



## Press Release

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### Workforce Solutions Presents Annual Awards

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas recognized area employers during the organization's annual celebration on September 30 at the Paris Golf & Country Club. Three employers and one Board member were recognized for their contributions to the Northeast Texas workforce system.

Hampton Inn & Suites was recognized as the Local Employer of Excellence. Located in Mount Pleasant, the hotel has played an active role in the workforce since opening in November 2008. This year, the hotel participated in the 2010 Summer Youth Employment Program by employing three youth and providing them with valuable work experience. Participants rotated through various jobs throughout the hotel in order to optimize the amount of experience received during the program. Youth gained experience in clerical work, customer service, hospitality specific elements, sales, marketing, and teamwork. The management team felt so strongly about the Summer Youth Work Program that they assisted in seeking out other companies in the area to participate. The hotel volunteers facilities for board and committee meetings on a regular basis and offer industry-related and community information to the board for both Mount Pleasant and the surrounding communities.

This year Workforce Solutions recognized two employers with the designation of Employer of the Year. Both of these employers have been nominated for the statewide "Employer of the Year" designation awarded by the Texas Workforce Commission. TWC will announce the winner of the statewide award during their annual conference in November.

The first Employer of the Year was awarded to CHRISTUS St. Michael Health System. As the second largest employer in the Texarkana area, they partner with Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas, Texarkana College, Texas A&M - Texarkana, Southern Arkansas University and UAMS to fill job vacancies. The health system has provided various resources for nursing programs at the two local colleges, developed its first in-house certified nursing assistant program to "grow their own," and developed and implemented a job-shadowing program for area high schools. In the past year, the hospital has taken advantage of a number of our programs hiring eight associates through the Texas Back to Work Program, nine through the Summer Youth Program, and several through on-

the-job training. For the last five years, the hospital has been named a Best Company to Work for in Texas and was named #3 in the nation as a Best Place to Work in Healthcare sponsored by Modern Healthcare in 2009.

The second Employer of the Year was awarded to Morningstar Foods in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Morningstar has built an extensive "working" partnership with Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas and sees Workforce Solutions as an extension of its Human Resources Department. Through "On-The-Job" Training, the company has hired and trained applicants to work in a progressive automated dairy environment, providing them a skill set for stable employment with the potential for future growth. In addition, the company participated in the Summer Youth Employment Program by providing qualified youth with a job during the summer. The goal of their involvement was not only to provide temporary employment, but to provide the avenue for future, permanent employment when the youth is available. The company prides itself on safety and has received large plant safety awards from the International Dairy Farmers. It is the only Dairy Operation in the country that is Volunteer Protection Program certified by Safety and has received the "Star Amongst Stars" award for plant safety in 2009 and 2010. Morningstar is actively involved with the hiring of applicants referred by the Workforce Centers for employment. Through these services, Morningstar is able to employ qualified applicants, or those applicants that can trained, to fill their employment needs, helping to reduce the number of claimants receiving unemployment benefits.

Board Member Roger Feagley of Sulphur Springs, Texas, was recognized with the Board Member of the Year award. Feagley, executive director of the Sulphur Springs/Hopkins County Economic Development Corporation, serves as the chair of the local Workforce & Economic Development Consortium. He was recognized for his leadership and continued service to the Board. For the past year, Workforce Solutions has searched for a contracting manager for the workforce centers. Feagley played an active role in the search and interviewing for the contractor, which was noted in his nomination: "He is never afraid to express his thoughts during board meetings even if it isn't popular, he does this with the best interest of the board in mind. He has given more than just time to the interview process with the procurement of a new contractor, he has given his heart. He was diligent with his research prior to the interviews, asked pertinent questions and let the perspective contractor know how concerned he is with each of the employees (at the workforce centers). He has been a champion for the organization."

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is one of 28 workforce boards across the state providing assistance to employers and job seekers. The board's mission is to be "a driving force" in the area to provide employers with workforce support for the economic benefit of the communities served. The organization serves a nine-county region in Northeast Texas including: Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River and Titus counties.

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

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