

# On Track To Win



**2009 Annual Report**

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT  
OF REHABILITATION SERVICES**

# OKLAHOMA COMMISSION FOR REHABILITATION SERVICES

## **CHAIR STEVE SHELTON OF EDMOND**

### **APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Steve Shelton is a senior application programmer and consultant with Fidelity National Information Services. He was a client of DRS' Visual Services/Vocational Rehabilitation program, which assisted him with his education and job placement. This assistance was a key factor in building the foundation for a successful information technology career. He has never allowed blindness to become a barrier to reaching the finish line.



## **VICE CHAIR BEN C. WHITE OF LAWTON**

### **APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA**

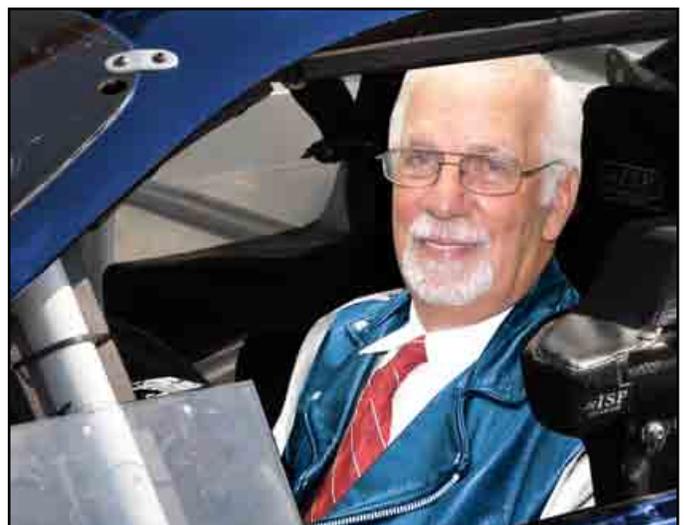
Ben C. White is a former hospital administrator and business owner. He served as executive vice president of Comanche County Memorial Hospital, where he was instrumental in developing the Center for Disability and Rehabilitation. He owned and operated the Center of Good Health, a full service family fitness and wellness center, which offers physical therapy and cardiac rehabilitation services.



## **MEMBER RAY F. KIRK OF MUSKOGEE**

### **APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE STATE SENATE**

Ray Kirk is a native of northeastern Oklahoma. He owns and operates a 585-acre cattle and thoroughbred horse ranch southeast of Muskogee. He was employed as a State Farm Insurance Companies agent for 32 years before retirement.





The mission of the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services is to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve productivity, independence and an enriched quality of life.





# PASSING THE KEYS

## DRS DIRECTOR LINDA PARKER

In December 2008, Linda Parker retired after 14 years of service to the agency. Even though Parker's race at DRS is over, her many miles of dedicated service are appreciated.

## DRS DIRECTOR MICHAEL O'BRIEN, ED.D.

Michael O'Brien, Ed.D. took the wheel as the DRS chief executive officer in January 2009. Under the guidance of the Commission for Rehabilitation Services, he leads 900 employees who assisted 73,368 Oklahomans with disabilities during the State Fiscal Year 2009. He directs Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Visual Services, Oklahoma School for the Blind, Oklahoma School for the Deaf, Disability Determination Division and Support Services, each with its individual goals and a collective mission to open doors to opportunity for Oklahomans with disabilities.



# SETTING THE PACE

## OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

This year, the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is leading the pack on issues important to those with disabilities and fully expects to pull ahead even more in the future.

On January 1, 2009, Director Michael O'Brien, Ed.D. took the wheel of DRS when Director Linda Parker retired after 14 years of service with the agency. With his entrance to the race, came his vision of "Cool jobs with good benefits and the opportunity to live independently for Oklahomans with disabilities."



With careful budgeting and federal stimulus money, the agency was able to reopen vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible Oklahomans with disabilities and begin helping clients reach O'Brien's vision of cool jobs. The previous year, two client groups had to be closed and clients were put on waiting lists due to budget constraints. The federal Rehabilitation Act, which governs our vocational rehabilitation and employment programs, does not permit agencies to cap or limit services needed by current clients in order to go to work. Instead, the agency has to control costs by delaying assistance to new applicants who are placed in three categories based on the significance of their disabilities.

Proving that Oklahomans can compete with the big leagues, the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped produced the first locally recorded audio book accepted by the National Library Services (NLS) in digital format. With the national distribution by NLS, children with a vision impairment anywhere in the United States can check out a copy of Oklahoma's recording of "When Turtle Grew Feathers" by Oklahoman Tim Tingle. The driving force behind this major accomplishment is the outstanding work by the producer, OLBPH Studio Director Jill Brummett, and the volunteer narrator, Nancy Cheper of Ada.

At the 15<sup>th</sup> annual People with Disabilities Awareness Day in April, our state capitol was filled to capacity with approximately 700 people visiting senators and representatives, learning about the various programs and opportunities available through the 40 exhibitors and making new contacts for fellowship and more. This event proved successful by bringing in the largest crowd of people with disabilities, or those who work with them, in event history.

