

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

We're off to a great start in 2015

It has been a busy few months since I started in my new role as Commissioner of the Department of Workforce Investment.

I am excited about the opportunity to work with each and every one of you to continue our transformation and continuous improvement efforts with the added impetus of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Like many of you, I've long been working to build collaboration, employer engagement and high quality individualized services into the workforce development system. Now all of these specific priorities are required by law. We still have lots of work to do, but we have made so much progress.

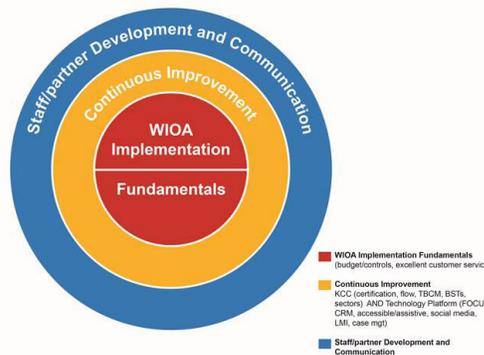
As the year progresses, we will continue to implement existing strategies, which fortunately for us are closely aligned with WIOA requirements.

While sometimes (OK, most days) it feels like we have far too many things to do, in my mind our work priorities fall cleanly into three areas:

- WIOA implementation and fundamentals,
- continuous improvement and
- staff and partner communication and development.



Commissioner of Workforce Investment Beth Kuhn



I'll end with two topics that are of the greatest importance to me personally: a culture of learning and excellent customer service.

The fast moving economic and labor market changes and the complex policy environment in which we operate make it imperative that we operate as a learning organization - we have

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To submit to **The Career Connection**, email susan.riddell@ky.gov.

incredible and varied expertise within our ranks, and all have much to learn from our customers and from each other.

What worked perfectly well yesterday may in fact fall short or need adjustment tomorrow. And so, you will find that I like to ask questions, and that I put tremendous value on curiosity and on learning from others.

Regarding customer service, we have the privilege and the challenge of serving two distinct customer groups: employers and individuals.

Fortunately for us these are mutually reinforcing: when we serve our employer customers well, our individual customers benefit and vice versa.

I see my job here as serving a third customer group: you. I do not have the privilege or the challenge of sitting on the front line, serving both our customer groups every day. But, if I can stay focused on the tools and the resources that make work on the front lines happen more effectively, then I am providing excellent customer service to you.

Please let me know what I can do to better meet that objective.

Thanks for all you do, and here's to an exciting and productive 2015!



Buddy Hoskinson, left, and David Beach, each have changed jobs recently. Hoskinson has joined OVR while Beach took a job at the University of Kentucky.

Leadership on the move

David Beach, executive director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, took a position at the University of Kentucky at the end of February. Buddy Hoskinson, who most recently served as executive director of the Office of Employment and Training, moved to OVR in Beach's former position on March 2.

Deputy Commissioner Mark White will serve as Interim Executive Director of the Office of Employment and Training until a replacement appointment is made.

Since Buddy simply moved down the hall, he will remain available to assist throughout the OET transition.

Tips on adjusting to new leadership

Here are some tips from Forbes contributor George Bradt on making a smooth transition under new leadership. To read his full article, go to <http://onforb.es/1Mjz6SH>.

- Treat your new boss decently as a human being. Make him or her feel welcome, valued and valuable. Enable the new boss to do good work. Do your job well - not the boss'.
- Choose to be optimistic. Believe the best about your new boss. Focus on the positives at all times with all people.
- Proactively tell your new boss that you want to be part of the new team and follow up with actions to reinforce this.
- Present a realistic, honest game plan to help the boss learn. Seek out the new boss' perspective early and often, and be open to new directions.
- Understand and move on your new boss' agenda immediately. Know the boss' priorities. Know what the new boss thinks your priorities should be.
- Quickly adjust to your new boss' working style. This is a hard shift, not an evolution around control points, decision-making and communication.
- Be on your "A" game. Be present and "on" - everything done by you and your team will be part of your new boss' evaluation of you. Deliver early wins important to your new boss and to the people he or she listens to. Your old wins and your team's old wins are history. Make new ones.



