1.1%	-500	18 Brownsville-Harlingen	0.1%	100
20 Sherman-Denison	8.6%	20 Waco	-1.4%	-1,500	20 Victoria	0.0%	0
21 Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown	8.8%	21 Beaumont-Port Arthur	-1.5%	-2,300	21 Amarillo	-0.1%	-100
22 Laredo	9.2%	22 Laredo	-1.7%	-1,500	21 San Antonio-New Braunfels	-0.1%	-800
23 El Paso	10.2%	23 Texarkana	-1.8%	-1,000	23 Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown	-0.4%	-9,700
24 Beaumont-Port Arthur	11.1%	23 El Paso	-1.8%	-4,900	24 Midland	-0.5%	-300
25 Brownsville-Harlingen	11.7%	25 Tyler	-2.2%	-2,100	24 Beaumont-Port Arthur	-0.5%	-800
26 McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	12.3%	26 McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	-2.9%	-6,400	26 Wichita Falls	-1.0%	-600

Creating A Skilled Workforce



BIG NEWS FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS IN TEXAS

In partnership with the Texas Workforce Solutions, Workforce Solutions South Plains proudly announce the **Skills for Small Business** training grants available to small business owners in Texas. It is these small business owners, or those with fewer than one-hundred employees, who serve as the catalyst for continued economic strength in the South Plains region.

“The state’s more than 433,000 small employers are the backbone of Texas’ business community. The training resources available through the Skills for Small Business program helps to increase business competitiveness while upgrading the skills of current employees and preparing newly hired employees for the employer’s job requirements,” said Workforce Solutions CEO Martin Aguirre.

Skills for Small Business grants emphasize training aimed at upgrading the skills of newly hired full-time employees and full-time incumbent workers. Training must be provided by a public community or technical college or the Texas Engineering Extension Services and must be selected from active course catalogs and schedules, including for credit, continuing education, on-line or other available unpublished courses. The small business owners are given the authority to identify the available training courses which best suit the employer’s needs.

The new training program funds tuition and fees up to \$1,450 per newly hired employee and up to \$725 per incumbent employee, and is focused on training for occupations within the Governor’s six targeted Industry Clusters or those targeted occupations identified by Workforce Solutions South Plains. Employers are required to pay the prevailing wages in the local labor market for the trainees funded under the grant.

For more information concerning the Skills for Small Business training grants, contact Danny Soliz of Workforce Solutions at (806) 744-1987 x-2005 or email danny.soliz@spworkforce.org

REGIONAL YOUTH GAIN SKILLS, WORK EXPERIENCE

Each year in May, as the school season ends for summer, Workforce Solutions Youth Zone career counselors begin matching South Plains’ youth with employers. Designed to provide the region’s youth with the work and life skills required by employers, the Workforce Solutions’ 2010 Summer Work Experience initiative matched over five-hundred eligible participants ages 14-24 to a summer job.

Workforce Solutions CEO Martin Aguirre said South Plains employers play a critical role in the success of the summer employment initiative. “The willingness of local employers to provide one-on-one mentoring to participating youth greatly increases the value of this initiative.”

Over two-hundred of the region’s employers created job opportunities for participating youth, each of whom were paid minimum wages via the subsidized program available through Workforce Solutions. And, in an effort to expand the number of youth assisted throughout the region, South Plains Community Action Association invested additional block grant funds to the summer work experience program.

“This employer-driven initiative is of paramount importance to the development of tomorrow’s workforce,” said Mr. Aguirre. “Workforce Solutions’ Youth Zone Career Counselors work diligently with participating employers to impart in each young person the work skills needed to compete in the job market upon high school or college graduation.”

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Dyan Dugan with Ashley Quezada, Muleshoe High School

“The Muleshoe Public Library has participated in the Summer Work Experience program for several years. The kids are fast learners and really help us out by performing so many of the daily tasks required.”

-Dyan Dugan, Muleshoe Public Library



-Ben Diaz with Robert Jimenez, Littlefield High School

“Robert has done very well here. He’s a fast learner, always shows up on time and follows instructions. We have really enjoyed having him with us this summer.”

-Ben Diaz, Littlefield District Court 154



Evelyn Quigley with Jessica Gomez, Lubbock High School.

“Jessica has been a joy to have at La Paloma. She learns very quickly, has a very pleasant attitude and always looks for opportunities to learn new things. Now that the Summer Youth Employment program is complete, we will follow-up with Jessica to provide her with part-time employment during her senior year.”

-Evelyn Quigley, La Paloma Center of Lubbock



Margaret Golightly with Anthony Castellano, Levelland High School

“Anthony was very professional, going above and beyond what was expected of him. In fact, we were so pleased with his work and life skills that we are working with him to continue part-time employment at the Levelland Police Department.”

-Margaret Golightly, Levelland Police Department

Each young person matched to a summer job was required to complete orientation prior to beginning their first day at work. Sessions were designed to instill life skills and leadership skills while helping them realize which occupations would best suit him or her. All youth are screened and matched to employer requirements.

“By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each young person, we are better equipped to match them with the appropriate employer,” reported Youth Zone Career Counselor Sara Hallett. “More importantly, the orientation helps the kids by encouraging them to be the very best at their jobs.”

Workforce Solutions South Plains will continue to provide employment and training services to all eligible in school or out of school youth upon completion of the Summer Work Experience program. For more information about Workforce Solutions’ year-round youth employment and training services call toll-free 1-866-765-5038.