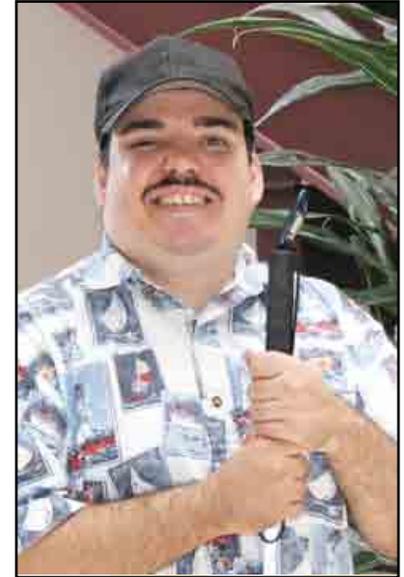
Oklahoma's future is guaranteed another win with both graduating classes from the Oklahoma School for the Blind and the Oklahoma School for the Deaf celebrating with 100 percent of the senior classes graduating.

Knowing the importance of knowledge and community, the Oklahoma School for the Deaf hosted the national conference of the American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC). The ASDC convention is held biennially for families of deaf children from across the nation as an opportunity to access information to help them with education, parenting, communication and technology in raising a child with deafness.



# CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE REHABILITATED IN THE VR AND VS PROGRAMS

	Total People Rehabilitated	People with Severe Disabilities Rehabilitated
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	831	726
Female	858	736
<b>Race</b>		
White	1,301	1,113
African American	205	187
Asian	23	22
American Indian or Alaska Native	197	174
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	6	4
Hispanic Ethnicity	60	51
*Clients may indicate up to six races/ethnicities.		
<b>Age at Application</b>		
Younger than 20	589	465
20 to 21	83	67
22 to 34	335	287
35 to 44	243	219
45-64	365	350
65 and older	74	74
<b>Education Level at Application</b>		
No Formal Schooling	4	3
Elementary Education (Grades 1 – 8)	48	46
Secondary Education, No Diploma (Grades 1 – 12)	561	483
Special Education Certificate of Completion / Diploma or in Attendance	39	29
High School Graduate or Equivalency Certificate (Regular Education Students)	546	467
Post-Secondary Education, No Degree	324	276
Associate Degree or Vocational/ Technical Certificate	99	92
Bachelor's Degree	56	55
Master's Degree Or Higher	12	11
<b>Primary Disability</b>		
Blind/Visual Impairment	338	306
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	74	61
Deaf-Blindness	1	1
Communicative Impairments	21	18
Orthopedic Impairment	283	237
Respiratory Impairments	41	19
General Physical Debilitation	56	51
Other Physical Impairments	162	144
Cognitive Impairments	460	404
Psychosocial Impairments	192	165
Other Mental Impairments	61	56



# DRS in Review

## LOOKING THROUGH THE REARVIEW MIRROR

There are five main components to the DRS engine: Vocational Rehabilitation, Visual Services, Disability Determination, Oklahoma School for the Blind and Oklahoma School for the Deaf. Each component helps Oklahomans with disabilities to achieve the life they choose, whether it is from employment, education or independence.

The finish line for Vocational Rehabilitation and Visual Services is to help Oklahomans with disabilities prepare for good jobs in the careers of their choice. In 2009, the point standing for these two divisions were 12,500 clients served resulting in 1,689 clients finding employment and becoming taxpayers.



Along the way, both the Vocational Rehabilitation and Visual Services offer specialized training for those with vision or hearing loss so they will be able to adapt to their environments and live independently.

For Oklahomans with disabilities who are unable to work, Disability Determination reviews medical records to see if applicants are eligible for Social Security disability benefits. This division has logged in many miles by completing a workload of 54,185 case determinations.

Preparing the next generation for Oklahoma are The Oklahoma School for the Blind in Muskogee and Oklahoma School for the Deaf in Sulphur. These schools provide valuable education to their residential students, as well as to students who commute and summer school students. They provide the opportunity for the students to achieve their educational and career goals. Both schools offer outreach services to families, local schools and their students who are blind or deaf across the state.

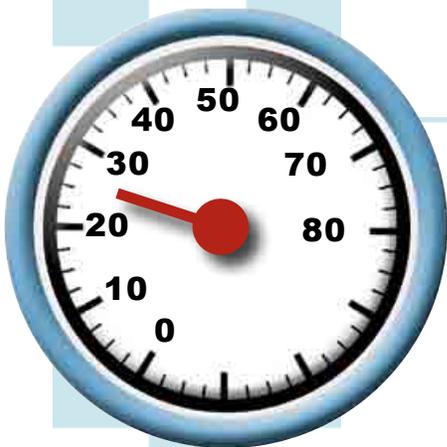
Keeping the DRS engine running in 2009 was funding from various sponsors, each critical for a successful journey. Services provided by Vocational Rehabilitation and Visual Services are funded by 75 percent federal dollars while 25 percent came from the state.

Disability Determination was 100 percent federally funded.

State funding for Oklahoma School for the Blind averaged 98 percent and funding for the Oklahoma School for the Deaf averaged 95 percent.

DRS' crew is comprised of approximately 900 employees. We lead by example, with 12 percent of the agency's personnel being people with disabilities. There are 42 Vocational Rehabilitation offices in 26 counties and 19 Visual Services offices in 13 counties.

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services began this race in 1993 when it was created as an independent agency. Each division's history started long before. The green flag for Vocational Rehabilitation waved in 1927, and for Visual Services in 1947. The Oklahoma School for the Blind and the Oklahoma School for the Deaf were both established in 1897. Disability Determination began operating in 1954. Through the years, DRS has helped many Oklahomans gain dignity through the power of self-sustaining employment and independent living.



# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

**D**RS' Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides employment services for Oklahomans who have a physical or mental disability and need assistance finding or keeping a job. People with visual impairments receive similar services from Visual Services.

To qualify for services, a person has a physical or mental disability that is a substantial barrier to employment. The client must be able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in ways that lead to finding and obtaining employment.

VR services primarily consist of career counseling, vocational education and training, medical services to improve employment opportunities, special technology and job placement to help Oklahomans with their career goals. VR staff also operate three career planning centers to assist clients in learning what type of careers in which they may excel. As a result, thousands whose disabilities were barriers to employment become taxpayers each year, eliminating or reducing their need for disability benefits and government assistance.

To give high school students with disabilities the lead in life, VR is there with the specialized Transition: School to Work program. This program gives students a head start on work experience with on-the-job training and job coaches.

VR operates programs that are geared toward finding employers to hire DRS' qualified clients, providing or financing any needed job-related training and giving valuable information about tax credits for employers from our corporate relations team and job developers throughout the state. VR also provides employment assistance and interpreter certification from Services for the Deaf.

VR coordinates services with eight tribal vocational rehabilitation programs to help Native Americans with disabilities reach their career goals.



## DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) SERVICES

	<b>FY-2009</b>
Clients Served	9,993
Program Applications	5,214
Employment Plans	3,390

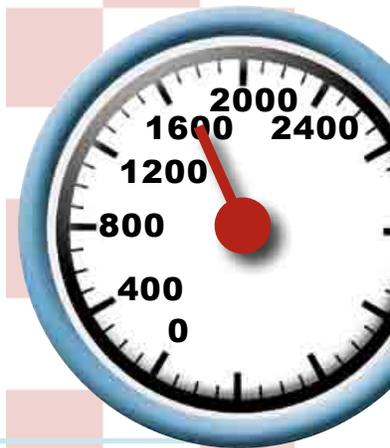
<b>VR Clients Who Became Employed</b>	<b>FY-2009</b>
Employment Outcomes	1,256
Average Yearly Earnings	\$19,510
Average Cost of Services Per Client Employed	\$12,080
Average Taxes Paid	\$2,927

### Combined VR/VS Statistics

<b>VR and VS Clients Served</b>	<b>FY-2009</b>
Clients Served	12,431
Program Applications	6,332
Employment Plans	4,264

<b>VR and VS Clients Employed</b>	<b>FY2009</b>
Employment Outcomes	<b>1,689</b>
Average Yearly Earnings	\$18,894
Average Cost of Services Per Client Employed	\$11,418
Average Taxes Paid	\$2,834

**\*Statistical information based on Federal Fiscal Year 2009**



## DRS HIRES BEST CANDIDATE, HAPPENS TO BE A VR CLIENT



Shan Carter played three co-ed soccer games the day before she experienced the first symptoms of multiple sclerosis in September 1999. Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disease that results in the body's immune system. Symptoms vary widely, depending on the location of affected nerve fibers, but for many people stress, heat or fatigue can trigger symptoms or make them much worse in episodes known as exacerbations.

As the symptoms increased, Carter was hospitalized and sometimes had to miss work for doctor appointments. When she experienced a serious exacerbation and was hospitalized, large steroid doses led to the deterioration of her hip at age 33. She was demoted several times and ultimately fired by a supervisor who was unwilling to accommodate her developing disability.

In 2001, Carter came to DRS for a letter documenting her disability that makes it easier to go to work for the state through a special hiring program.

Carter learned of an opening for an administrative assistant in the policy development unit at DRS. Impressed with her skills and attitude, the unit administrator hired her.

At one point, when she was hospitalized with an exacerbation, DRS reopened Carter's vocational rehabilitation case and modified her van for the power wheelchair that she purchased with medical insurance and her own funds. Both DRS and Carter wanted her to return to work, so the agency modified her office to make space for the wheelchair, which she used when she came back, but fortunately no longer needs.

"I went through other programs trying to get a job, but kept running into walls," Carter said. "DRS allowed me get a permanent, stable job with benefits. I felt good about that, plus hiring people with disabilities reinforces what this agency is all about."

She was promoted in January, 2008 to an administrative programs officer with responsibilities that include inventory control, vehicle coordination for the agency and supervising other staff.

"With MS it's not if an exacerbation will occur, it's when," Shan Carter said. "So there are advantages to working for an agency that understands disability and offers sick days and insurance.

"It never occurred to me to stay home," she said. "I was ready to get back to work."

"At DRS, we literally put our money where our mouth is in terms of hiring qualified people with disabilities," DRS Director Michael O'Brien, Ed. D. said. "Nearly 12 percent of our staff have disabilities, and we find that they are dedicated and committed to helping others go to work."

### VICTORY LANE

Smashing the agency's goal of 18 complete cases with successful employment outcomes in a year was Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Shelly Bell with a total of 46 closed cases. That means 46 Oklahomans with disabilities went to work and became taxpayers.

How did she do it? She said being clear about your goal from the outset is important.

"From the very first time a consumer makes contact with our office, they are informed that employment is our goal."

Keeping it simple, a winning strategy.



## VISUAL SERVICES

Oklahomans who are blind or visually impaired turn to Visual Services for assistance through vocational rehabilitation, employment and other programs that encourage confidence and independence.

Through employment, people who are blind or visual impaired can support themselves and their families just like any other person. Visual Services (VS) offers employment assistance to help those who want employment reach their goals through the use of career counseling, vocational education and training, medical services to improve employment opportunities, special technology and job placement.