ROGER PHILLIPS

married to: wife Patty
for almost 25 years

three children: Mike, Christa
and Alvin

five grandchildren: Amber
(13), Isaac (5), Preston (3),
Dillon (2) and Aleigha (7
months)

favorite sports teams: Green
Bay Packers, Saint
Louis Cardinals, Indiana
Hoosiers and St. Louis Blues.

Spotlight on: Roger Phillips

Roger Phillips kicked off 2015 by joining the Office of Employment and Training as the assistant director for Workforce and Employment Services.

He works with the local offices to develop effective and efficient ways to serve both job seekers and employers.

"My personal goal is to build good, strong relationships between the central office and the local offices," Phillips said. "The Office of Employment and Training is a great organization with a great mission, and I enjoy being a part of it."

Phillips was recently the operations administrator for the Kentucky Career Center in Hopkinsville where he oversaw the career center for more than three years.

"That was by far the most challenging and rewarding job I have had," Phillips said. "I never knew the importance of a job, to a person, to their family and the community prior to that."

He graduated from the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville, Ind., earning a degree in political science.

"Roger's career has a long history of organizational management emphasizing the collaboration between partners and various organizations to benefit the communities he has served," Lori Collins, division

director of Workforce and Employment Services, said. Before joining us in 2011, he was the employment and training coordinator at Experience Works Senior Community Service Employment Program covering 13 counties in western Kentucky.

"Roger will work directly with the Kentucky Career Center regional managers as a connection between the different central office programs that impact our career centers as well as operational issues of facilities and collaboration with partner organizations," Collins said.

Phillips said he benefitted from his first job as an assessor of real property for a local county assessor's office in Posey County, Ind.

"I got to meet most every tax payer in the county, and I developed a real respect for the people who make up this country and what it means to serve our communities," Phillips said.

"My next journey into governmental service lasted more than 10 years with The Green River District Health Department in Owensboro, first as the Women Infants and Children program (WIC) field representative and then as the immunization field representative where I covered western Kentucky assuring that federal and state policies and regulations were followed."

Vocational rehabilitation office helps disabled find work and function better while employed

Note: This article appeared in a recent issue of **The State Journal**. Portions of it have been edited out for space. The article was written by Shannon Brock. The photo was taken by Bobby Ellis.

When Daniel Fey realized his hearing – or lack thereof – could potentially be the difference in a life-or-death situation for one of his employees, he knew he had to do something.

Fey, 42, is the collection system superintendent for the Frankfort Sewer Department.

“If there’s a breakdown in that communication, it could very well mean someone’s life,” he said.

His foreman, Fred Loman, pointed out that Fey wasn’t hearing phone calls and, at times, important alarms.

“Our gas meters, like if we go in a manhole or something, he couldn’t hear the pitch,” Loman said.

“And that’s a problem,” Fey said. “That was probably the defining moment. In all reality, that was the moment where it was, ‘OK, this could cost my life or someone else’s.’ And it’s my job to keep us all safe.”

His doctor confirmed what Fey feared to be true – his hearing loss was significant. So, the doctor pointed Fey in the direction of Jodi Harris, a rehabilitation counselor for the Kentucky Career Center’s Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).

The office’s mission is simple: to help those with “any type of physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment,” Harris said.

“Everything is tied to employment in some way from beginning to end,” she said.

Within a couple of months, Fey received hearing aids and realized just how much he had been missing. “I hadn’t realized that I’d been missing so much until I



Daniel Fey uses a uses a bluetooth device that links his cell phone and hearing aids to talk on the phone.

had it,” Fey said. “The loss is gradual, but the gain is instantaneous.”

Not just for hearing loss: Helping those with hearing loss is just a small part of what OVR does.

