

Food for Thought

Administration Offices Moving to New Locations



The administrative offices of the Agriculture Program will be moving from their current locations in the Jack K. Williams Administration Building and the Centeq Plaza in College Station, to new homes in the Wells Fargo Building at the corner of Briarcrest Drive and the Earl Rudder Freeway (East Bypass) in Bryan, and the Metro Center on Texas Avenue, in College Station.

Moving will begin June 1 and be completed by June 4. Although it is hoped that service disruptions will be minimal, there will be some brief delays in returning telephone calls and e-mails during that week. Should an emergency arise and you are unable to reach the person you need, please call 979-845-4747 for assistance.

Telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, fax numbers and mail stops will remain largely unchanged. U.S. Mail delivery addresses will also remain unchanged. However, please note that, for express delivery service, physical addresses will change as follows:

Human Resources (Suite 504), Contracts and Grants (Suite 101), Fiscal Services (Suite 602), and Purchasing (Suite 604) should be addressed to 3000 Briarcrest Drive, Bryan, Texas 77802.

The Property office will be located at the Metro Center on Texas Avenue and express deliveries for Property should be addressed to Suite 111, 3833 Texas Avenue, Bryan, Texas 77802.

For College Station-based customers, extra mail delivery boxes to Wells Fargo and the Metro Center will be available on the main floor of the Jack K. Williams Administration Building, 131 Kleberg, and 421 Heep. There will also be a drop box in Suite 101 of the Wells Fargo Building for your convenience. Please note that no deposits are to be placed in these boxes. Instead, they should be delivered to Suite 602 of the Wells Fargo Building.

For questions specific to a functional area, please contact the head of the appropriate unit. For general questions about the move, contact Wayne Williams or Johnny Fazzino.

— Steve Schulze

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PHONE NUMBERS

- **Benefits**
Phone: 979-845-2178
Fax: 979-862-4885
- **Co. Programs HR**
Phone: 979-845-3708
Fax: 979-458-1046
- **Compensation**
Phone: 979-845-7986
Fax: 979-862-4885
- **Employment**
Phone: 979-458-HIRE (4473)
Fax: 979-862-4885
- **Payroll**
Phone: 979-845-3636
Fax: 979-845-9329
- **Training**
Phone: 979-845-4766
Fax: 979-862-4885

WEBSITES

- AG Program HR:**
aghr.tamu.edu/default
- Co. Programs HR:** taex-hr.tamu.edu
- Employment:** greatjobs.tamu.edu
- Benefits:**
aghr.tamu.edu/benefits.htm
- Ag Program Directory:**
agdirectory.tamu.edu/
- Payroll:** aghr.tamu.edu/pay.htm
- Forms (Alphabetical List):**
agservices.tamu.edu/forms/forms-alfa.htm



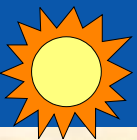
TRS Board Approves New Rule on 90-day Waiting Period

Ag Program employees who are unable to earn a year of TRS membership service credit because of the 90-day waiting period, may be eligible to purchase service credit for the year under a new rule adopted by the TRS Board of Trustees. An employee must work a sufficient length of time (generally 4 ½ months) in a TRS-covered position during a school year to earn a year of TRS membership service credit.

If a member does not reach this length of service requirement due to the 90 day waiting period, but otherwise would have a sufficient amount of service to earn credit for the year, the member may purchase waiting-period ser-

vice credit back. For example, if an employee worked only three months as a TRS member but also worked three months under the waiting period, the employee may purchase some of the waiting time to count as service credit for the year because the total amount of service during the school year will be at least 4 ½ months. Membership waiting-period service credit may be established after the end of the school year in which the waiting period occurred. The cost of the service credit is the actuarial cost. Members may contact TRS after August 31, 2004, if they are interested in establishing this service credit for that year.

— Vic Seidel



Summer is Coming! Want to Spend More Time Enjoying the Long Days of Summer?

The Ag Program Payroll Office provides two great services that allow more time for relaxing and less time standing in lines. Direct deposit and electronic check stubs are available to ALL Ag Program employees. **TAKE ADVANTAGE TODAY!**

ELECTRONIC CHECK STUBS—By signing up for electronic check stubs, you are delivered an email reminder that your check stub is available to be viewed through the HR Connect Website.

DIRECT DEPOSIT—Allows your paycheck to be in the bank before you even get to work on payday. NO LINES, NO BANK, NO HASSLES!