Our VS program is customized to help Oklahomans with visual impairments adjust to vision loss and develop skills needed to get or keep quality jobs.

Clients are eligible for the vocational rehabilitation program if their visual impairments make it difficult to work. They must be able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, which are required to prepare for and find jobs.

VS helps high school students get valuable vocational training and work experience, and assists business owners who are blind in operating food service businesses in government buildings through the Business Enterprise Program.

The corporate relations team provides recruitment assistance free to employers, along with information on tax credits and training on the latest adaptive technology to help employees with disabilities get the job done.

Rehabilitation teachers offer free classes and in-home instruction to help Oklahomans adjust to vision loss, while orientation and mobility specialists teach clients techniques for traveling safely. Oklahomans who are 55 years of age or older may receive specialized assistance through the Older Blind Independent Living Services program.

VS' Vision Center concentrates a variety of services in one convenient location. The center features a Rehabilitation Technology Lab, which enables clients to try out the latest technology and receive hands-on training.

Visual Services operates the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, which mails thousands of free recorded books to patrons and provides free braille textbooks and classroom materials to public school students.



## VICTORY LANE



Visual Services Counselor Gladys Monroe is on top of the leader board with a total of 35 closed cases. Monroe attributes honesty and a positive attitude with her success.

"I think it is vital as a Rehabilitation Counselor that we are honest with our clients therefore promoting positive attitudes in our clients. One way to achieved this is by helping our clients get a better understanding of what our agency can provide to assist them with becoming employed. Therefore our clients will learn to be independent and successful in their endeavors."



## DIVISION OF VISUAL SERVICES (VS) SERVICES

	FY-2009
Clients Served	2,438
Program Applications	1,118
Employment Plans	874

VS Clients Who Became Employed	FY-2009
Employment Outcomes	433
Average Yearly Earnings	\$17,106
Average Cost of Services Per Client Employed	\$9,498
Average Taxes Paid	\$2,566

## OKLAHOMA LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED SERVICES

Circulation	FY-2009
Library Patrons	5,209
Books Circulated Daily to Patrons	725
Books Received Weekly by Patrons	3,515
Daily Inquiries	105

Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Center	FY-2009
Children Receiving Textbooks/Educational Materials	695
Average Days for Child to Receive:	
In-House Book	1
Ordered Book – Braille	25
Ordered Book – Large Print	14

Total Books/Items in Collection	12,417
New Books Purchased – Braille	115
New Books Purchased – Large Print	643
Instructional Aids and Equipment *	627

\*Books and instructional aids/equipment, such as talking globes, tactile maps, etc., are ordered during one fiscal/school year and received the next fiscal/school year.

Federal Quota Funds (Previous School Year)	FY-2009
Children Eligible for Textbooks	522
Funding	\$279,276

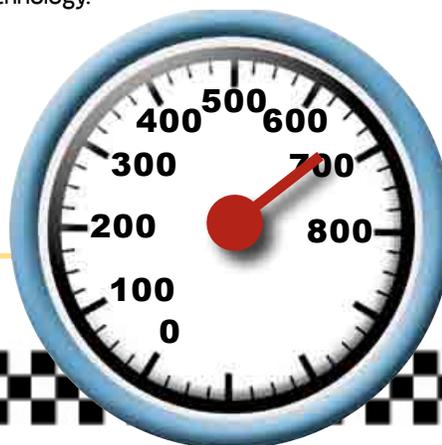
The State Department of Education provides supplemental funding annually for Braille Education materials. For FY08 and FY09 the funding amount was \$250,000.

The library's AIM Center served 695 students with 522 of those being eligible for the Federal Quota. For students receiving accessible instructional materials, such as textbooks in Braille or large print and/or other aids and equipment, these items are shipped the same or next day when in stock. Special order materials can take up to two weeks when in stock from vendors. In the event a Braille or large print text book is not in stock from a vendor and must be custom produced, delivery time could be several months.

General library services circulated 182,704 books and numerous magazines to 5,209 patrons. The current book collection is made up of 55,682 book titles and offers reader advisor services equivalent to a mid-sized public library. The library staff repairs an average of 70 audio book players, five braille writing machines and over 300 defective audio books per month.

The Library's recording studio produces two popular magazines and an average of 3 books per month about Oklahoma or written by Oklahoma authors, all of which are available nationally through inter-library loan. In addition to this, DRS brochures and training materials are also recorded. The recording studio continues to be a model facility and relies heavily on volunteers from the community to provide manpower.

Late in 2009, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, began rolling out digital book cartridges and digital book players. Gradually, over the next three to five years, the cassette-based collection and players will be phased out and totally replaced in Oklahoma by the newer digital-based technology.



# VICTORY LANE

## VISION IMPAIRMENT WON'T STOP A CAN-DO SPIRIT

**W**hat do you do when your client has a can-do attitude? Get out of the way, and watch him succeed. That's exactly what Teresa McDermott, DRS Visual Services counselor did when she took on Kenneth Poore's case. Poore, a Konawa resident, wanted to work and take care of himself, but he was new to town and couldn't find work.

"I am originally from New York and I couldn't find any work at all," Poore said. "So I called Cecil first." Cecil Corvin was a DRS counselor for 7 years, who passed away in 2007. Corvin introduced Poore and McDermott to each other because Poore lived in her territory.

