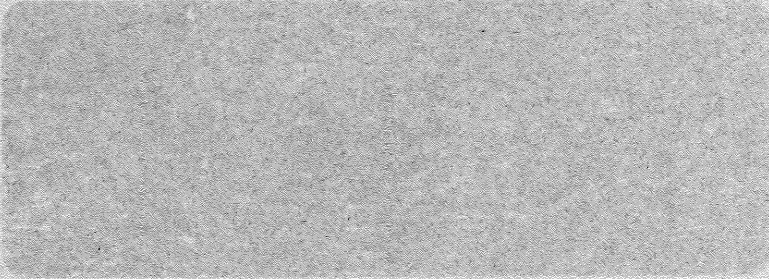





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Helping Minnesotans Help Themselves Achieve Economic Security

1993 Annual Report



Minnesota Department of Economic Security
formerly the Minnesota Department of Jobs and Training
390 North Robert Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101



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This annual report features highlights from selected department activities and programs that were reported in the department's monthly newsletter, Connecting. Upon request, this publication is available in alternative formats. Inquiries and comments can be submitted to Annual Report/CommTeam, Minnesota Department of Economic Security, 390 North Robert Street, St. Paul, MN 55101.

State Services for the Blind Division

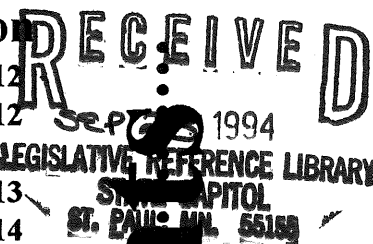
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Quality transformation, internal changes highlight 1993

By Commissioner R. Jane Brown

A look back at 1993 brings to my mind a period of tremendous change for each division of the department. Some of it is change for today, and some will prove to be change for tomorrow. All of it, however, is designed to improve the services we deliver to our customers.

Total Quality training at all staff levels is bringing about a better understanding and awareness of who our customers are, as well as their needs.

Quality improvements are taking place within all divisions, as well as within the department's administration. Our Quality year was highlighted by union agreements with AFSCME

Standing water in fields like this one in southeastern Minnesota caused many Minnesotans to seek assistance from at least six different programs administered by two of our divisions.



and MMA, the self-assessment, and the formation of numerous teams undertaking projects that are bringing real change to the Department of Jobs and Training.

In addition to providing basic services to our customers, each division met a host of challenges in 1993. We saw a department-wide commitment to staff training and awareness of the Americans With Disabilities Act; the creation of the new Independent Living Council and the changes it brings to Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind, the initiation of "One Stops," ResSearch, and Redesign of Job Service; new livelihood within Job Service Employer Committees across the state and bonding for new Head Start facilities.

Also, area Job Service/Unemployment Insurance offices and various program personnel within the Community Based Services division expedited benefits and services to flood

The transformations have not only created more welcoming environments for our customers, but also more professional and efficient worksites for DJT staff.

victims this summer and fall. The positive effects of these efforts will be felt for years to come.

One significant change that cannot be overlooked is the "makeover" that has occurred in our 25-year-old building at 390 North Robert St.. Similarly, most of our offices have now been brought into the 1990s with remodeling and new equipment.

The transformations have not only created more welcoming environments for our customers, but also more professional and efficient worksites for DJT staff.

Many of the challenges and successes we faced as co-workers and as a department in 1993 will serve as building blocks for new tests and tasks in 1994. As we grow and learn from where we have been, we can all take pride in a job well done.

1993: The Year of the Customer

By Rick Hokanson, director
Office of Quality Resources

The year 1993 was the first full year of our customer focused "Total Quality Organization" (TQO) journey. It was a year that brought many educational experiences for managers and supervisors and hundreds of front line staff. It also included completion of a department-wide self-assessment using the Minnesota Quality Award, train-the-trainer sessions in conducting a TQO series, and Commissioner Brown was appointed to the Minnesota Council for Quality.

In addition, a new team consisting of career leaders in the department was established to, among other things, increase the capacity to sustain TQO over the long haul and the Office of Quality Resources was established to facilitate our transformation to "quality."

Office managers who have implemented local improvements are reporting increases in positive customer feedback and conversely decreasing numbers of complaints. Improvements have been acted upon which streamline service and/or



result in cost savings. Communication with bargaining units has become more open and less adversarial.

There is still much to be done. The majority of staff has yet to participate in training. Results of the self-assessment point to the need to be much more specific in terms of our goals and to do a better job of describing them to all staff. We still are

not good enough at assessing customer expectations or satisfaction with our services.

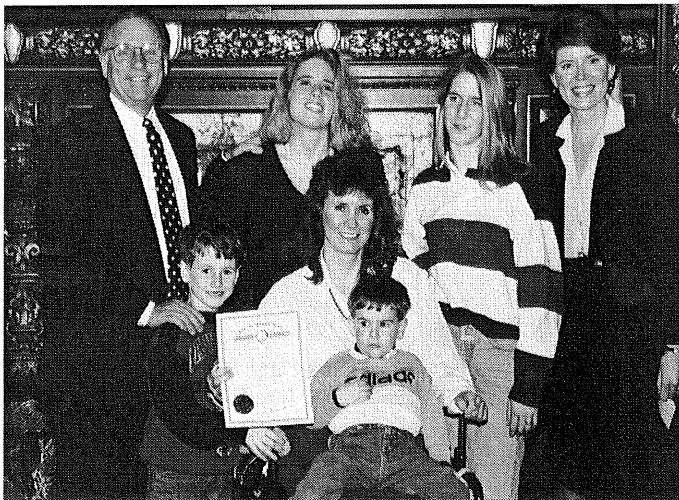
Most organizations trying to adopt "quality" as their basic culture have these same problems. Communication with customers and staff, staff development and program measurement will be TQO priorities for 1994.

Governor Carlson and DJT honor outstanding volunteers

Twelve outstanding volunteers for the Department of Jobs and Training were selected for special recognition in conjunction with National and Minnesota Volunteer Recognition Week held April 18-24, 1993.

The department's four assistant commissioners were asked to select significant volunteers from their divisions for recognition by Governor Arne H. Carlson and the department.

Those selected and the division they serve are:



Mary Ellen Pischke, Oronoco, chair of the Independent Living Council for the Rehabilitation Services Division, and her family are shown with Governor Arne H. Carlson and Commissioner R. Jane Brown (right).

"Our programs are successful and responsive today as a result of the strong influence of volunteers..." Commissioner R. Jane Brown

State Services for the Blind: *Rollie Baldwin, Clifford Norman, Judy Wilder, Curtis Chong and Helen Lifson.*

Job Service and Unemployment Insurance Division: *William R. Peterson and Richard Roesler.*

Division of Rehabilitation Services: *Mary Ellen Pischke (pictured), Jim Jones, Jeff Bangsberg and John Trepp.*

Community Based Services Division: *Alberta Carol and Head Start parents and volunteers, who were represented by Michelle Ford. Certificates of commendation were sent to Head Start programs and presented at their monthly board meetings.*

Commissioner R. Jane Brown, who sent letters to the volunteers notifying them of their selection, said, "In nearly every instance, our programs are successful and responsive today as a result of the strong influence of volunteers from the public-at-large."

She continued, "We have volunteers who have hands-on contact with programs and others who bring their experience to our programs in advisory

capacities. In the true spirit of volunteerism, these generous contributions serve to enrich the lives of disadvantaged Minnesotans who are our customers."

Volunteers in DJT's Divisions

Division	# Volunteers	# Hours Donated
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CBS	61,530	1,639,452
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This includes volunteers serving in Minnesota's Community Action Agencies, Head Start centers and West Hennepin Services.

SSB	523	81,336
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SSB volunteers serve in the Communications Center and on numerous councils, committees, task forces and working groups.

DRS	69	4,674
JS/UI	201	3,272

DRS and JS/UI volunteers can most readily be found on advisory councils and committees.



Field offices undertake own remodeling, relocation efforts

While the department's administrative office was undergoing extensive remodeling and upgrade, the department's leased facilities also have been upgrading their space and furniture.

Fred Wilkinson of the Management Planning Office, Program Support Services Division, serves as facilities coordinator to the managers of the offices housed in leased space. His primary role is to provide support staff for whatever the office managers may need, including any planned remodeling, relocation or lease negotiations.

"In recent years the department has made concerted efforts to be user friendly," Wilkinson said. "A good example is the co-location of department offices, where possible, into space that is convenient for the needs of the program participants and employers we serve. This space must also meet applicable local, state and federal leased site requirements."

Offices in North Minneapolis, Fairmont, West St. Paul and North St. Paul are examples of those who have completed their remodeling process.

