

Volume 2, Issue 1 February 2009 Rehab Council Connection a quarterly e-newsletter

From left to right and top to bottom page 1:

Masthead: “Our Volunteer Members; Jeffry Abe-Gunter, Spokane; Don Brandon, Mountlake Terrace; Joanne Butts, Orting; Sandra Carr, Spokane; Sharey Cleveland, Nespelem; Lou Colwell, Seattle; John Harrison, Olympia; Rudy Hernandez, Burien; Jerry Johnsen, Seattle; Jim Larson, Olympia; Carol Maher, Olympia; Martin McCallum, Olympia; William Murray, Wenatchee; R.L. Roberts, Spokane; Lynnae Ruttledge, Olympia, ex-officio; Kris Tefft, Olympia”

WSRC and DVR Collaborate on Comprehensive Needs Assessment

DVR and the WSRC continue to make progress on our collaboration on a comprehensive needs assessment. Together we (have completed or) are undertaking a range of assessment activities between now and May. The goal is to position DVR to better understand and meet the needs of employers and in doing so, to support jobseekers with disabilities to secure work in fields with potential for advancement and wage progression.

We are collaborating with the Association of Washington Business on an employer survey and together we will facilitate customer focus groups and public meetings.

Left side box: “Save the Date: Customer Forum 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm followed by ‘Say Hey Kitsap’ 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm Thursday April 16, 2009 Silverdale Beach Hotel 3073 NW Bucklin Hill Rd. Silverdale, WA 98383: ASL interpretation provided for more information contact JoAnne Lang at: langjk@dshs.wa.gov”

Jim Larson to Chair WSRC in 2009

Few Rehabilitation Councils in the nation are as fortunate as the WSRC has been to have a knowledgeable, dedicated representative of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board like our own Martin McCallum. McCallum continues to make significant contributions to the success of our Council. In January Martin McCallum concluded his term as Council Chair.

Jim Larson was elected by his peers to succeed Martin McCallum as the 2009 Council Chair. Larson was appointed to the Council by Governor Gregoire in 2007.

He is a seasoned leader and manager who has built his career supporting people with disabilities to secure employment. Jim Larson is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Morningside, a Community Rehabilitation Program serving jobseekers with disabilities in Thurston and Grays Harbor Counties. He has been at the helm of Morningside since 1989. Larson led two other employment programs including one based in Ellensburg which he transformed from a facility based program to a community based program.

Jim was born and raised in Ballard. He is a graduate of Western Washington University. Jim Larson has a long record of civic engagement and volunteer service. He served on our Council for the first time from 1995 to 2000. Larson has served as the Chair of the Council in the past.

Lower right contents box: “In this issue: Needs Assessment 1: Jim Larson Chair 1: Welcome Aboard Don Brandon 2: Seeking Customer Input and Hosting ‘Say Hey Kitsap’ 2: Orion Industries 3”

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Upper left hand box: “Revenue Forecast: On February 10th the next budget forecast will be released. Washingtonians will learn how much the state budget deficit grew last quarter. The need to achieve greater cost savings will no doubt be in store.

A significant portion of DVR’s budget comes from federal sources. Although DVR has taken budget cuts, cuts to client services are not anticipated at this point.

Many organizations that provide prevocational services to DVR customers so they may be more ready for work are facing severe cuts.

More will be known in coming days.”

Welcome Aboard Don Brandon

“The members and staff of the WSRC are pleased to welcome Don Brandon as our newest member. Brandon represents the perspectives of current and former customers of DVR on the Council. He brings a breadth and depth of leadership experience and relationships to his Council service. As the Director of the Disability Business and Technical Assistance Center Northwest, Brandon is a regional liaison to the community of employers and can provide the much needed practical assistance that many entrepreneurs seek when making their businesses and employment opportunities more accessible.

Prior to his service with the Disability Business and Technical Assistance Center, Don Brandon served as the ADA Officer for the State of Alaska. He also worked as the ADA and Affirmative Action Officer for the University of Alaska at Anchorage, and was the longtime Chair of the Governor’s Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation for our neighbors to the north. When asked to comment on her colleagues’ leadership style Kathe Matrone, the Director of the Technical Assistance Continuing Education grant at the University of Washington said of him, “He’s an action-oriented person, a character, very personable and well-positioned to be a conduit to the employment community.”