SIGNING UP FOR ELECTRONIC CHECK STUBS:

1. Log on to HRConnect at: <https://hrc.tamu.edu>
2. If you don't know your PIN, call (979)-845-3636, or email, agpayroll@ag.tamu.edu, and ask for one.

3. After you have your PIN, select the "Payroll Data" tab.
4. Scroll to the bottom of the page, and under "Electronic Payroll Earnings Information," choose CLICK FOR DETAILS.
5. Follow the instructions and you are set to receive your check stub via e-mail.

SIGNING UP FOR DIRECT DEPOSIT:

1. Take advantage of Direct Deposit by simply filling out one form, that's all!
2. Go to the address: <http://agservices.tamu.edu/forms/AG-501.pdf>
3. Fill the form out and return to the Payroll Office at:

AG Program Payroll
2162 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843

— Vic Seidel



The Dreaded Phone Interview

Dan Miller

Studies have shown that 90% of communication is nonverbal. So how do you shine in the increasingly popular phone interview? You can't take advantage of your good looks, great wardrobe, firm handshake, eye contact, and JLo perfume.

But there are unique elements of a phone interview that you can use to your advantage:

- **Stand Up.** Standing changes your breathing and your tone of voice. It makes you sound stronger and more confident. (I stand and walk when doing phone coaching so I don't risk sounding tired or too casual.)
- **Have a Mirror Handy.** Yes, be looking at yourself in a mirror. Your smile and facial expressions come through more than you may realize. Respond physically like you would in per-

son and much of that enthusiasm will be translated via the phone anyway.

- **Have Your Answers Written Out.** This is an open-book test. You can have your answers to all of the expected questions written out and actually sound much more polished than you may be able to in person. "*What are your three greatest strengths? What do you look for in a supervisor? Why did you leave your last job?*" Be ready with clear responses to these and many more.

Don't see the phone interview as just a preliminary step of little importance. It's the real thing. Put yourself at the top—it's fairly easy to outshine the competition.

— Dan Miller is president of Business Source in Brentwood.
www.48days.com, 615-373-7771

Annual Enrollment

This year's Annual Enrollment period will make use of technology to put the information you need at your fingertips. Through the use of TTVN and other computer-based options, employees and retirees inside and outside the Bryan/College Station area will be able to attend video conference meetings and have annual enrollment information available 24X7. There will also be three employee meetings and four retiree meetings held locally. We'll provide detailed information about how to access Annual Enrollment information as we get closer to July.

The A&M Care Plans will remain basically the same, both in services offered and premiums charged. The A&M Care 65+ plan will see a decrease in premiums, while continuing to offer the same benefits to Medicare eligible retirees.

The HMOs will see some significant changes in both services and premiums. As always, we encourage you to read your Annual Enrollment booklet thoroughly even if you're not changing plans because the plan you're currently on may be slightly different from one year to the next.

Speaking of Annual Enrollment booklets... employees and retirees will be able to choose whether to receive their Annual Enrollment booklet and Personal Benefit Summary letter electronically via HRConnect or as a paper copy. You will be notified via e-mail when it is time to login to HRConnect to make your choice for paper or electronic information. It is very important that you update your e-mail address in HRConnect. Please e-mail the benefits office at aghrbenefits@ag.tamu.edu if you need assistance logging in to HRConnect.

— Jennifer Humphries

I'm a firm believer in learning from adversity.

— Donald Trump

Tax Saver Plan Spending Accounts



It's that time of year again! For those who participate in one of the Tax Saver Spending Accounts, it's the time we begin to recognize how close the anticipated health and dependent care costs are to the actual costs.

Reprinted below, with permission, is an excerpt from an article from #13 Monday Money Line\$:

Start Forecasting Your Future Out-of-pocket Medical Expenses

I just forecasted my prescription drug costs, using the March 1st price levels. My costs exceed \$1,000 without factoring in the cost of co-pays for visits to the doctor. What my simple analysis tells me is that I should pay close attention during annual enrollment in July. I plan to increase my contributions to my health care Tax Saver Spending Account. This means I will be reimbursed for every out-of-pocket dollar I spend on health care (not to exceed the total amount I am contributing to the health care spending account), WITHOUT having to pay income taxes. That's a tax savings of \$270 for someone in the 27% tax bracket. I'll fine-tune my forecast up until annual enrollment time. Careful forecasting and planning can save money even while we're spending it.