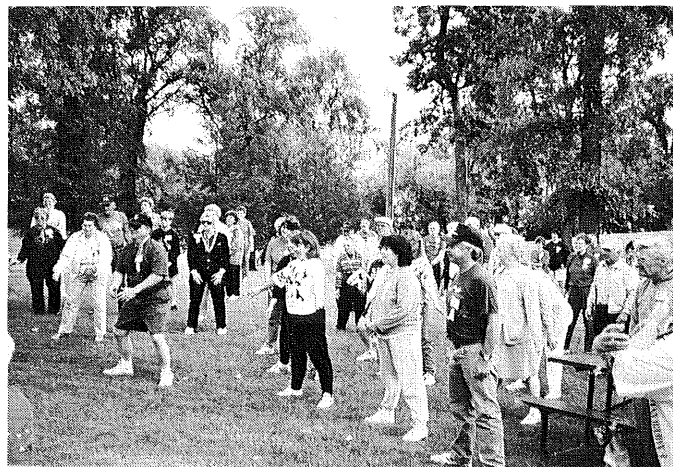
Blaine, South Minneapolis and the central offices for State Services for the Blind Division occupy new buildings and purchased new furnishings.

Other offices are at various stages of remodeling. Eventually, local offices statewide, leased or owned, will have or be upgrading their office sites and furniture.



Remodeling of the Fairmont Area and Rehabilitation Services offices was noted with a ribbon cutting and open house June 18, 1993. Pictured here are (L to R) Commissioner R. Jane Brown, building owner Helen Hodgman, and Area Manager Joe Kurtzman. Others present are members of the Fairmont Chamber of Commerce.

Willmar Job Service staffers take to the streets



Warming up prior to pounding the pavement, several members of the Willmar Job Service staff participated in an August 7 "Heart Walk" sponsored by the American Heart Association.

Each member completed the nearly four-mile course. The group raised over \$75 for the cause.

Harvest of Hope organized to help flood victims

Generosity marks statewide department effort

To quickly rebuild the state's rapidly draining food shelves, DJT employees joined their colleagues from other state departments in making the week-long food drive, Harvest of Hope, "a resounding success," according to Governor Arne H. Carlson.

Department employees from throughout the state donated approximately one ton of food, which amounted to 11 percent of the total Harvest of Hope bounty. Generously, DJT employee wallets also opened up and contributed \$1,500 in cash, which comprised about 15 percent of the total \$10,000 cash effort.

Via the Minnesota Food Bank Network and Food Shelf Association, the 18,095 pounds

collected from the Harvest of Hope were distributed to local food shelves in National Guard trucks like the one pictured below.

Southwestern Minnesota received approximately 10,000 pounds, the northwestern portion of the state received

6,000 pounds and the food shelves in the southeast were stocked with an additional 2,000 pounds.

In a letter to Commissioner R. Jane Brown and department staff, Governor Carlson called DJT's drive "one of the most generous efforts of all of state government!"



(Left) Minnesota National Guard trucks transported Harvest of Hope contributions to flood-stricken locations around the state.



(Above) Volunteers pack up food and monetary donations that were collected at 390 North Robert, St. Paul and other metro field offices.

The check's in the mail

Indicia mail eliminated October 1

A longstanding tradition that has been part of the Department of Jobs and Training since the agency's inception back in the '30s was eliminated October 1, 1993.

That tradition was the indicia mail privilege that had been used by Job Service, Unemployment Insurance and Research and Statistics.

As a result, all department mail was metered as of October 1, according to John Stavros, director of Financial Management. However, there is a one-year transition period during which the indicia envelopes can be used up by metering over the indicia, he added.

Among those bearing the burden of the change are the employees in the department's mailroom. Their duties will become much more complicated, Stavros pointed out, because it will be necessary to keep track of every piece of mail that goes out, as well as the cost involved.



Jeanne O'Flanagan, Office Services supervisor, Program Support Services Division, stands beside the new bar code printing and sorting system with Duane Troff, inserting machine operator.

"Our goal will be to mail as cheaply and efficiently as possible..."
John Stavros, director of Financial Management.



**Postage and Fees Paid
Employment Security Mail
Lab 449**

This is known as direct accountability of postage costs and involves the actual count and costs of mail pieces. Direct accountability of mail costs uses a variety of mailing systems and procedures that provide actual, verifiable records of postage use.

"Our goal will be to mail as cheaply and efficiently as possible because we will be moving to a fixed postage budget that will be determined by the U.S. Department of Labor beginning October 1, 1994," Stavros said.

In preparation for the upcoming change, a new and sophisticated bar code printing and sorting system has been purchased for use with high volume mail.

The mailroom handled approximately 12 million pieces of mail last year. During the last quarter, which ended June 30, the new bar coding machine processed 920,000 pieces of unemployment mail alone.

Rolling out the new carpet...

Remodeling assures safety, access and productivity

Task: Take a 25-year-old building with five floors, 107,000 square feet and housing approximately 600 employees. Remodel it to accommodate an additional 86 employees. Also, do it in the least disruptive way possible while ultimately providing for maximum safety, productivity and accessibility.

And do it before we all grow old.

That was the challenge presented for planners of the remodeling of the department's Central Office Building at 390 North Robert Street in St. Paul.

Under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Earl Wilson, the remodeling process was initiated in the fall of 1991 with completion scheduled for spring of 1994.

One of the primary concerns was to accommodate in the Central Office Building the employees housed at that time in the American Center Building and still provide adequate, ergonomically designed work space for everyone. (Ergonomics is the science of work station design to make the job fit the person rather than the person fit the job.)

Ed Schulz, management analyst, Job Service/Unemployment Insurance Staff Services Office, was selected as the project coordinator. He was joined by John Strassburg, research analyst specialist, Research and Statistics Office.

Strassburg laid out a detailed preliminary floor plan for the Research and Statistics Office area and comments from employees were invited. Revisions were then made and the plan was submitted to Wilson for his review.

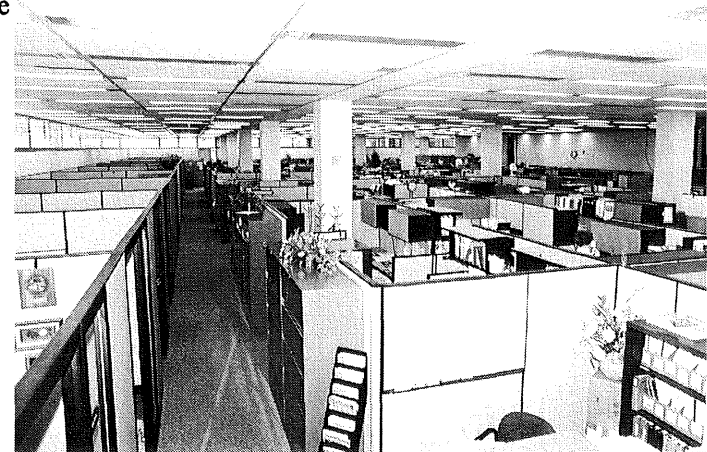
Schulz and Strassburg visited several state agencies that had undergone similar remodeling efforts, as well as the local showrooms of a nationally recognized manufacturer of modular furniture. These visits helped them gain insight into the many aspects affecting the planning and preparation for the project before making recommendations to the deputy commissioner.

Assistance in the planning stages of the project has directly involved many of the employees and certainly the results will affect them all. Floor committees with representatives of each administrative office unit were established to assist in the planning process.

The state turned over the building and fire code jurisdiction of the project to the City of St. Paul on July 1, 1993. This added extensive changes to the plan in order to be in compliance with the new set of building and fire code requirements.

When completed, the Central Office will be the first building in St. Paul to be as completely in compliance as possible with existing building and fire codes, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act, and is considered a model for other similar projects in the city.

The building also will be totally rewired to meet data and electrical needs. "Clean" wires for the computers will eliminate possible interference from electrical appliances and provide for future modes of high technology.



A partial view of the newly remodeled first floor west offices on the first floor of the Central Office Building at 390 North Robert Street, St. Paul.

Job Service/Unemployment Insurance

Outcomes

Minnesota Job Service There were 313,489 persons filing new job applications or renewing existing applications during the last completed program year. Employers listed 126,733 job openings, of which Job Service filled 66,265. Job Service helped an additional 13,430 persons obtain other employment. These activities contribute to the Minnesota Milestone goal of ensuring economic means to maintain a reasonable standard of living.

Alien Labor Certification Program Through Minnesota Job Service, this program provided 235 Labor Certifications and 150 prevailing wage determinations for employers.

Targeted Jobs Tax Credit Program There were 7,377 people who were determined eligible or "vouchered" for this program. Of that group, 6,029 of them were hired during the FFY93.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Program During FFY93, workers eligible for this program received the following services:

- ❖ 92 new claimants received basic Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRAs);
- ❖ 110 new recipients of additional TRAs;
- ❖ 199 entered training and 227 were in training at the end of the fiscal year;
- ❖ There were five employers whose employees were certified under the program during the fiscal year.

Veterans Program A total of 44,285 new and renewed applications were processed in 1993. Approximately 36,877 veterans received service, of which 10,943 were placed in jobs or obtained employment as a result of services received. This activity contributes to the Minnesota Milestone goal of ensuring economic means to maintain a reasonable standard of living.