To look at Poore, you don't notice the disability; he is legally blind from an undeveloped optical nerve and nystagmus, which means involuntary eye movement. With the assistance of glasses, magnifying glasses and computer screen enlargers, Poore can see to read, write and accomplish almost anything he sets his mind to. Once you get to know him, you forget he has a disability.

Growing up on a dairy farm, Poore's grandfather didn't coddle or shelter him. He was expected to be up and in the barn by 5 a.m. every day. "My grandfather always told us we need to learn how stuff is done," Poore said.

Poore's brother also has the same condition — it is hereditary.

"Grandpa said that you guys have a job to do, and we always did it. We were never told we had a disability."

To this day, Poore does not let that disability stop him from being a successful business owner of Ken-Do-It Home Inspections and Handyman, LLC and a responsible community member as a board member of the Boys and Girls Club in Ada. He is also a good friend who renovates a friend's garage on the weekend and a rescuer of bunnies with his wife, Jolene. Most importantly, he is dad to 13-year-old Kenna Lee.

DRS helped him become a business man with needed assistance, but he became successful through his drive and attitude. He knew he wanted to work in the construction field. It's what he likes and had experience in dating back to age 14.

"Cecil and I were informally talking about Kenny and he mentioned a home inspection course," McDermott said, who is now a programs manager for the agency. "Kenny thought it was something that he would like to do. He called and talked to the school and got the information. He took the initiative.

"We (DRS) paid for the home inspection course and computer software, such as a screen enlargement. The school is in Midwest City, so he had to stay in a hotel for five or six nights. He found one that was close enough to school that he could walk. He didn't ask for assistance with that.



He just did it. It was a very independent undertaking. It was very well thought out.

“I really didn’t know where it was going to go once he finished the course,” McDermott said. “But then he started calling me and saying, ‘I’ve got this job here and I’m contracting with this other person on his apartments.’”

“The next thing I know, he’s working a couple of towns over. It’s all because of his attitude.

“He got out and sought out people to work for. He didn’t sit at home and wait for them to call him. He made up some business cards and did some flyers, but the success was coming from word-of-mouth and his drive. He got out there and hit the street,” McDermott said.

“I’ve got one employee who works part-time or full-time depending on how much work we have coming in. We do a full line of construction as well as remodels and repair,” Poore said. “Right now, I am working on getting my electrical and heating and air license.”

It doesn’t stop there, Poore also works for the Boys and Girls Club in Ada. “I am on the board of directors at the Boys and Girls Club. I help with the decisions and stuff,” Poore said.

“When I am not working other jobs, I volunteer at the club. I like the positive direction this club offers. When I started on the board, we had 20 kids in the program. It has now grown to between 80 and 90 in our after-school program. We also started with 125 in our soccer program, and we’re over 300 now.”

Currently, Poore is donating his time in the remodeling of the Boys and Girls Club and thinking about coaching the soccer team.

McDermott said, “He was a model consumer. He’s got a lot of good instincts and intuition. I thought he would bring a lot to the field of rehab, but that’s not for him. He’d rather build a desk than sit behind it.”



Poore is also active when it comes to disability rights and legislation. He usually attends the annual People with Disabilities Awareness Day hosted by DRS at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City to talk with legislators and let them know about disability issues.

“I want legislators to support people with disabilities and offer them the same program I was able to go through,” Poore said.

Don’t underestimate Poore, he even managed to serve two years of ROTC in college, but then they gave him a vision test.

The name of his business was aptly chosen. Ken-Do-It sums it up nicely.



# DISABILITY DETERMINATION

Time is of the essence in the Disability Determination Division (DDD). The drivers, also known as disability examiners, process as many claims as possible, accurately and quickly, due to the fact that a claim actually represents a person who has applied for disability benefits for Social Security Disability Income or Supplemental Security Income benefits. It is DDD's job to determine if that person is eligible under the Social Security Administration's requirements.

Our disability examiners and consulting physicians or psychologists review applicants' medical and vocational information and work as a team on the medical review process. They decide whether or not applicants qualify as disabled or blind based on medical evidence using federal guidelines. Here accuracy, speed and expert opinions are critical.

Children are evaluated based on their ability to perform age-appropriate activities and their medical evidence.

Disability Determination met their initial clearance target by clearing 39,278 initial claims in federal fiscal year 2009. This is more than 2,000 initial claims than the previous year.

What does this really mean? When a person applies for disability benefits in Oklahoma, he or she gets an accurate evaluation, allowing for benefits to begin in a timely fashion.

The DDD takes great pride in the quality of the work they produce. In FY 2009, the Oklahoma DDD ranked fourth in the nation in initial claims accuracy for the year, making accurate decisions in 97.2 percent of their cases as measured by the Social Security Administrations' (SSA) Office of Quality Performance.