SOUTH PLAINS

TARGETED OCCUPATIONS & INDUSTRIES

Workforce Solutions South Plains began a new program year in July, prompting the Board of Directors to establish current guidelines directed at ensuring future training initiatives are expended on the area's current high priority industries and targeted occupations. The board targets funding to the region's industries and occupations which are the fastest-growing and/or which have added the most jobs. Following a strategic planning session held in June, Workforce Solutions established new guidelines for future expenditures to ensure skills training is aligned to meet the demands of South Plains employers. Here are the newly established Targeted Occupations and High-Priority Industries.

HIGH-PRIORITY INDUSTRIES 2010 - 2011

- Support Activities For Mining
- Building Equipment Contractors
- Automobile Dealers
- General Freight Trucking
- Depository Credit Intermediation
- Business Support Services
- Elementary And Secondary Schools
- Offices Of Physicians
- Home Health Care Services
- General Medical And Surgical Hospitals
- Nursing Care Facilities
- Residential Mental Health Facilities
- Child Day Care Services
- Full-Service Restaurants

TARGETED OCCUPATIONS 2010 - 2011

- Accountants and Auditors
- Administrative Services Managers
- Automotive Service Technicians and Technologists
- Bookkeeping/Accounting/Auditing
- Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists
- Business Operations Specialists, All Other
- Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers
- Claims Adjusters, Examiners and Investigators
- Computer Support Specialists
- Dental Assistants
- Dental Hygienists
- Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers
- Electricians
- Elementary School Teachers, Ex. Special & Vocational Ed.
- Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
- Heating/Air Conditioning/Refrigeration Mechanics
- Industrial Machinery Mechanics
- Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational nurses
- Machinists
- Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
- Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians
- Medical and Health Services Managers
- Medical Assistants
- Medical records and health information technicians
- Medical Secretaries
- Middle School Teachers, Ex. Special and Vocational Ed.
- Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics
- Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- Physical Therapist Assistants
- Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters
- Pre-school Teachers, Ex. Special Education
- Radiologic Technologists and Technicians
- Registered Nurses
- Respiratory Therapists
- Secondary School Teachers, Ex. Special and Vocational Ed.
- Surgical Technologists
- Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line
- Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers
- Truck Driver, Heavy Duty Tractor Trailer
- Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers

Note: Wage information for the region's Targeted Occupations may be found at <http://www.spworkforce.org/lmi/targeting/BLSWages.pdf>

BUSINESS FOCUS



“Over the years, ACG has worked extensively with Workforce Solutions of the South Plains to recruit employees for the denim mill. Located in rural West Texas, Workforce Solutions greatly assists in enhancing the pool of applicants by directing the eager, skilled job seekers our way.

Our Workforce Solutions Business Services



ACG's Cleo Smith, Production Manager and Natalia Moore shown in front of a cotton mill.

In business for over 34 years, American Cotton Growers (ACG) is the only denim manufacturing company west of the Mississippi River. ACG focuses on the development and production of value-added, high-fashion denim fabrics for its customers, including many of the world's most recognized apparel companies and retail outlets such as Abercrombie & Fitch, Gap and Levi's. Located in the largest cotton producing region of the world, ACG has the capacity to consume up to 150,000 bales of cotton each year, most of which is grown within a fifty mile radius of the mill located in Littlefield.

Part of the Textile and Apparel Division of Plains Cotton Cooperative Association (PCCA), ACG was acquired in 1987 from another farmer-owned cooperative. PCCA's strong financial statement has enabled ACG to continually invest in the most modern textile equipment. Consequently, ACG's state-of-the-art denim manufacturing process can produce thirty-eight million linear yards of denim annually in a variety of styles, shades and weights to meet the needs of each individual customer. In addition to creating its own unique product line, ACG's product development staff collaborates with customers to develop styles that fit current trends.

ACG employs over five-hundred seventy employees, making it the largest employer in Lamb County. The company offers its employees a variety of benefits including multiple insurance plans, a 401K retirement plan with employer base and matching contributions, an educational expense reimbursement plan, and an incentive bonus based on production, among others. They also provide ongoing on-the-job training and professional development training to all new and incumbent workers, ensuring their workforce is well trained in current textile manufacturing applications.

Representative does a great job at keeping us informed of state and federal programs which would benefit our company, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Texas Back to Work and Summer Youth Employment programs.”

- Natalia Moore, Director of Human Resources

2010

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WORKFORCE CENTER LOCATIONS

Toll-Free (866) 765-5038 | www.spworkforce.org

**Business and Career
Center of Lubbock**
1218 14th Street
Lubbock, TX 79401
(806) 744-5378

**Business and Career Center
of Levelland**
1102 Austin Street
Levelland, TX 79336
(806) 894-5005

**Business and Career Center
of Plainview**
1001 N. IH27, Ste. 228
Plainview, TX 79072
(806) 293-8566

**Business and Career Center
of Littlefield**
1700 Hall Avenue
Littlefield, TX 79339
(806) 385-7897

**Business and Career Center
of Brownfield**
1321B Tahoka Road
Brownfield, TX 79316
(806) 637-4234

**Business and Career Center
of Muleshoe**
203 S. Main Street
Muleshoe, TX 79347
(806) 272-7540

South Plains Community Action Association
224 S. Berkshire
Crosbyton, TX 79322
(806) 675-7307

**Yoakum County
Literacy Center**
500 N. Avenue C
Denver City, TX 79323
(806) 592-5919

Child Care Services
1213 13th Street
Lubbock, TX 79401
(806) 744-3572
Toll-Free (800) 658-6284

Board Administration
1301 Broadway, Ste. 201
Lubbock, TX 79401
(806) 744-1987