Unemployment Insurance Tax Branch At the end of the second quarter in 1993, there were 104,429 employers and about 2.5 million insured employees in the state.

Unemployment Insurance Benefit Programs In calendar year 1993, there were almost 214,000 claims established for unemployed workers in Minnesota. In addition, just over 11,000 claims were filed by Minnesota workers living in other states.

Unemployment Insurance Benefit Payment Control For calendar year 1993, Benefit Payment Control activities found 14,602 overpayments of unemployment insurance benefits amounting to approximately \$9.5 million. Of these, 2,619 cases for \$2.8 million were due to fraud. Collection efforts recovered approximately \$6 million in 1993.

Appeals The unemployment appeals system provides Minnesota employers and unemployment insurance claimants with a due process procedure for the resolution of disputes relating to unemployment benefits and taxes. During 1993, unemployment judges heard and decided 13,000 appeals. Of those, 3,000 were appealed to the Commissioner of Jobs and Training for review and were decided by the commissioner's representative.

Job Service/Unemployment Insurance

Funding

Job Service is funded under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act. The 1993 allocation was \$12,839,288.

The *Minnesota Alien Labor Certification Program* is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The FFY94 funding level is \$218,609.

The *Targeted Jobs Tax Credit Program (TJTC)* is funded through the U.S. Department of Labor. In FFY94, TJTC was funded at \$261,623.

Funded through the U.S. Department of Labor, the *Trade Adjustment Assistance Program* received FFY93 funding of \$696,970, of which \$99,170 was to administer the program. This amount does not include \$628,097 paid out in allowances.

The *Veterans program* is funded by two program grants for a total of \$3.496 million in FFY94. The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program grant is \$1.607 million and \$1.839 million grant is slated for the Local Veterans Employment Representative Program.

The *Tax Branch* receives administrative funding through the federal unemployment tax on employers.

Unemployment Insurance benefits are funded from an employer tax maintained in a dedicated federal trust fund. It is an entitlement program, from which \$386 million in benefits was paid in 1993.

Benefit Payment Control receives funding through the federal unemployment tax on employers.

The *Unemployment Appeals system* was funded at \$3,209,649 in 1993 in federal unemployment compensation administrative funding.

The Department of Jobs and Training operates Job Service/Unemployment Insurance offices in these communities:

Albert Lea	Crookston	Hutchinson	Mora	St. Paul
Alexandria	Detroit Lakes	International Falls	New Ulm	Shakopee
Austin	Duluth	Litchfield	North St. Paul	Stillwater
Bemidji	E. Grand Forks	Little Falls	Owatonna	Thief River Falls
Blaine	Fairmont	Mankato	Park Rapids	Wadena
Bloomington	Faribault	Marshall	Red Wing	Waseca
Brainerd	Fergus Falls	Minneapolis	Rochester	Willmar
Brooklyn Park	Grand Rapids	Minnetonka	Roseau	Winona
Cambridge	Hibbing	Montevideo	St. Cloud	Worthington
		Moorhead		

Fact Sheet

The Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) Program provides benefits to persons whose income was lost or interrupted as a result of a major disaster. The program is unique in that assistance benefits are available to the self-employed and others who are not covered under the regular unemployment insurance system.

DUA activated in record time

Through the use of an existing unemployment insurance structure, the Department of Jobs and Training was able to respond quickly to the personal and economic hardships experienced by Minnesota residents who became unemployed as a result of severe storms and flooding that began in April 1993.

Commissioner R. Jane Brown indicated that over \$6 million in disaster assistance benefits were disbursed to persons in the 57 Minnesota counties included under the presidential disaster declaration since July.

Brown credits the rapid response to a coordinated effort of staff in local Job Service and Unemployment Insurance offices that serve the affected areas and the administrative office in St. Paul.

She noted that other area offices, without direct responsibilities in the affected areas, also volunteered staff and resources to assist with the project.

Changes improve UI program

"A lot of what was done by the 1993 Legislature will improve the fairness and equity in the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program," said Gary Sorensen, assistant commissioner for the Job Service and Unemployment Insurance Division.

"In addition to eliminating unnecessary work, the changes should encourage people to work and receive better treatment under the system," he added.

The changes to the Minnesota Unemployment Insurance Law enacted by the Legislature concurred with the recommendations from DJT's Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council.

A summary of the changes include:

UI claimants who have established, but not used a claim for benefits because they found immediate reemployment, are permitted to base a subsequent claim on their more recent work history.

Limited liability corporation members with less than 10 percent ownership will be treated as employees rather than partners.

Exclusion from coverage of officers of township or farmers' mutual insurance companies since they serve on a rotating basis for minimal fees.

Lump sum severance payments are now allocated at the employee's regular rate of pay. Fifty percent of total severance payments will be allocated at the regular weekly rate of pay.

A trial period will now allow workers under Minnesota approved training, prior to the training, the same flexibility to accept temporary employment without jeopardizing their UI benefits when the training begins.

Automatic requirements for transcripts of hearings is eliminated.

A change in the data privacy requirement prohibits the use of unemployment testimony for other purposes.

Tax debts may be settled by compromise before the previously required four-year waiting period.

Members, managers, governors or employees of limited liability companies can now be held liable for unpaid unemployment taxes as are their counterparts of a corporation. The change eliminates the 20 percent ownership requirement and adds a definition to willfulness.

Unemployment Insurance Advisory Group

Tom Beer
Rep. Jim Girard
John Morris
Bill Peterson
Sen. Linda Runbeck
Ray Waldron

Rep. Jim Farrell
Sharon McCauley
Sen. Steve Novak
Brad Robinson
Duane Schultz

So. Mpls. Job Club caters to experienced workers

An Experienced Workers Job Club for people 45 years and older has been operating successfully at the South Minneapolis Job Service/Unemployment Insurance Office for the past year.

The club combines the features of a job club with the benefits of a support group and has proven to be a valuable tool for assisting older workers in their search for jobs, according to Dan Segura, founder of the club and job developer for the office's Dislocated Worker Program.

Since its start in mid 1992, the club has come to

place workers "at an average of one a week," Segura said.

The club originally was established to provide ongoing support for the older workers in the Dislocated Worker Program, but as the project evolved, it was decided to extend the service to other clients who fall into that age range.

Goals of the weekly meetings are to provide the job seeker:

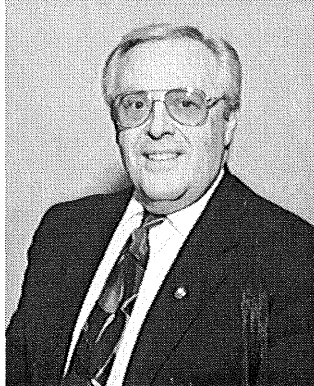
- An opportunity to network with others in the job market and share job leads;

- A place to develop and practice skills needed to assure employers that he or she is the best candidate for the job; and

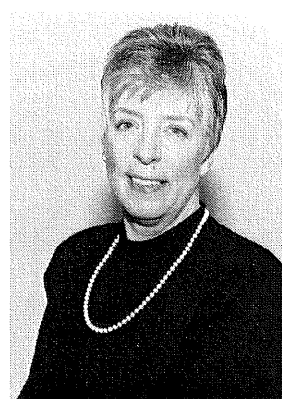
- Training in self-selected areas and knowledge gained from outside speakers.

"In conjunction with the department's movement toward a Total Quality Organization, this job club is member driven," Segura said. "Every effort is made to determine the needs and wants of members, and topics are selected based upon those requests."

New regional JS/UI managers assume duties



Gary Sherman
Southern Regional Manager



Mary Brunkow
Metro Regional Manager



Chuck Hartfiel
Northern Regional Manager

Three new regional managers for southern, metropolitan and northern Minnesota recently assumed their duties. Up until their new assignments, they were area office managers at Rochester, Winona and Minnetonka.

Among their various duties will be to work with business, labor, local officials, community groups, educational institutions and other divisions and departments to develop public policy, support legislation and promote economic and workforce development, according to Gary Sorensen, assistant commissioner of the division. "The positions were created to assure the implementation of 'Total Quality' and the many changes necessary to stay competitive in serving the needs of our customers in the job placement arena."

State Services for the Blind

Outcomes

Business Enterprises Program A total of 78 legally blind vendors operated in more than 200 locations across the state in 1993 under a franchise agreement. Sales volume was \$8,098,989 for the year, and the average blind vendor net profit was \$24,958. Six new vendors were trained.

Communications Center

Braille Unit	226 braille titles for education, 5,949 different vocational materials 2,701 personal enrichment titles
Radio Talking Book	8,760 hours of programming to 6,593 persons with receivers
Audio Services Section	54,335 cassette tapes of broadcasts to 592 listeners 12,583 vocational/education cassettes to 595 students
Communication Center	23,340 pieces of audio equipment maintained/circulated
Dial In News	24 -hour newspaper access to 250 consumers
Engineering Section	9,016 equipment units repaired

Career and Independent Living Services A total of 5,615 clients were served with 484 achieving their vocational rehabilitation outcome (including homemakers) and 510 achieving independent living or self care goals. There was a 31 percent increase in blind persons becoming employed and a 33 percent increase in elderly blind persons achieving their independent living goals.