“What we do is we work, not just with people with hearing loss ... we work with individuals with disabilities, and everything we do is related to employment,” Harris said.

“The majority of people who come see us actually are not working and they want us to help them find a job based on what they can do, also taking into account their limitations,” Harris said.

Harris said other services, like the unemployment office, don’t look at a person’s limitations. But OVR is more focused in its approach.

“We have to look at not only what are their strengths, their aptitudes and abilities, their interests, what their job history is, but also what their limitations are,” Harris said. “We kind of have to look at that bigger picture and the person as a whole.”

“A lot of people that come in to see us either have never worked because of a disability (or) maybe they have done the same type of work all their life, but now they can’t do that anymore, so then they’re like, ‘what do I do now?’”

‘Disability’: In order to receive help from OVR, which is funded by a combination of state and federal monies, clients must have some form of disability.

“Even if they’re not diagnosed when they come in to see us, we can send them to get testing because we have to have that documentation,” Harris said.

Harris said she, and the other counselors in the local office, work with the individuals through a variety of

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Employed

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manners, including vocational testing, to see the type of job for which they would be suited.

"We work together as a team," she said. "I'm not just telling them, 'This is what you have to do.' I'm kind of a facilitator to try to figure out what you need and how are we going to get there."

Many times people can be put off by the world "disability," which can carry a negative connotation, even though it shouldn't, Harris said.

"A lot of times when you say that word ... people are like 'I'm not disabled. I don't get disability.' We just use that term because that's the way our funding is. It has to be an individual with a disability," she said.

Not everyone who comes through the OVR doors will be approved for assistance, Harris said. Some services, such as the hearing aid program, are not based on household income, but others, such as college tuition assistance, do take income into account.

"We want people to know that we're out there," Harris said. "There is an eligibility process. They can call and talk to the office and make a referral, and we'll be happy to meet, to schedule them."

Life-changing decision: Although hesitant to seek help at first, Fey said knowing what he knows now, his message to others is clear:

"Go. Go have it checked. Unfortunately, a lot of my problem was pride, and actually the worry of the result is what I didn't want. But sometimes you need help. The world that it's opened up is completely outstanding. It's wonderful."

Fey said he knew his hearing was bad for a long time, but delayed having it checked.

"Gradually it got worse. My family, my kids and wife, were the first ones to go, 'Hey look, you need to have that checked.' And I was like no, I'm alright," Fey said.

Fey had trouble hearing in church and moved to the front row to keep up during services. He often avoided church functions because conversations were too difficult to understand.

"You feel isolated when you can't hear," Fey said. "It's almost to the point of, why bother? And now, (my family is) all about it. We're all the time having some kind of function out there. So not only did it really help me professionally, it really helped me socially."

The results were overwhelming, at first.

"(It was) frightening," he said. "I hadn't realized how significant it was until I walked outside. When they first put them in, they had them dialed way down, and I could hear everything in the office, and I was like 'Wow.' I could hear people walking down the hallway.

"When I was leaving the doctor's office, I walked outside and heard birds ... I hadn't heard birds in four or five years."

Fey said the entire process was simple and that Harris was "absolutely wonderful, and that program is just outstanding.

"Like I said, I was kind of embarrassed about it. Of course, anything that's different, out of the norm, people look at it as a weakness, but in reality, I think it's made me strong again."



Shop & Share event March 28

Shop & Share is a goods drive benefitting the 15 Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence (KCADV) shelters across the state.

On Saturday, March 28, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Kentuckians can shop at Kroger, Food City and Super Dollar Discount Food stores for goods that victims need and then directly donate those items at the stores.

Volunteers at each store will provide a list of items needed at the shelters: canned foods, school supplies, toilet paper and soap. Monetary donations also will be accepted.

Our domestic violence shelters do a remarkable job helping victims to get back on their feet and regain control of their lives. Volunteering or donating to Shop & Share is a simple way to help these shelters make a difference in victims' lives.