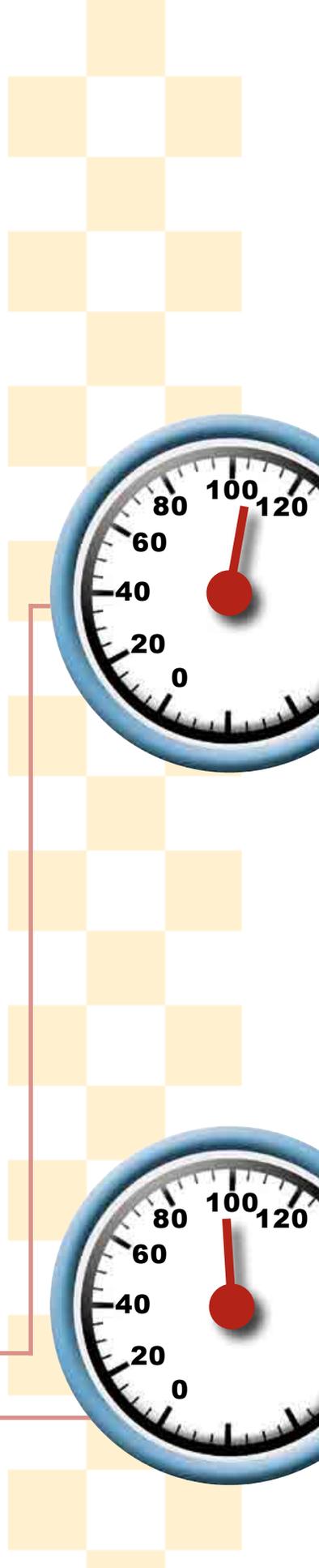
Disability Determination had a Mean Processing Time (MPT) of 76.6 days. MPT represents the average time it took to make a medical decision for an initial disability claim. This is 8.6 days fewer than DDD's processing time in FY 2008.

The law requires Disability Determination to perform a Continuing Disability Review (CDR) approximately every three years to establish if the medical condition of the claimant has improved or not. Disability Determination completed their assigned share of this Region's CDR workload by processing 5,162 CDRs.

Disability Determination helps Oklahomans cope with loss of income due to disability. As a result, they gain more independence and build a better life for themselves and their families.

DISABILITY DETERMINATION DIVISION	
Performance	FY-2009
Budgeted Workload	57,784
Completed Disability Benefit Cases	58,590
Processed Budgeted Workload	101.4%
Decision Accuracy Rate Oklahoma	97.2%
Decision Accuracy Rate National	94.8%
Processing Time (Days)	76.4

\*Statistical information based on Federal Fiscal Year 2009



# VICTORY LANE

## SMITH RECEIVES LEADERSHIP AWARD AT NADE CONFERENCE

**D**isability Determination Division's Professional Relations Specialist Bruce E. Smith was presented the NADE Award for Outstanding Leadership at the National Association of Disability Examiners Conference held Oct. 5 through 8 in Covington, Kentucky.

"I was very surprised and very honored to have received the award. I love my job and the award is just icing," Smith said.

Smith is past-president of the Oklahoma Association of Disability Examiners (OKADE) and a member of the NADE Resolutions Committee.

The NADE Award honors the disability professional of the year for outstanding contributions not only to the service of the claimant, but to promoting more effective relationships within the professional community.

Smith exceeded the criteria for this award. He received the SSA Regional Commissioner's Quality Award for significant contributions to the SSA Disability Program, the DDS Leadership Award and the Governor's Commendation for Quality Teamwork. His involvement includes collaborations with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Governor's Council on Homelessness, the VA Medical Center's Wounded Warrior's Project and an initiative at a local homeless shelter with staff from the SSA Field Office and Disability Determination Division (DDD) to expedite applications for benefits. All of these projects significantly impact case development at DDD.



# OKLAHOMA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Students who are blind or visually impaired may attend the Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB) to receive a specialized education to meet their educational needs. Students not only learn the basics as all Oklahoma students do, they learn skills that will allow them to live independently.

OSB is a public school; therefore, there is no tuition, transportation or room and board cost.

Students may commute from home daily if they live close by or they can live at the school during the week and on Friday afternoon return to their hometowns to be with their families on the weekend.

OSB is a fully accredited school that teaches all the state mandated education requirements with individual training that will ensure a student has every opportunity at his or her fingertips. Whether it is assistive technology (AT), such as computer screen readers, audio books or magnifiers that enlarge printed material to braille for note taking, students at OSB can get their hands on equipment that is not always available at public schools.

OSB also has a Summer Enrichment Program for students who attend public schools during the regular school year, but need help with academic courses, AT or independent living skills training.

The school provides special events and activities to bring the public and students together. Each year, OSB hosts Future Shock where the high-school-aged students get to visit with workplace professionals and college recruiters to prepare the students for life after high school.

OSB provides thousands of free outreach services each year for students attending local public schools, their families and local school systems. Qualified staff offer free student evaluations, in-service training for teachers and recommendations for classroom modifications and special equipment that help students reach their full potential.



## VICTORY LANE

Mary Perry is the Oklahoma School for the Blind Employee of the Year. Perry started her career in the Food Service Department in July 2007 and then transferred to a custodial position in 2008.

“She is an employee who wants to do her very best,” Karen Kizzia, superintendent, said. “She is truly supportive of our school system and is a great role model for our students.”





## OKLAHOMA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

School Census	FY-2009
Residential Students	41
Day Students	54
Total Students Attending All or Part of the Year	95
Counties Served	37
Students with Multiple Disabilities	19
Teacher to Student Ratio	1 to 3.65
Direct Care Specialist to Student Ratio	1 to 4
Summer School Students	21
Days for Summer School	20

Outreach Program	FY-2009
Direct Services	1,955
Consultations and Evaluations	130
Services to Families	96
Services to Schools	343
Services to Organizations	1,320

School Year Graduation Percentage	FY-2009
OSB Graduation Rate	100.0%
State Graduation Rate	76.6%
National Graduation Rate	70.6%

\*Statistical information based on School Year 2008-09



## OKLAHOMA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

The checked flag goes to the Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD) for Oklahoma students who are deaf or hard of hearing. OSD is both a neighborhood school where students commute from home and a residential school where students live during the week and on Friday afternoon return to their hometowns to spend the weekends with their families. There is no cost for tuition or room and board at OSD, nor is there a fee for transporting students to and from home.