Nancy L. Granovsky, CFP®, CFCS, Professor and Extension Family Economics Specialist, Texas Cooperative Extension

Employees have the opportunity to enroll or reenroll in the **Dependent Day Care Spending Account** and/or **Health Care Spending Account** each year during Annual Enrollment. The plan year runs from September 1 – August 31 and claims incurred during that time must be submitted to the Tax Saver Plan prior to November 30. For additional information on how these plans may be of benefit to you, please review the information at

<http://sago.tamu.edu/shro/brochures/TAXSAVER.HTM>

— Jennifer Humphries

Faith that the thing can be done is essential to any great achievement.

— Thomas N. Carruther

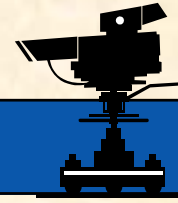


Did you know....?

The average person's left hand does 56% of the typing.

"Stewardesses" is the longest word that is typed with only the left hand.

"Dreamt" is the only English word that ends in the letters "mt".



AGHR Learning Central

Our efforts to provide sources for continuous learning for all employees has continued throughout the spring and plans are currently underway for the Fall 2004 programs. As employees, supervisors, and administrators, you may have discovered a special need for employee development programs, or have some new ideas for learning programs. If so, please forward these ideas to Bob Hensz via e-mail at r-hensz@tamu.edu. We are always looking for new ideas and welcome your suggestions.

This summer we will focus on the Annual Benefits Enrollment and our current schedule is as follows:

June 25 – Annual Enrollment Meeting 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (9–11 in El Paso)

July 9 – Annual Enrollment Meeting 2:00– 4:00 p.m. (1–3 in El Paso)

July 14 – Annual Enrollment Meeting 2:00– 4:00 p.m. (1–3 in El Paso)

July 27 – Annual Enrollment Meeting 10:00a.m. – 12:00 noon (9–11 in El Paso)

August 31 – Progressive Discipline (tentative) 10:00 a.m.– 12:00 noon (9 – 11 in El Paso)

September 28 – Dealing with Difficult People (tentative) 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon (9 – 11 in El Paso)

— Bob Hensz

TRS Online Personal Access

TRS active members with valid passwords can now obtain access to their most recent Annual Statement of Account through the TRS Web site. TRS Online Personal Access also offers active members an opportunity to calculate retirement annuity estimates online with their individual data obtained from TRS mainframe computer records. Retirees are also able to access certain personal information online.

Members may request a password by downloading form TRS 608I from TRS Web site at:

[//www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us). Then, just print out the form, complete it fully, sign and have your signature notarized, and mail the completed form with original signatures to TRS (not a copy or fax). After TRS receives this form, your password will be mailed to you at the address on file with TRS.

Contact the Ag Program payroll office at (979) 845-4775 or (979) 845-4296 if you have any questions.

— Patsy Schoppe

“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.”
— Henry Ford

Workers' Compensation

Early Return to Work

Did you know that the longer an employee is off work due to a work-related injury, the less likely it is that the employee will ever come back? While the employee is off due to an injury they may be continuing to receive benefits and their salary or a Workers' Compensation weekly income payment. The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station (TAES) and the Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE) are assessed funds that are used to pay this income benefit, so in essence, we are paying the injured employee's salary even if they are not working.

Both TAES and TCE support an "early return to work program". The early return to work program in essence is finding some productive work in the unit for the injured employee that will accommodate the doctor's duty restrictions. So, when an employee is off losing time, the employee and/or the unit can contact the treating doctor, and let him/her know that you have limited duty available (if you do) and provide a description of the duties for that position. When the doctor clears the employee to work, notify the employee, in writing, that you have work available that meets the doctor's restrictions.

Remember, bringing an employee back to work can assist in the employee's full recovery and allows us to get more work done. Please make every attempt to return injured workers to duty—even for a few hours a day.

Have You Been Injured on the Job?

What do you do if you are injured on the job? Many employees and even supervisors are not sure how to answer this question and as a result, many things may not be done in a timely fashion. As soon as an employee is injured, he/she needs to notify his/her supervisor and seek medical attention as needed. (If an injury is not reported in 30 days, claims will probably be denied.) The supervisor and/or an office support employee will need to complete a TWCC-1, First Report of Injury, and FAX it to the Ag Program HR Office/County Programs HR Office as applicable. If there is lost time or the employee has seen a medical practitioner, then copies are also FAXed to Risk Management. Additional instructions can be found online at: <http://agtraining.tamu.edu/workcomp.htm>.