To sign-up as a volunteer or for more information on Shop and Share, go to <http://1.usa.gov/1cpRu4R>.

Have you fulfilled your 2015 Living Well Promise?

It's the time of year to make sure all of our Education and Workforce Development Cabinet employees who elected one of the Living Well Health Insurance Plans have fulfilled their Living Well Promise.

You can fulfill your Living Well Promise by completing the Health Assessment online or by having a Vitality Check by May 1, 2015.

Click LivingWell to visit the Living Well website and complete your health assessment online.

Or, schedule a health screening at one of the regional Vitality Check events across the state.

If you have questions, contact the cabinet insurance coordinator, Sabrena Hockensmith, at Sabrena.hockensmith@ky.gov.

March: Heart disease prevention
April: National Walking Day and walking benefits
May: Mental health awareness

Stop smoking, start walking will only help your heart

With the Kyhealthnow initiative, Gov. Steve Beshear has made improving the health and wellness of Kentucky's children, families and workforce one of his highest priorities.

To significantly advance the wellbeing of Kentucky's citizens, Beshear announced a variety of health goals for the state.

Goal: Reduce Cardiovascular Deaths by 10 percent

With more than 12,000 deaths per year, Kentucky ranks 48th in the nation in cardiovascular deaths. Beshear will implement strategies to reduce cardiovascular disease, including:

- Increase by 25 percent the proportion of adults receiving aspirin therapy in accordance with evidence-based guidelines.
- Reduce the proportion of adults with uncontrolled hypertension by 10 percent.
- Reduce the proportion of adults with hypertension who are current smokers by 10 percent.
- Increase by 10 percent the proportion of adults who have had their blood



cholesterol checked within the preceding five years.

- Increase the percentage of individuals receiving evidence-based smoking cessation treatment by 50 percent.
- Decrease the percentage of Kentuckians with diabetes whose most recent hemoglobin A1C level was greater than 9 percent during the preceding year, recognizing the link between diabetes and heart disease.
- Support the ongoing efforts of the Kentucky CARE Collaborative, a state-wide effort designed to provide blood pressure awareness education within communities.
- Continue efforts to lower sodium intake in government-regulated facilities, given the link between sodium intake and cardiovascular disease.
- Continue support for efforts of the Stroke Encounter Quality Improvement Project, a statewide voluntary initiative among hospitals to implement evidence-based integrated cardiovascular health systems in Kentucky.

Physical activity starts by just moving around

Being physically active is important for overall wellness. About 80 percent of adults don't get enough activity to maintain good health. Walking is a great first step in a more active lifestyle. April 1 is National Walking Day. Here's more information from the American Heart Association. Regular physical activity can help you:

- lower your risk of heart disease and stroke
- maintain a healthy weight
- reduce or control blood pressure
- reduce your risk of diabetes and some kinds of cancer
- sleep better
- have more energy to do the things you love

Physical activity is anything that makes you move your body and burn calories. This includes things like climbing stairs, gardening, housework, shoveling snow, walking the dog, playing sports and dancing, as well as traditional aerobic activities like walking, running, swimming and biking. Strengthening and stretching exercises are also good for overall stamina and flexibility.

The simplest change you can make to improve your heart health is to start walking. It's fun, free, easy, social and great exercise. A walking program is flexible and can be done just about anywhere. It's easy to make walking a regular and satisfying part of your life.

How much is enough? Most adults should get:

- at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity at least 5 days per week for a total of 150 minutes per week, or
- at least 25 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity at least three days per week for a total of 75 minutes per week, or
- a combination of moderate and vigorous activity, and
- moderate- to high-intensity muscle-strengthening activity at least two days per week for additional health benefits.
- If you need to lower blood pressure or cholesterol, aim for an average of 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic activity three or four times per week.

Kids should get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity every day.

It's time to get moving! Remember, something is always better than nothing, and everyone has to start somewhere. Even if you've been sedentary for years, today is the day you can begin to make healthy changes in your life. Set a reachable goal, and go for it.



