

R1500.6
AL 79
1:1

ALTERNATIVES

Spring 1993 Vol. 1, No. 1

Timely information for employers and job seekers with disabilities

Alternatives is a quarterly newsletter published by Gateway Industries, vocational work center of the Laredo State Center/TXMHMR. The focus of this publication is to promote the hiring of persons with disabilities by employers in the community through public awareness and the continued sharing of information.

This is a project of the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities funded by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission.

EDITOR:

Ernesto A. Santos

Director, Gateway Industries

COLUMN EDITOR

Zulema Lopez

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Fermin Vasquez

Job Developer,
Gateway Industries

DESIGNER

Jose A. Garcia

Graphitiks Advertising Design

Government Publications
Texas State Documents

JUN 20 1993

Depository
Dallas Public Library

NDEAM PROCLAMATION

SIGNED BY
MAYOR

Mayor Saul Ramirez signed a city proclamation October 1st, 1992, designating the month of October as National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) in Laredo.

This ceremony is renewed each year as a symbol of commitment by the city of Laredo in working to enhance the lives of all citizens with disabilities.

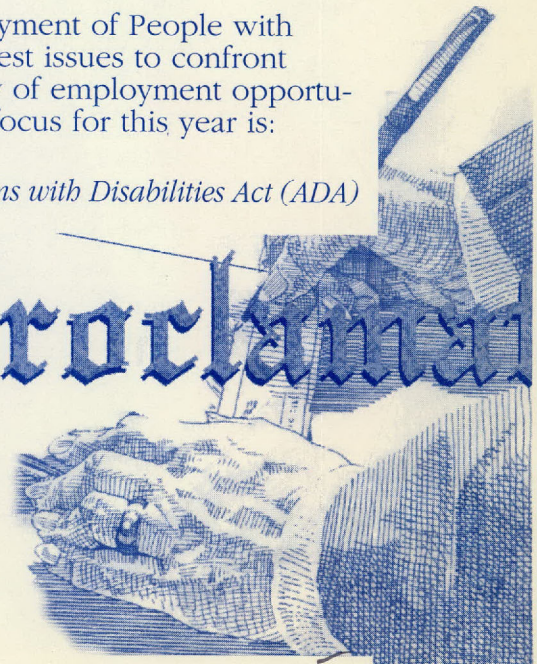
Present at the signing of the proclamation were Delores V. Rodriguez, Laredo State Center Director, Tim Brown, Ph. D, LSC Consumer Services Administrator, and Zulema Lopez, Gateway Industries Vocational Coordinator. The mayor presented the proclamation to Melissa Cantu and Roberto Trevino vocational program participants at Gateway Industries.

Each year the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities issues a press release featuring the latest issues to confront those who are striving to increase the availability of employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The main focus for this year is:

"The successful implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its mark on American businesses is the focus for National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month - October 1992.

Business leaders, service providers, labor union representatives, advocacy groups, and people with disabilities throughout the nation are working together to create a change."

Proclamation



New *Alternatives* to inform employers of untapped labor sources

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce all our readers to our first issue of *ALTERNATIVES*. This quarterly publication has been developed to inform the community about the abilities of a wonderful economic resource, that for the most part, has been left underutilized. I am referring to individuals in our population who have a disability. In the coming year it is my hope that this newsletter will help to educate employers throughout the community about the abilities of these individuals, and at the same time spotlight some of their accomplishments. As the Director of Gateway Industries, I have seen first hand what the human spirit can accomplish if only given the chance. Fifteen years ago most people with disabilities who wanted to work did not have many alternatives. The old model of working in a workshop is very quickly becoming a thing of the past, and rightfully so. Today with modern training methods and advancement in adaptive devices more and more people are joining the workforce as productive members of society, and yes, paying their share of taxes too. Even Congress has affirmed this growing movement with the recent passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

securing the rights of these individuals to a more productive and fruitful life.

In this issue we feature some of the activities sponsored by Gateway Industries in coordination with National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Every October we take some time from our busy schedules to recognize the efforts of individuals that we helped obtain jobs and have met or exceeded their individual vocational goals. Of course, we also use this time of year to express our appreciation to all those who make it possible, the employers who have hired people we referred. In our next issue we hope to get down to business and have more features on employment issues that can be of help to all employers in the ever changing business world. Until then, we hope that you enjoy reading this issue and encourage you to call our office at (210) 724-5507 to learn more about our employment services.

By Ernesto A. Santos
Director, Gateway Industries

Our Thanks to the INS Welfare & Recreation Association

On October 15, 1992 Gateway Industries celebrated their 5th annual Day at the Lake Picnic. The event took place at 'El Ranchito'

adjacent to Casa Blanca State Park.

Each year the vocational rehabilitation staff of Gateway Industries and our program participants meet to enjoy a day of outdoor recreational activities including sports, music, and a delicious BBQ. This event is held every year during National Disability Employment Awareness Month and has proven to be an excellent opportunity for our vocational trainees to get to know our staff outside of the daily grind.

We would like to take this time to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Immigration & Naturalization Service's Welfare and Recreation Association for sponsoring this year's activities.

INS Welfare & Recreation Association members who volunteered their time and efforts included:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Ramon Juarez | Port Director |
| Alfredo Sanchez Jr. | Supervisor |
| Rogelio Salinas | Supervisor |
| Sophia Hinckley | Immigration Inspector |
| Guadalupe Carranco | Asst. Port Director |
| Conrado Serna | Asst. Port Director |
| Robert Frausto | Immigration Inspector |
| Robert Palacios | Immigration Inspector |
| Juan A. Esparza | Immigration Inspector/Pres. (Welfare & Recreation) |

GATEWAY INDUSTRIES' 5TH ANNUAL AWARDS NIGHT HELD AT IBOC

Each year Gateway Industries presents certificates of achievement to those individuals who, despite their disability, have risen to the challenge and have attained success at working in real jobs for real pay. Whether they are employed in the community or participating in one of our training programs, these hard working individuals have demonstrated excellent work habits and are recognized in the areas of job attendance, personal advancement, and dedication to their jobs.

By Zulema Lopez
and Fermin Vasquez

This year over twenty-five individuals received recognition at the annual event which was held on October 20th at International Bank of Commerce.

Additionally, several local employers were recognized for hiring people with disabilities through Gateway Industries' placement services. This year's 'EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR' award was presented to **Royal Treat Car Wash** for their outstanding support in hiring individuals with disabilities during 1992.

Once again, we would like to thank the International Bank of Commerce for their continued support and gracious hospitality in celebrating the accomplishments of these individuals.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Reasonable Accommodations

In the recent years, since Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, there has been much said about the burden that businesses will have to bear in order to accommodate a person with a disability in his or her pursuit of a more normal life. Whether it means removing architectural barriers or considering an otherwise capable candidate for hire, there is usually a simple, low cost solution to the problem of accommodation.

The key to designing low cost accommodations is to use one's imagination. Sometimes we have to think in less conventional terms if we are going to make our services, products, and job opportunities more accessible

to people with disabilities. Remember that the world around us was designed to suit the physical and mental capabilities of the "average adult." All our daily activities are structured

around that premise. As logical as it may sound, how many "average adults" do you know? Listed are some examples of accommodations that offer low cost solutions to achieving accessibility.