The Store Nearly 2200 customers (up 41 percent from the previous year) made purchases from The Store, with \$90,352 (double last year's figures) in gross sales. This included both walk-in (61 percent) and mail-order (39 percent) traffic.

Funding

The FFY93 budget for the **Business Enterprise Program** was \$1,349,180, and was composed of \$746,925 in non-public funds (55 percent) and \$602,255 in federal and state-match funds (45 percent).

The FFY93 budget for the **Communication Center** was \$1,856,297, and was composed of \$490,370 (26 percent) in state non-match funds, \$1,006,958 (54 percent) in federal and state-match funds, and \$358,969 (20 percent) in non-public funds.

The FFY93 budget for the **Career and Independent Living Services** Section was \$5,896,633, and was composed of \$952,419 (16 percent) in state non-match funds and \$4,944,214 (84 percent) in federal and state-match funds.

The Store is dependent upon purchases made by clients and consumers. It is not a profit-making venture.

Rehabilitation Act amendments stress consumerism, accountability for two divisions

Two major themes -- consumerism and accountability -- emerge from amendments to the federal Rehabilitation Act and impact the department's State Services for the Blind (SSB) Division and the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

A major change called for by the amendments is that an eligibility determination be made by a counselor within 60 days of the client's application, except in extreme circumstances.

Prior to this amendment, no explicit time frame was provided for establishing eligibility. The thrust now appears to be one of timely response to the consumer's requests, according to Dick Strong, SSB Policy and Human Resource manager.

The vocational rehabilitation services provided to a person with a disability will continue to depend upon what that person's vocational needs are as jointly determined by the rehab counselor and by the person with the disability.

Prior to this amendment, no explicit time frame was provided for establishing eligibility.

"The range is open ended and depends upon the needs of the individual with a disability," Strong said. "The critical new feature contained in the amendments is the issue of consumer choice."

The "choice" amendment requires the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education to develop specific standards for the selection of vocational rehabilitation services and rehabilitation service providers by a person with a disability.

"This set of regulations may well focus on what services will be provided to a person and who will be providing those services," Strong explained. "This appears to be moving away from the paternalism of years ago and toward strengthening a true partnership between the consumer and the state agency representative."

Another significant change in the law focuses on improving existing requirements for the joint development of an individualized rehabilitation plan between the client and the counselor.

An individualized written rehabilitation plan will now require a statement by the person with a disability that describes how that person was informed about and involved in choosing their plan, as well as the providers and methods used to meet their goals.

"I believe the intent of this amendment is for the individual with a disability to have a greater role

"One of the major strengths of the... system has been the ability to tailor the program to the needs of a particular state," Dick Strong, SSB Policy and Human Resource Manager.

in determining the content and thrust of his or her rehabilitation plan," Strong said.

In the area of accountability, there is an amendment that calls for the commissioner of the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration to establish and publish evaluation standards and performance indicators for the vocational rehabilitation program in the various states.

Evaluation standards and performance indicators will look at outcome and related measures of program performance. Each state will report on the extent of its own benchmark compliance.

"One of the major strengths of the state/federal vocational rehabilitation system has been the ability to tailor the program to the needs of a particular state," Strong continued.

"It is hoped that national standards will not hamper SSB and DRS in responding creatively to needs unique to Minnesota."

SSB builds work and training programs

Fact: The national and Minnesota unemployment rate for people who are blind or visually impaired is 70 percent. Comparably, in November 1993, the general unemployment rate in Minnesota was 4.0 percent and the U.S. rate was 6.1 percent.

To address this historic employment disparity required an innovative and aggressive approach by the State Services for the Blind (SSB) Placement and Assistive Technology Unit.

This unit consists of consumers, counselors, placement specialists, supervisors, support staff and management. The focus is on the refinement of long-standing experience built on the work undertaken by the SSB Partnership Project.

The Partnership Project was a pilot-turned-permanent program designed to enlist the expertise of employers in helping to reduce the high unemployment rate among people who are blind or visually impaired and who are ready and willing to work.

The project team identified four critical issues relating to successful employment outcomes:

- Positive employer attitudes;
- A pool of qualified applicants ready and able to work;

- Ready availability of assistive technology equipment and expertise; and
- Strategies to address systemic disincentives such as the loss of medical assistance and disability benefits when going to work.

A number of initiatives generated by the Partnership Project have now been incorporated into the ongoing efforts of SSB, according to Rich Gieshen, SSB marketing and placement specialist. Also, the creation of SSB's Resource Center for Assistive Technology allowed the agency to better address clients' technology needs.

The center is staffed by two assistive technology specialists, Jerry Wood and Michael Dugan, to introduce consumers to this new equipment and operational techniques, as well as hands-on practice and training.

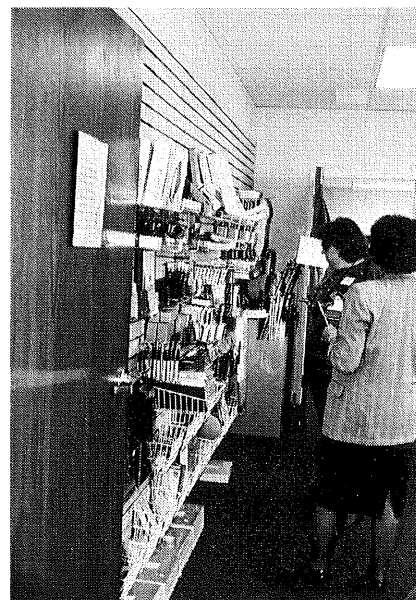
A third key element to SSB's Placement and Assistive Technology Unit approach involves active solicitation of consumer input about employment services from the Minnesota Council for the Blind's employment committee.

Boasting more than 175 items for blind and visually impaired The Store stocks useful, fun products for all ages

Braille watches, talking calculators and Braille versions on Monopoly can all be found at The Store, located at SSB headquarters in St. Paul.

The Store is carefully designed to be accessible and comfortable for shoppers who do not want to wait the six to eight weeks handling it sometimes takes to order similar items from specialty catalogs.

While providing the inventory with a nominal handling charge, in 1993 The Store served 2,185 clients and sold \$90,352 worth of merchandise.



Business Enterprises trains vendors for success

The Business Enterprises Program of State Services for the Blind (SSB) does everything possible to make sure blind and visually impaired people who operate franchises succeed.

Chuk Hamilton, director of Business Enterprises, describes success as clients "becoming independent and self-sufficient through a profitable business enterprise of their own." There are currently 76 Business Enterprise vendors operating in the state.

Types of businesses include candy/gift shops, canteens, lunchrooms and vending machine routes.

Together, the client and counselor evaluate this business career path, and the application process determines whether the client has the acumen to succeed in a franchise operation. The requirements are strenuous and the standards are high.

"As much is expected of the blind vendor as of any other franchise owner," Hamilton said.

Training is the key ingredient in the future success of the client. In addition to site visits of other operations, over-the-counter training takes place at the Business Enterprise Program Training Center at SSB main offices.

This facility allows participants to have

The Randolph-Sheppard Act PL 93-516 and Minnesota Statutes 248.07, subd. 7-11 serve as the legal base for State Services for the Blind to select, train and license persons who are blind to operate franchises in state and federally run facilities.

hands-on experience with a wide variety of equipment. All aspects of operating and maintaining basic equipment are covered, as well as merchandising and customer relations.

Field training is conducted in over-the-counter sales by using selected businesses chosen as field locations. Three sites are selected and the student spends two weeks at each.

Upon completion of the over-the-counter field training, the student returns to the training

center to learn the operation of vending machines. This is done on a 1:1 or 1:2 basis between the students and the trainer.

Lasting about eight weeks, this training emphasizes service maintenance, repair and merchandising and is followed by more field training.

Once the operator is established in business, six statewide management coordinators work with him or her to ensure further success.



Minneapolis management coordinator Bert Morlock said, "We assist, encourage and arrange but we don't do. We foster independence but support is available where appropriate."

At existing sites, Business Enterprise Program students train for weeks to learn all the facets of a vending or snackshop operation.

Summer programs assist youth with transition skills

Making the move from high school to work or to a post secondary institution can be difficult, at best, for any student. Visually impaired students are given the opportunity to participate in some special services to smooth that transition.

In the case of visually impaired youth planning to seek employment after high school, experience shows that employers are more inclined to consider an applicant if there is evidence of prior work experience.

"State Services for the Blind (SSB) is committed to providing ongoing skill development activities to its program participants," said Chuck Hutchinson,

rehabilitation specialist in charge of summer programs. "We feel work experience opportunities are an important part of the career planning process for youth with visual impairments."

