

OCCK Forms Regional Business Advisory Council

In late summer this year, we started the Regional Business Advisory Council (RBAC) recruiting 12 community leaders to assist us in our efforts to increase the number of people with disabilities working in the north central region of Kansas.

The recruited business and community leaders have met twice and have developed several ideas and concepts to assist us in our efforts. The RBAC is focused on developing strategic plans and wealth creation ideas that lead to new partnerships and collaborations. We also have four Local Business Advisory Councils that help us access the hidden job market in Abilene, Beloit, Concordia, and Salina. The RBAC will also play a role in supporting the local councils by encouraging other local business leaders to participate.

One of the goals of the Councils is to increase the employment outcomes for 55 people with disabilities each year for the next three years. We are also working on plans to increase the opportunities for people currently working in the sheltered workshops at OCCK Inc. by developing contracts with more regional companies.

Putting people with disabilities to work in the workplace provides increased earnings for them and reduces their need for government assistance.

Regional Council members include:

Ken King, President of Land Pride (Retired)

Doug McKinney, Exec. Director
North Central Regional Planning
Commission

Curt Crawford, Vice President of
M-C Industries (Retired)

Susan Nickerson, Business
Executive and Industry Liaison
Kansas Department of Commerce

John Blackwell, PH.D. Vice
President for Student Development
Kansas Wesleyan University

Lynn Peterson, Abilene City
Commission & Workforce
Investment State Board,
Memorial Art

Pete Brungardt, State Senator
District 24

Tom Moxley, State Representative
68th district

Mollie Carter, Sunflower Bank
President

Lola Fair, SPHR, Director of
Human Resources
Kennedy and Coe, LLC, Salina
Business Advisory Council
Chairperson

Craig Goodell, SRS
Kansas Rehabilitation Services

Dennis Lauver, President of the
Salina Chamber

There are many reasons that the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is twice that of the general population. Some of the reasons are attitudinal and are based on employer misconceptions about people with disabilities. In other cases people with disabilities may have been taught to have low self expectations or fear the loss of their support benefits. By working together with local businesses we can create productive communities where everyone can contribute and belong.

If you live in one of the 9 counties we serve and are concerned about the high unemployment rate for people with disabilities, please contact, Julie Wayman or Steve Gieber at 785-827-9383.

Concordia Region Receives Community Foundation Grant

**Grant Helps Improve Training
Opportunities for Individuals
with Disabilities.**

The Concordia Region received a grant of \$4,000.00 from the Community Foundation for Cloud County, an affiliate of the Greater Salina Community Foundation. With the grant Concordia purchased a Smartboard and laptop that will be used to provide interactive training opportunities to OCCK customers. Training will include finding employment, job clubs, safety, social networking, cooking, planning and using calendars. This purchase will enhance the training opportunities we provide to people with disabilities. The grant also allowed us to purchase a therapeutic massage chair and additional Wii games for our consumers.