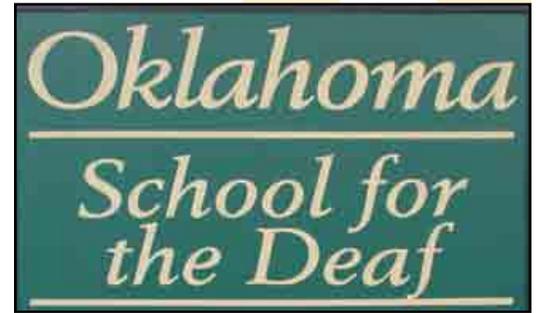
The education a student receives at OSD is equal to all other public schools in the state. It is a fully accredited public school that follows all the state mandated education requirements.

The advantages to attending OSD are the specialized courses designed to meet unique communication needs of a student who is deaf or hard of hearing. OSD offers specific skills training, including American Sign Language (ASL) and use of adaptive technology. Students may receive remediation or skills reinforcement, and staff work effectively with students who have varying degrees of hearing loss using the child's preferred communication method.

OSD expanded its educational reach with three satellite preschools strategically placed throughout the state, one in the north at Collinsville, one in the center at Edmond and now one in the southwest at Chickasha. These satellite preschools help to keep children at home during their early childhood years while providing the needed education in communication that is critical at this time in their young lives and usually not available in the public schools.

The National Accessible Learning Center, operated through OSD in collaboration with the Oklahoma School for the Blind, houses and distributes 70,000 educational videos specially formatted for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, with captioning and descriptive narrative for students who are blind or visually impaired. This center is the only educational video library of its kind in the United States.

OSD accepts its responsibility to the community which includes the deaf or hard of hearing beyond the high school years. Housed on the campus is the Equipment Distribution Program where adaptive equipment for telephone and communication access for those of any age is provided. Also, the Hearing Aid Program for Senior Adults provides assistance for those needing hearing aids who meet eligibility guidelines.



### VICTORY LANE



Loretta Stinson was voted Oklahoma School for the Deaf Teacher of the Year. Stinson teaches art to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. Due to her diligent efforts, the dinosaur drawings of eight of her students (shown left) were featured in the nationally-syndicated "Alley Oop" comic strip giving the students and OSD outstanding exposure.

Larry Hawkins, OSD principal, said, "Loretta received a grant for a field trip to take her students to the Toy Action Figure Museum in Pauls Valley. She wanted to find a way to connect art to the Toy Action Museum. In researching their Web site, she discovered a contest that was sponsored by the creators, the Benders, of the Alley Oop comic strip, and the Benders were featured in the hometown heroes section of the museum. She, therefore, encouraged her students to do research on dinosaurs and to study the kinds of drawings in the Alley Oop comic strips. Students made drawings of dinosaurs and entered them into the national competition. The results were eight OSD students' pictures selected for publication. During the week of February 6 through 14, 2009, Alley Oop comic strips featured OSD students' drawings. **OSD students' were the first deaf illustrators whose work has appeared in a national syndicated comic strip in newspapers.** One student said, 'It's just normal for me to draw, and I didn't know it would be all over the world.'"

# OKLAHOMA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF



<b>School Census</b>	<b>FY-2009</b>
Total Students Attending All or Part of the Year	154
Residential Students	91
Day Students	63
Counties Served	75
Students with Multiple Disabilities	30
Teacher to Student Ratio	1 to 7
Direct Care Specialist to Student Ratio	1 to 5.81
Summer School Students	99
Days for Summer School	5

<b>Preschool Programs</b>	<b>FY-2009</b>
Satellite Preschool Programs	3
Students	33

<b>Outreach Programs</b>	<b>FY-2009</b>
Direct Services*	64,558
Consultations and Evaluations	2,707
Services to Families	28,615
Services to Schools	27,686
Services to Organizations	5,550

\*Includes videos shipped to patrons nationwide by OSD's National Accessible Learning Center.

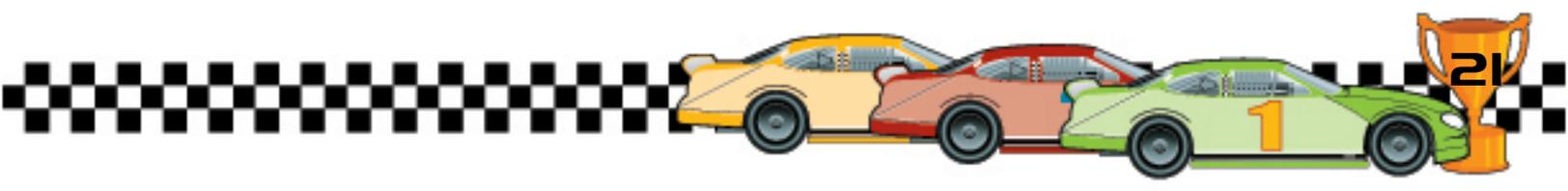
<b>School Year Graduation Percentage</b>	<b>FY-2009</b>
OSD Graduation Rate	100.0%
State Graduation Rate	76.6%
National Graduation Rate	70.6%