Several summer programs to enhance the independent living and work skills have been designed in collaboration with SSB and the Department of Education, University of Minnesota, State Academy for the Blind, and Minnesota Resource Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

The Summer Transition Program complements the mainstream curriculum and aids the local school districts in preparing students for transition. This is an opportunity to begin

teaching skills that will be encountered in the next year of schooling.

Students in this program are high school juniors and seniors who are planning on post secondary education or entering competitive employment upon graduation.

Areas of instruction include job training and work experience, independent living, community participation, leisure and recreational opportunities and mobility in an urban setting.

A low student to staff ratio ensures a close working relationship and is a key factor of the program's tradition of success.



A wealth of resources... both human and technological can be found at the main offices of State Services for the Blind.

Left, a volunteer reads front page news for Dial-In News, a 24-hour telephone access news reading service.

Right, assistive devices like these large screen computers enable clients to tend to work or personal needs.



Community Based Services

Outcomes

Transitional Housing Program This program helps assure that homeless people will have a place to live that is clean, safe and private. In SFY 93, transitional housing providers served 1,066 people (658 households), of which 42 percent were children, 44 percent were adult women and 14 percent were adult men.

Emergency Community Services Homeless Grant Program In FY92, 14,643 people were served with these funds via grants.

Emergency Shelter Grants Program In FY93, Emergency Shelter Grants Program funds were awarded competitively to 41 local governments, shelters and transitional housing programs, and other non-profit service providers.

Emergency Food Assistance Program/Soup Kitchen Food Bank Program In 1993, 128,000 households were served during each of three mass distributions of commodities. Via Minnesota food shelves, commodity products were distributed to 566,216 households, and 442,226 meals were served by the soup kitchens and emergency shelters.

Project Head Start Head Start is providing comprehensive services to 12,361 low income children and approximately 41 percent of eligible Minnesota children and families.

Head Start/Early Education Bonding In SFY93, 14 projects were funded to purchase, renovate or expand Head Start and other early intervention education programs. Statewide, 25 percent of those funds were spent on youth activities and over \$5 million additional dollars were leveraged in this process.

Minnesota Displaced Homemaker Program From July 1992 through June 1993, 1,975 displaced homemakers were served. Of those who completed the program, 21 percent implemented plans that would move them toward financial independence; 21 percent began job training or advanced education; and more than 27 percent found jobs at an average hourly wage of \$6.47.

Summer Youth Employment and Training Program In the summer of 1993, over 7,689 disadvantaged youth between 14 and 21 were served. The program's waiting list was about 7,000.

JTPA Title IIC Youth Training Program It is anticipated that 4,162 economically disadvantaged youth will be served in its first year. The goal of the program is placement in unsubsidized employment and employability enhancement.

Youth Intervention Program In 1992, agencies receiving funds from the Youth Intervention Program served about 45,000 youth and their families. The recidivism rate among youth referred to the program was 7.8 percent (less than half the national average for youth referred to court). The average cost per client is \$271 and participation period is from three to six months.

Juvenile Justice Program In 1993, the Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee awarded 48 grants totaling more than \$1.2 million to local units of government and private agencies. These programs will serve over 8,600 juveniles and their families, and 80 percent of the youth will be young people of color.

Fact Sheet

Community Based Services

Outcomes

Minnesota Youth Program In 1993, the Minnesota Youth Program served 6,158 young people, 96.8 percent of whom are economically disadvantaged, 41 percent have emotional, mental or physical disabilities and 26 percent are recipients of public assistance. Over 7,000 youth were on the waiting list for services in 1993. All providers cited improved reading and math scores, with gains on average made in reading of .9 grade level and math of 1.1 grade level.

Minnesota YouthBuild Program It is estimated that 250 youth were served in 1993-94 and 500 are projected to be served in 1994-95. All participants are at-risk of dropping out of school, 45 percent of them are juvenile offenders, 30 percent receive public assistance and 40 percent are people of color. Approximately 300 homeless and low income individuals and families were impacted by this program.

Youth Wage Subsidy Program There were 330 at-risk youth, aged 14 to 21, served in this program through June 30, 1993 and 89 private sector employers participated in it.

Weatherization Assistance Program This program averages 18 percent energy savings with a 10.2 year cost-effective payback. During the 1993 Heating Season (4/92 to 3/93) a total of 6,757 households were weatherized and cumulatively, 169,960 households were served.

Energy Assistance Program Energy Assistance provides an average benefit equal to 71 percent of home heating costs for all households receiving assistance.

	1992	1993
Number of Households served		
Primary Heat	104,535	109,412
Crisis	7,655	11,377
Repairs	3,445	4,041
Average assistance		
Primary Heat	\$ 371	\$ 360
Crisis	\$ 221	\$ 230
Repairs	\$ 773	\$ 802
Cost per household	\$ 48	\$ 48
State cost per household	\$ 8	\$ 8
Cost per service unit	\$ 44	\$ 42
State cost per service units	\$ 7	\$ 7

Community Based Services

Outcomes

JTPA Titles IIA and IIC: Training Services for the Disadvantaged During PY92, the program served 13,757 participants, of which 4,708 (34 percent) were youth. Of the total, 22 percent were persons of color and 57 percent were public assistance recipients. Of the 7,357 people who terminated from the program, 5,343 (72.6 percent) entered unsubsidized employment.

JTPA 8 Percent Education Coordination During the program year ending June 30, 1993, 1,540 participants were served. Of those, 190 had special needs that nine education grants were earmarked to meet.

JTPA 5 Percent Older Worker Program For PY92, the program served 616 participants and placed 277 persons in private sector employment at an average hourly wage of \$6.12.

JTPA Veterans Program During PY92, 169 program participants were served, 51 were placed in employment and 77 participated in classroom training.

Senior Community Service Employment Program The program served 435 participants and placed 71 in unsubsidized employment at the prevailing wage during the last program year.

Opportunities Industrialization Centers For SFY93, the OICs enrolled 2,067 unemployed or economically disadvantaged people. Of those, 969 completed employability training, 938 positive terminations, 580 job placements and 358 employability enhancement terminations. Of those served, 86 percent were persons of color, 32 percent were youth, 36 percent heads of households, 34 percent welfare recipients and 10 percent offenders or ex-offenders.

Project STRIDE In SFY93, Project STRIDE provided extensive services to 21,000 AFDC recipients. Of those served, 28 percent attended remedial and high school completion classes and 44 percent attended post-secondary education aiding them in breaking the cycle of long-term public assistance dependency. Education and job search assistance enabled 2,800 recipients to find employment at an average hourly wage of \$6.85.

Special Project to Reduce AFDC Dependency Special Project funds were awarded competitively to 16 agencies during the 92-93 biennium; 1,743 AFDC and at-risk clients were served, with 169 entering education or training and 18 percent becoming employed.

Work Readiness Employment and Training Services During SFY93, 32,472 persons between 16 and 55 received employment and training services; 5,232 (21.6 percent) of those terminated entered employment at an hourly wage of \$5.71 and 26 percent of the participants were enrolled in educational components. The average participation length was 15.8 weeks.

Dislocated Worker Program From July 1, 1992 to June 30, 1993, 14,925 clients received dislocated worker service. Of the 6,644 who ended their participation, 4,718 (71 percent) were placed in jobs with an average hourly wage of \$10.

Fact Sheet

Community Based Services

Funding

The *Transitional Housing Program* is state funded at \$420,000 for SFY93 and \$880,000 for SFY94.

The *Emergency Community Services Homeless Grant Program* was funded in FY92 at \$302,011 and FY93 at \$236,607, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The *Emergency Shelter Grants Program* was funded in FY92 at \$563,350 and in FY93 at \$400,000 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The *Emergency Food Assistance Program* was funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at \$540,000 and a supplemental allocation of \$100,000 was provided by the State of Minnesota.

The *Food Shelf Program* was funded by the state at \$600,000 for SFY94.

Minnesota's *Head Start* received \$11.5 million state funds and \$33.5 million in federal funds for program year 93/94.

Head Start/Early Education Bonding efforts were funded by a state allocation of \$2 million.

The State of Minnesota funded the *Minnesota Displaced Homemaker Program* at \$1,360,350 for SFY93.

For the *JTPA Summer Youth Employment and Training Program*, Minnesota's federal funding for summer 1993 was \$10.2 million, which includes a \$1.8 million supplemental allocation.

The *JTPA II-C Youth Training Program* was federally funded at \$6.1 million for program year 1993.

The *Youth Intervention Program* was funded at \$550,000 in 1993 and 1994. All programs must obtain a 2-to-1 funding match from local sources.

The *Juvenile Justice Program* was funded in 1992 and 1993 by Federal Formula Grants of \$848,000 each year, and will be funded at \$906,000 in 1994.

The *Minnesota Youth Program* was state funded at \$5.5 million in 1993 and \$2.3 million in 1994.

The *Minnesota YouthBuild Program* was state funded at \$300,000 in 1993 and 1994.

Community Based Services

Funding

The *Youth Wage Subsidy Program* was state funded at \$250,000 for PY 93 and PY94.