In addition to his professional domain, Brandon has been active in advancing the goals of the Independent Living Movement and widely involved with accessible recreation activities. He co-founded the Fairbanks to Anchorage wheelchair race and was among its earliest winners. Don Brandon will attend his first Council meeting in April in Silverdale.

Upper right photo box: Don Brandon pictured in a chest up shot. He is bald, with round features. His skin is light brown. He is wearing wire-rim eyeglasses, has a grey beard and mustache. Photo Caption reads: “Governor Gregoire appointed Don Brandon of Mountlake Terrace to the WSRC January 28th.”

Left hand lower box: “Highlights from January Meeting Agenda: developing work plans for 09: Voting on bylaws revisions: Council elections: Learning about the Technical Assistance Continuing Education (TACE) grant.”

Seeking Customer Input and Hosting ‘Say Hey Kitsap’

The WSRC has a two part federal mandate to garner input from DVR customers and to assess their satisfaction with the DVR services. Over the past four years, one way we have sought information from the customer base has been by hosting quarterly customer forums. Since the

end of the waiting list for services last year we have noticed a marked decline in attendance at the forums.

We are seeking new strategies to draw customers and other stakeholders to share their successes, insights and concerns.

During the April quarterly meeting we are allocating time in the afternoon for comment. Some of the approaches we are considering are: Extending personalized invitations to a small random sample of customers, who are in a particular phase of the VR process and asking them to reflect on a prepared set of questions; allocating time for less structured comment from others with open cases in the county; and coordinating opportunities for virtual participation via conference calls or video conferencing.

The Council is also organizing the inaugural ‘Say Hey Kitsap’ to immediately follow the public comment period in the hopes of creating additional incentive to attend.

If you have suggestions on how we might do a better job of seeking input from DVR customers we welcome your suggestions. Please e-mail or call Joelle Brouner with your ideas at: brounjm@dshs.wa.gov or (360) 725-3690.

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Left hand box: “The WSRC; 4565 7th Ave SE, 1st floor, P.O. Box 45343, Phone: 1(866)252-2939; Fax: (360) 407-3899; Email: brounjm@dshs.wa.gov; WSRC logo; we’re on the Web! Visit us at: www.wastaterehabecouncil.org”

Orion Industries Highlights Promise of Project with Industries Grant

At the January quarterly meeting Kathy Powers, the Director of Rehabilitation Services for Orion Industries joined us to discuss the work of her organization.

Orion Industries provides on the job training for people in King and Pierce Counties. Orion serves program participants who have been unemployed or underemployed for a variety of reasons. Orion Industries fabricates machined parts for the aerospace industry. They also are making inroads into the field of healthcare, clerical support, and customer service. Recently Orion secured a Projects with Industries grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The target populations for grant funded services are people with disabilities or others with low educational attainment and a history of criminal or civil non violent offenses. DVR serves to benefit from the grant because it will not have to purchase the services Orion offers and because the grantee will be working closely with a Business Advisory Council that will help DVR to connect with employers. To learn more contact Kathy Powers at: Kathy.powers@orionworks.org.”

Right side box: photo showing young man from waist up in blue scrubs; “Get your 2008 Annual Report Today! If you’d like to learn more about the work of the WSRC in 2008 you may request our annual report by contacting JoAnne Lange at: langjk@dshs.wa.gov”

Help the WSRC Spread the Word

To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter, contact Joelle Brouner at brounjm@dshs.wa.gov, or call (360) 725-3690

The WSRC Is Recruiting New Members

Central box: “The WSRC is currently recruiting three new members. Two positions are available for candidates who are current or former customers of DVR. The remaining position is available for someone who represents Community Rehabilitation Programs. For more information contact Joelle at (360) 725-3690”

The bottom half of the page is formatted like an envelope with the WSRC logo as a stamp. The council address appears in the upper left corner. “WSRC; 4565-7th AVE SE, 1st floor; P.O. Box 45343; Olympia, WA 98504-5343” The center address for addressee reads: “Coming straight to you; quarterly; from cyberspace”