National Walking Day is when millions of Americans across the nation will take steps to a healthier life, but it's also about having fun and creating camaraderie. Don't forget to enjoy the day!

April 1 is National Walking Day. You are encouraged to bring tennis shoes to work and move around as much as possible.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Go to www.mentalhealthamerica.net to learn more about improving your mental health.

Did you know?

- Connecting with others can help you to enjoy times when you are alone.
- Staying positive can improve your mood and your health.
- If you quit smoking now, in 20 minutes your heart rate drops, and in 12 hours the carbon monoxide in your blood drops to normal.
- Helping others may help you experience less depression.
- Drinking beverages with caffeine should be stopped six to eight hours before bed for a more restful sleep.
- Creating joy and satisfaction can be easy with little things such as making a gourmet meal while listening to your favorite music, treating yourself to a massage, or even taking a few moments to admire nature.

UI staffers giving back to students

LaQuita McGill and Dana Bradford had a discussion last year about how McGill could volunteer her time in a meaningful and beneficial way.

Bradford, a former teacher in the Franklin County school district, recommended she try Junior Achievement (JA). In the process, Bradford decided to join her.



Dana Bradford, left, and LaQuita McGill

McGill and Bradford, both adjudicators for non-separation claims in the Kentucky Career Center Office of Employment and Training's Unemployment Insurance, have been amazed with the program. They have worked with students at Westridge and Peaks Mill elementaries so far.

Each have busy schedules but felt volunteering is worth the extra effort. Bradford gives swim lessons at night. Along with her full-time job, McGill is a graduate student at Kentucky State University and a part-time supervisor at a local retail store.

"I felt like all of my time and efforts were going to self-gaining entities, and I wanted to start giving back," McGill said.

Working with Junior Achievement also took McGill back to her childhood.

"One day after my first two lessons I was going through a binder full of my childhood accomplishments and I came across a Junior Achievement certificate from my elementary school back in Detroit," McGill said. "So not only am I a volunteer, I am also a product of the program.

"All in all I feel that there is no greater feeling than knowing that you are a part of something that makes a difference," McGill added.

Bradford used the JA program when she was a teacher. "The program is great because Junior Achievement provides all of the materials. All you need to do is show up and teach," Bradford said. "It is very

rewarding working with the students. They are excited to participate in the program and look forward to seeing us each week."

McGill loves interacting with the students and knowing that she has their undivided attention. One of her most memorable moments is when she and Bradford

were teaching the stu-

dents at Peaks Mill and the teacher handed them a stack of letters written by each student.

"It brought so much joy to me to know that the students appreciated what we were doing, which made our purpose even more meaningful," McGill said.

Some of the lessons they have worked on with students have dealt with profit/loss and what it means to be a government employee.

The JA program is an "excellent extension to what the students are learning in the classroom," Bradford said. "It's student-centered and so easy to implement. I wish more people would get involved volunteering for this program. It only takes about an hour or so a week for five sessions and gives back tenfold."



INTERESTED IN BECOMING
A VOLUNTEER ?

Contact program manager Erin Warren at (859) 219-2423 or toll-free at (877) 396-2101. Warren also can be reached at erin@jalexington.org.

www.juniorachievement.org

Highlights from the March KWIB meeting



Gov. Steve Beshear is pleased with the progress Kentucky is making in workforce investment, and he encouraged the board to keep up the good work.

Hugh Haydon speaks during his first meeting serving as board chairman. At left is KWIB Executive Director Melissa Aguilar.



Rep. Larry Clark swears in Workforce Investment Commissioner Beth Kuhn, above, and Jay Box, the new president of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, below.



Lori Collins, division director of Workforce and Employment Services, presents on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act System Transformation Policy partnership agreement.

The next KWIB meeting is scheduled for May 14. Go to <http://kwib.ky.gov> to get updates on the meeting and its location.



Cora McNabb, vocational rehabilitation administrator with OFB, presents on Customer Flow at the board meeting.