Weatherization Assistance funding is projected at \$14.74 million for FPY94 from the following sources: \$9.91 million from the U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program, \$2 million from the Petroleum Violation Escrow fund and \$2.85 million from the federal Energy Assistance Program. Current FFY93 program funding is \$12.59 million.

The *Energy Assistance Program* received \$56 million in federal funding for FFY94.

JTPA Titles IIA and IIC: Training Services for the Disadvantaged was funded at \$18,818,899 for PY93. Of this amount, \$14,782,453 was distributed for programs at the local level and the remainder was set aside to serve targeted populations.

The *JTPA 8 Percent Education Coordination* effort was funded at \$1,496,928 for PY93.

The *JTPA 3 Percent Older Worker Program* was funded at \$561,059 in PY93.

For PY93, the *JTPA Veterans Program* was federally funded at \$127,000.

The *Senior Community Service Employment Program* was authorized at 308 job slots with a funding level of \$1,866,224 for the program period July 1, 1993 to June 30, 1994.

The *Opportunities Industrialization Centers* were state funded at \$350,000 in each SFY 93 and 94. State funding provides the support base to compliment local public sector and JTPA funding. State funding comprises 8.5 percent of OIC's total funding.

Project STRIDE's budget of \$18.8 million for SFY93 was comprised of state, federal and local funding sources.

Special Projects to Reduce AFDC Dependency were funded at \$1,364,000 for the 94-95 biennium from state and federal sources.

Work Readiness Employment and Training services were funded at \$3.776 million for SFY94, with an additional allocation of \$250,000 for SFY94 for Start Work Grants.

The *Dislocated Worker Program* received federal funding of \$3.9 million and state funding of \$17.8 million in SFY94. Also, Minnesota accessed \$4.4 million in U.S. Department of Labor Defense Conversion Adjustment Program funds.

Cooperative efforts assist dislocated workers

"If given the opportunity, worker involvement in a plant closing or layoff situation can help ease the painful effects of a job loss..."

according to Connie McGowan, coordinator, Policy and Planning Unit of the department's Community Based Services (CBS) Division. To encourage investment in these situations, the CBS Dislocated Worker Unit presented Coordinating Opportunities for Reemployment (CORE) training to further the use of labor/management committees throughout the state.

Continuing technological changes, global competition and other factors effecting the

U.S. economy have resulted in many plant closings and mass layoffs of workers.

McGowan noted, "Resources provided under the federal Economic Dislocation Worker Adjustment Assistance Act and the Minnesota State Dislocated Worker funds assist people and communities faced with the disruption caused by job loss situations." These funds are directed toward helping workers adjust to the change and train for new careers.

Developing a CORE committee in response to a job loss event empowers workers by offering an opportunity to be directly involved in developing a plan to help themselves return to work.

In addition, the CORE group may include local community leaders, representatives of educational facilities, human resources specialists, Job Service and union representatives, as well as other members of the community who can contribute to a specific plan for the workers.

Filberto "Fil" Chairez, a rapid response coordinator,

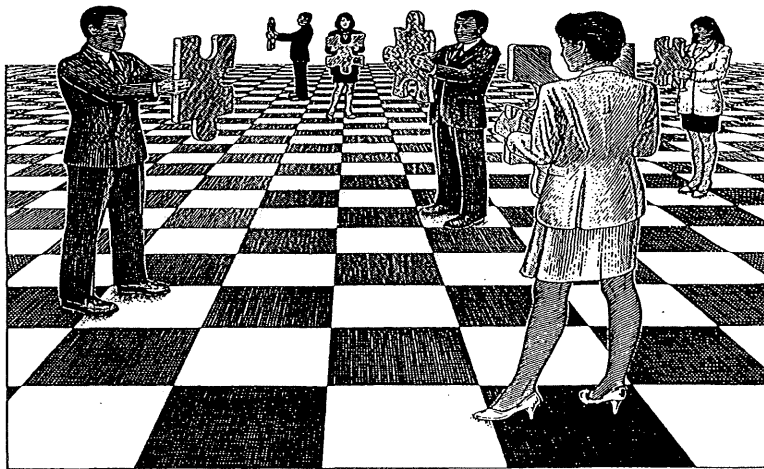
noted that "a key element of the CORE group is the appointment of a neutral chair for committee meetings. The chair helps keep the committee on track toward the accomplishment of its mission -- a coordinated effort to address job development, job placement, retraining and other services and activities to help dislocated workers begin new careers."

Participating in the planning and development for this statewide training effort with McGowan and Chairez were Sha Leahy, St. Paul Job Creation and Training Center; David McKay, Minnesota Teamsters Service Bureau; and Kay Franey, Hennepin County Training and Employment Assistance Program.

Cooperation among and participation by companies, workers and local community agencies is extremely helpful.

Employers can provide facilities, contacts and other resources to aid employees with job search activity. Strong and active participation by unions and other employee representatives contributes a greater level of acceptance and trust by affected workers. Community agencies offer diverse forms of assistance to meet a broad scope of worker needs.

CORE outcomes will include a program offering a wide range of options to meet differing needs.



Cornerstone builds on Head Start's success

The project is designed to improve and increase access to support services for low-income families through the creation of family resource centers wrapped around Head Start.

There are ample roadblocks for Head Start parents and their children. “For people who are living in poverty, like Head Start clients, transportation is a problem; child care is a problem,” Shapiro pointed out.

A graphic of a staircase made of blocks, each with a different icon representing social issues like poverty, education, and healthcare. The icons include a family, a school bus, a family with a child, a gavel, a caduceus, a schoolhouse, a city skyline, a capitol dome, a graduation cap, a medical cross, and a person helping another.

Sharon Shapiro, Head Start program specialist

Opportunities for children with disabilities and their families will be improved through Cornerstone.

Linkages will improve data collection procedures, enhance screening activities, facilitate referrals, assure comprehensive assessment, develop coordinated treatment plans, provide for cross training with Head Start staff and strengthen family support services.

1993 marks expanded Head Start funding

Prompted by continued program successes and an increased need for services, this year Gov. Arne Carlson requested funding for the state's Head Start Program to be increased to \$23 million for the coming biennium, according to Sharon Shapiro, Head Start specialist in the department's Community Based Services Division.

The additional funds, Shapiro said, will be used to expand the number of children served. Eleven percent of the increased funding is dedicated to create an innovative projects initiative.

All Head Start programs are being encouraged to consider innovative approaches to their services. Formal requests for proposals for the innovative projects funds are currently being prepared.

Head Start began in 1965 as a health project for pre-school children. Since that time it has expanded to include education and family involvement. The program operates through community centers statewide and in the rural areas where center services are not accessible, home-based visitor services provide the same quality and range of programs.

Older workers and their employers gain recognition for contributions to Minnesota's economy, way of life

"Renewable Resources: Today's Older Worker" was the focus of special two-day conference sponsored by the Department of Jobs and Training and its Aging Work Force Team on May 11 and 12 in Bloomington.

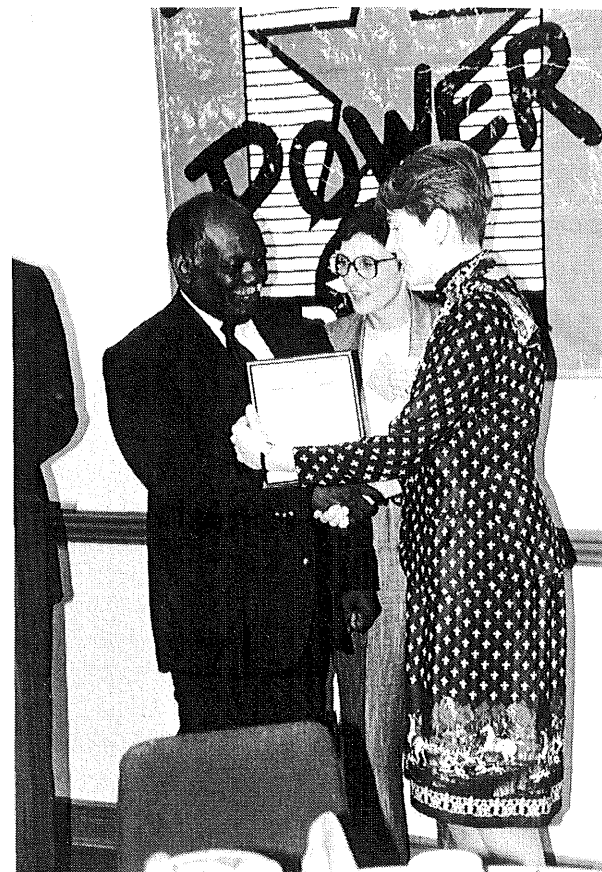
The event was scheduled in conjunction with Older Worker Week, which was observed May 9 through 15 by proclamation of Gov. Arne H. Carlson.

"Older, experienced workers bring to the work place all the skills and wisdom they have garnered over the years, together with a dedication to quality and a job well done," Carlson wrote in the proclamation.