Statistical information based on school year 2008-09



# VICTORY LANE

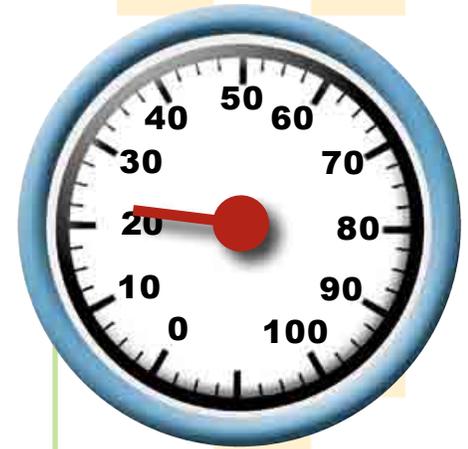




# OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

## 2009 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES

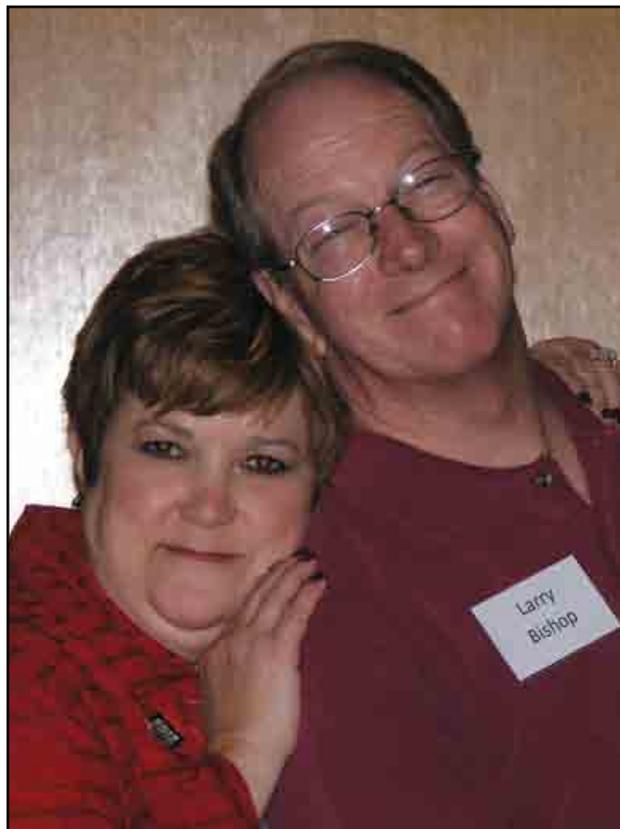
	State	Federal	Other	Total
DVR/DVS	\$11,237,000	\$33,123,000	\$567,000	\$44,927,000
OSB	6,723,000	115,000	24,000	6,862,000
OSD	8,251,000	414,000	863,000	9,528,000
DDD	0	23,410,000		23,410,000
Support Services	1,685,000	4,143,000		5,828,000
Total	\$27,896,000	\$61,205,000	\$1,454,000	\$90,555,000



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) / Division of Visual Services (DVS) – The majority of funding for the program is eligible for a federal/state match of 78.7 percent / 21.3 percent. DVS' Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (OLBPH) receives 100 percent state funding.

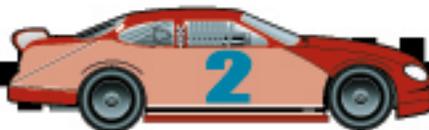
Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB) – The majority of funding for this program is state appropriations.

Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD) – The majority of funding for this program is state appropriations. The majority of other funding goes to the Equipment Distribution program, which provides telecommunications and other equipment to deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and severely speech-impaired individuals.



Disability Determination Division (DDD) – This program is 100 percent federally-funded.

Support Services – DRS utilizes an indirect cost rate as the standardized method for individual programs to pay a fair share of support services (general administration) costs.





# FINISH LINE

## WHAT WE DO

Opening doors to opportunity – that’s what we do at the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services.

We are proud of our dedicated staff – including 12 percent who have disabilities – because they understand and care about the people we serve.

Our programs and services help people with their life’s journey lead more self-sufficient and fulfilling lives. We are DRS. We guide people with a roadmap to employment, but each person we serve deserves the credit for driving the laps required to reach the finish line.

While there are still many races to enter, the goal is always the same –

# VICTORY LINE

Jackets, helmets, gloves, and other items used as props for the photos were contributed by DRS staff, including Bruce Smith, Vanessa Martin, Ray Leard, Candace Lemons and Dan Shephard.

DRS Publication S10-05 Issued March 2010

DRS is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services and/or assistance and is in compliance with the Civil Rights Acts 1964 and 1991, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Executive Order 112246, as amended. DRS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or veteran’s status in employment or provision of services.

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1,689

DRS clients found employment

54185

case determinations performed by DRS Disability Determination Division

percent of DRS employees who have disabilities

12

97.2

accuracy rate for DDD decisions as determined by the federal government

5,209

patrons at Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

100

percent of students at Oklahoma School for the Blind and Oklahoma School for the Deaf who graduated

04

national ranking of DDD for accuracy

46

cases closed by top VR counselor Shelly Bell

55,682

book titles at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

\$2,834

average taxes paid by Vocational Rehabilitation and Visual Services clients who are now working.

25

percent of funding for VR and VS provided by the State of Oklahoma

16

years as an Oklahoma state agency