Among highlights of the conference was the honoring of 12 outstanding older workers and eight employers who have distinguished themselves by hiring older workers.

All were nominated for the honor by agencies throughout the state who operate Job Training Partnership Act Older Worker Programs or Senior Community Service Employment Programs coordinated by the Community Based Services Division.

They were honored at recognition ceremonies on May 11 by Commissioner R. Jane Brown and Assistant Commissioner Byron Zuidema.



Commissioner R. Jane Brown presents a Governor's Certificate of Commendation to Roosevelt Perkins. The provider who nominated him, Pat Foulkes, Employment Action Center, Minneapolis attended with him.

Youths will have more focused job options

The federal JTPA funding that includes the Youth Service Corps model and the Title IIC Youth Training Program is administered through CBS. Economically disadvantaged youths will have a wide variety of jobs to choose from under JTPA.

A wide variety of employment and training services are provided to Minnesota youths through the federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), but this year there will be two more focused ways to tap employment.

At least \$7.5 million in JTPA funding this year will help provide about 5,400 state youths with training and jobs. The two JTPA program strategies that provide new focus on young workers are the Youth Service Corps model and the Title IIC Youth Training Program.

The JTPA Youth Service Corps model provides young people with summer work in community service jobs under close adult supervision. This program strategy emphasizes service, teamwork and self development of young workers and is funded under JTPA Titles IIB, IIC and the Minnesota Youth Program.

"The Youth Service Corps model is something we're really excited about," said Kay Tracy, director of Youth Programs at the department's Community Based Services Division. "We think it is an opportunity to strengthen the job training programs that we offer in Minnesota."

With a focus on community service, Youth Service Corps participants will work on highly visible projects that fulfill unmet needs and provide lasting benefits. Youths will be involved in project planning and work in teams of 12 along with a full-time supervisor.

Community improvement projects for young workers aren't new, but the Youth Service Corps is aimed at providing more focus and impetus. For example, last summer in the northeast portion of the state, 175 work sites had specific community improvement projects that involved 450 youths. In the southwest, youths assisted with the cleanup of areas in Murray County that were devastated by tornadoes.

There were 16 projects last summer to keep 32

crews busy and employ about 350 youths in Hennepin, Scott and Carver counties. Crews worked 20-32 hours each week, building timber walls, staircases or trails at parks.

The University of Minnesota served as a large work site in Minneapolis where 114 youths worked at a variety of jobs in different departments. Academic enrichment was linked to the work for those who needed it.

The second program available this year is the JTPA Title IIC Youth Training Program that began July 1. Its purpose is to improve the long-term employability of youths and to enhance their educational, occupational and citizenship skills. The program is designed to encourage school completion or enrollment in alternative programs and increase the earnings of youths.

The Youth Training Program is aimed at addressing problems that impair a young person's ability to make transitions from school to work, apprenticeship, the military or post-secondary education and training.

continued on page 26

"The Youth Service Corps model is something we're really excited about... it's an opportunity to strengthen the job training programs that we offer in Minnesota,"
Kay Tracy, Youth Programs director.

Youth Job Options (from page 25)

Like the Youth Services Corps, the services provided by the JTPA Title IIC Youth Training Program aren't new but the sole focus on youths is a new feature.

"It's going to be a special program to focus on youths, because their needs are different than adults," said Susan Lauer, specialist for JTPA Title IIC programs in CBS.

Under the year-round Youth Training Program, youths will receive an objective assessment of their educational and vocational needs. Then an individual strategy will be developed to meet those needs in order to increase the employability of the youths.

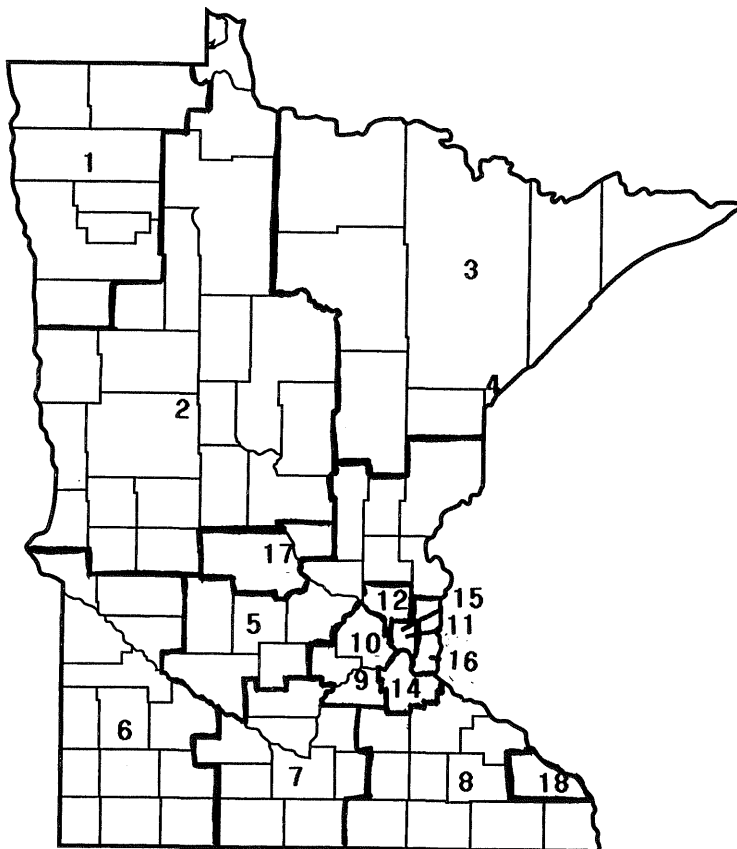
Services provided to youths can include basic skills training, such as high school or alternative schooling. It also can include vocational training and work experience.

Half of the Youth Training Program slots are targeted for school dropouts. "The program wants to get them back into school and get them involved so they can plan for their future," Lauer said. "The goal is that they stay in school and obtain marketable skills."

At least 65 percent of the Youth Training Program participants must be at-risk youths who lack basic skills, are school dropouts, pregnant or parenting, disabled or have a learning disability, homeless, runaways, or offenders.

Summer Youth Employment Program Providers

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|----|--|
| 1 | Northwestern Minnesota Private Industry Council | 4 | Duluth Job Training Program | 7 | South Central Private Industry Council |
| 2 | Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program | 5 | Private Industry Council #5 | 8 | Southeast Minnesota Private Industry Council |
| 3 | Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training | 6 | Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council | 9 | Hennepin/Scott/Carver Employment and Training Consortium |
| | | | | 10 | Minneapolis Employment and Training Program |
| | | | | 11 | City of St. Paul Job Creation and Training Section |
| | | | | 12 | Anoka County Job Training Center |
| | | | | 14 | Dakota County Employment and Economic Assistance |
| | | | | 15 | Ramsey County Job Program |
| | | | | 16 | Washington County Job Training Center |
| | | | | 17 | Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council |
| | | | | 18 | Winona County Training and Employment Council |



Rehabilitation Services

Outcomes

Vocational Rehabilitation Services During FY93, 3,535 persons were placed in employment, and 32 percent of them had been receiving public assistance at the time they applied for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Also, 6,233 new vocational plans for people with disabilities were developed. Of those served, 78 percent have severe disabilities.

Extended Employment Program A total of 7,306 people were served.

Supported employment: 2,880 participants worked 2,968,092 hours at an average wage of \$3.78 per hour.

Long term employment: 2,815 participants worked 3,454,755 hours at an average wage of \$2.01 per hour.

Independent Living Program serves approximately 4,500 people annually.

Projects with Industry During FY93, 233 persons were placed in employment, 68 percent of whom have severe disabilities. Representatives from 100 local employers serve as members of the seven advisory councils. Along with project staff, they sponsor seminars on disability and employment issues for area employers.

Disability Determination Services From October 1993 through September 1994, it is expected that 37,850 applications for disability will be processed. Of that number, the unit will refer at least 2,100 eligible applicants to vocational rehabilitation.

Funding

The **Vocational Rehabilitation Program** is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the State of Minnesota. It requires a state match with additional maintenance-of-effort requirements, resulting in FY93 funding of \$6.4 million from the state and \$26 million from the federal government.

The **Extended Employment Program** is entirely state funded, with an SFY94 allocation of \$10,329,000.

The **Independent Living Program** was funded at \$1,483,874 in state (49 percent) and federal (51 percent) funds.

Projects with Industry is federally funded at \$300,000 annually by the U.S. Department of Education and requires a state match.

The **Disability Determination Services Program** is 100 percent federally funded at \$11,902,004 by the Social Security Administration.

New law requires, sets priorities of service

A new federal law which went into effect October 1, requires the department's Division of Rehabilitation Services to give first priority to serving applicants with the most severe disabilities during periods of time when the agency has insufficient resources to serve all applicants.

Known as the "Order of Selection" and found in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992, the new regulation gives priority to people with severe disabilities that result in serious limitations in one or more functional areas of:

mobility	communication
work tolerance	self care
self-direction	work skills
interpersonal skills.	

A serious functional limitation means a reduction in performance, due to a severe disability, in one or more of these areas. Consideration is also given to the degree that a person requires services or accommodations not typically made for others in order to prepare for, engage in or retain a job.

Current clients with a rehabilitation plan will continue to be served even if they don't meet the new order of selection guidelines, said Roberta Pisa, rehabilitation specialist, who has been providing staff support for "Focusing Services," a work group that helped plan for the

change. However, after October 1, applicants who did not have a severe disability will not receive services even though they may otherwise be eligible, she added.

In those cases, the division will provide information and referral services to such agencies as the department's Job Service offices, Job Training Partnership Act programs and/or other community resources for their job search.

People who become disabled as a result of a work-related injury or accident will continue to be served by the Department of Labor and Industry's Workers' Compensation Program, as it is unaffected by the new regulation.

"Naturally, we want to be able to serve all eligible consumers," Pisa said. "However, we recognize that the need for vocational rehabilitation assistance exceeds resources and we want to use those limited resources to provide quality services."

All division offices have been serving people with severe disabilities, who comprise about 80 percent of the current caseload of 14,500 clients.

"This will change the way we do business because we will have to turn some clients

away who meet our other eligibility requirements," Pisa said. "It means that we will not be serving some of the people that historically we have serviced in the past."

Members of the Focusing Services Task Force conducted two series of town meetings to inform the public and advocacy organizations of the change and to request their input.

The task force is headed by Cathy Carlson, manager of the Program Planning and Development Unit, and Kim Rezek, director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Unit.

Assistant Commissioner Norena Hale, in consultation with the division's Consumer Advisory Council, will review the annual availability of resources and will decide how many priority categories will remain open.

However, if, at a later time, it is necessary to further limit the number of people served, the criteria of functional limitations may be raised to two or more, three or more, etc. In this way, priority will be given to people with the most severe disabilities.

Volunteers enhance, enrich clients' lives

Minnesotans give generously of their time, talents and financial resources. So much so that they lead the nation in their generosity.

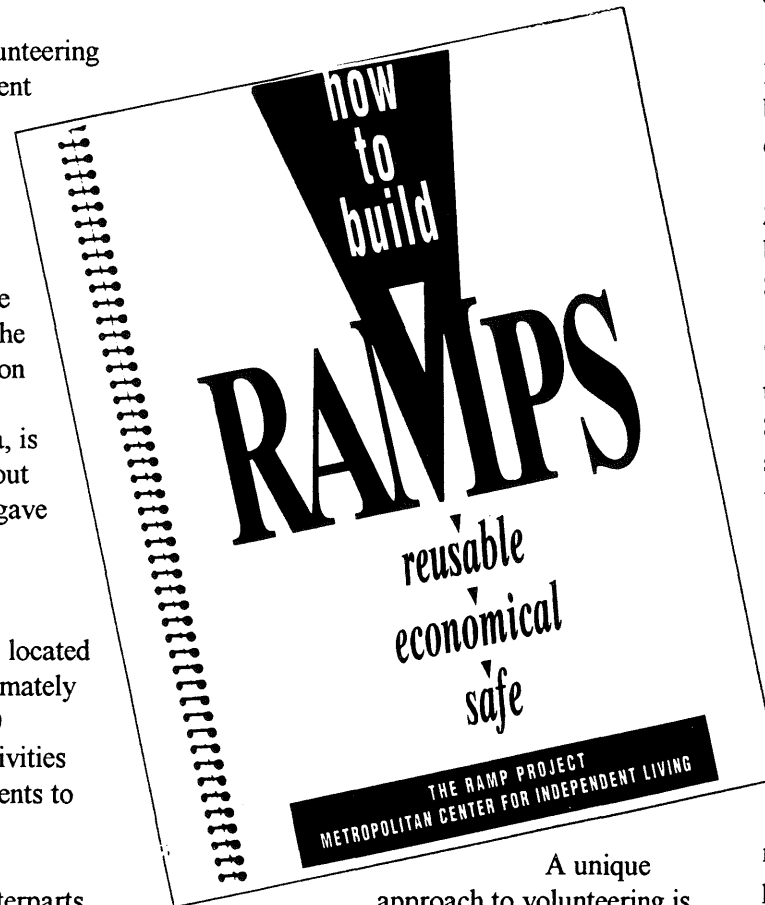
A 1991 Gallup Poll, "Giving and Volunteering in the United States," showed 60 percent of Minnesotans volunteered an average of 3.8 hours per week contributing the equivalent of an estimated \$4.7 billion in 1991.

One effect of volunteer services can be found in programs that aid clients of the department's Division of Rehabilitation Services. As an example, the Opportunity Workshop in Minnetonka, is a rehabilitation facility that serves about 300 clients. In 1992, 152 volunteers gave over 8,000 hours of service valued at \$93,000 to Opportunity Workshop.

AccessAbility, a rehabilitation facility located in northeast Minneapolis, has approximately 400 program participants. About 100 volunteers assist in the day-to-day activities and provide services that allow the clients to attend and enjoy social events.

Both organizations, like their 29 counterparts around the state, rely on volunteers to serve on their operating boards and committees. These bodies assure the availability of the most

effective and efficient services, while serving as a link to the local communities.



A unique approach to volunteering is the ramp building project conducted by the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living in St. Paul. For people with limited

mobility, houses with steps are insurmountable barriers. One of the goals of the Independent Living Program is to work toward removing barriers that limit the independence of people with disabilities.

Bob Zimmerman, rehabilitation counselor, has been involved in the provision of ramps for clients for the past four years.

Zimmerman said, "The cost of having a ramp built commercially, on average, was about \$2,200.

"Using volunteers reduces the construction cost to approximately \$175 for labor and between \$500 and \$600 for materials, depending on the size of the ramp required. Costs can be further trimmed by contributions from persons or organizations."

An evaluation of all requests is conducted to determine an individual's needs. They are asked to recruit volunteers from their families, friends or civic groups to do the construction.

The ramps are available on a for sale, rent or rent-to-buy option. Rental rates are about \$5 per month per module.

DRS helps youth with life transitions

Transition from school to work or independent living is a major challenge in the life of a student or young adult with a disability.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) works closely with schools throughout the state to assist students with disabilities in planning for their transition to life after school.

Cathy Carlson, DRS program planning and development unit manager, noted that every public and private secondary school in the state is assigned a vocational rehabilitation counselor/liaison. Of the more than 10,000 persons being served by DRS, approximately 3,000 are between the ages of 16 and 21.

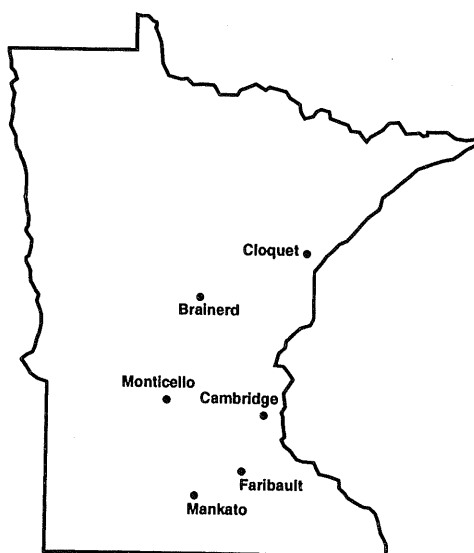
Improved survival and advancements in rehabilitation technology are contributing to greater expectations for life after school for people with disabilities. Increased awareness of the employment potential of people with disabilities is improving the number and quality of employment opportunities available to them, Carlson said.

DRS transition services offers resources to assist the student in post-high school decisions. The decision-making process is formalized in an Individualized Written Vocational

Rehabilitation Plan, which is a joint effort between the student, family members and the vocational rehabilitation counselor. It assesses the individual's potential and designs a vocational plan that will lead to employment after school or set a career path that may include further training or schooling.

As part of its transition services, DRS operates a Project With Industries (PWI) program at six sites in greater Minnesota. These programs primarily serve students and young adults who are making the transition to employment.

An example of the cooperation of a local PWI and the employer community is the annual



Projects With Industry are operated at six sites in greater Minnesota.

work skills competition. This is a joint effort of the schools, the local private industry council and the DRS/PWI program at Cambridge.

The students practice their skills in job interviews, job problem-solving, completion of employment application forms and general knowledge. Volunteers from the school system, DRS, Job Service and employers serve as resource staff and judges for the competition. Last year, 57 students competed.

Also in support of the transition process, vocational rehabilitation is actively involved in each of the state's 71 Community Transition Interagency Committees.

Each committee represents a school district, local county human services agency, post-secondary educational institutions, parents of students with disabilities and adults who are former recipients of services.

The committees identify the current transition services, programs and funding sources in the local community, help develop a plan for meeting identified needs.

Recognizing the value of transition services, the U.S. Department of Education recently funded a five-year Interagency Systems Change Grant to improve the state level systems policy development and planning.