Notes for Administrators/Supervisors

On June 3, 2004, the FAX number for the Ag Program HR Office will change to 979-458-1046. Please send all Workers' Compensation faxes (TWDD-1, 3, 6, witness statements, etc.) to this FAX number. Also, please remember to FAX copies of the TWCC-1 within 48 hours of the injury to AGHR/County Programs HR.

FAX Changes

With the move of AGHR and County Programs HR to the Wells Fargo Tower, we are combining resources and our primary FAX numbers. As of June 3, 2004, please send all AGHR faxes to 979-458-1046 (the current County Programs HR FAX number). The Payroll FAX and Employment Office FAX numbers will remain the same (unchanged).

— Bob Hensz

It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something.

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

Commit to Being Change-Hardy

Want your employees to be committed to change? Set the example for “change-hardiness.” Uncertainty scares people. They need to see you proving *change isn’t awful—just different!*

How change-hardy are you? If you’re not sure, ask yourself these questions: What kind of message do you send employees by the way you respond to change? How would they rate you as a model of change-hardy leadership? Do you convey confidence that good things come from change, or do you create stress every time you walk into the room? What would employees say about your enthusiasm and resiliency? What would they say about your “response-ability” to their suggestions?

To become more change-hardy, try adopting these attitudes and behaviors:

- As soon as you face any change, set aggressive time frames and short-term stretch goals for adapting to the change. And be sure to set them way outside of your comfort zone. This encourages **action** instead of resistance.
- Remind yourself to let go of the old and mine the new for unexpected, hidden opportunities. This reinforces **innovation** instead of complacency and keeps you from getting blindsided by the changing world.
- Create a culture of collaborative exploration. Explode the mistaken belief that management has—or will soon have—a fail-safe plan. Emphasize the more accurate belief that every level, including management, is

dealing with uncertainty and constant **re-prioritization**.

- Share with your team some mistakes you’ve made and the lessons learned from those mistakes. Do it! **Openness and honesty**—even vulnerability—from a person we respect are big courage boosters.
- Treat each change as an experiment. Notice what works and do more of that. Notice what doesn’t work and move on to something else very quickly. **Agility and fast learning** are the key competencies, not stubbornness.

If your followers don’t handle change well, look in the mirror. When you recognize it starts with you and model change-hardy behaviors, you become someone worth following. And there’s a good chance they’ll follow your lead.

As your employees begin to exhibit these change-hardy attitudes and behaviors, celebrate and reward them. And encourage them to continue to challenge you. When you do, you develop a mind-set of “evolving our way into the future together”...and you create a group of people committed to the opportunities of change.



*Excerpt from **Employee Commitment: If You Build It, Results Will Come**. Would you like more powerful information on commitment building? Visit the ADL Book Store at the link below to find out how to bring this information into your organization. Volume discounts start at only five copies.*

<http://www.adlassociates.com/catalog/default.php>

Failure is the opportunity to begin again, more intelligently. — Henry Ford

Sharpen Your Saw

Many of you have probably heard the story of the man who was exhausted from attempting to cut down a tree. When asked why he didn't take a break to sharpen his saw, he replied that he was too busy sawing. Investing in ourselves is the best investment any of us can make, yet we often say we don't have time.

Fortunately, there are organizations available that are focused on providing some excellent sharpening tools; the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) and the Texas A&M University Association of Professional Support Staff (TAPSS). The purpose of each is to provide information, education, training, networking opportunities and to communicate the value of an administrative career.

Founded in 1942, the IAAP is the world's largest association for administrative support staff, with more than 400 chapters and 40,000 members. IAAP is recognized for providing both the Certified Professional Secretary (CPS) and the Certified Administrative Professional (CAP) ratings. In addition to annual conferences and seminars, IAAP offers publications on the newest innovations along with a wide range of tools and information resources.

The Bryan-College Station Chapter of IAAP meets every third Tuesday of the month. Monthly programs are designed to be educa-

tional and informative, with some time for fun. For information on the Bryan-College Station Chapter contact Mildred Seaton at 979/845-9528 or e-mail m-seaton@tamu.edu. Those interested who reside outside of the Bryan/College Station area may contact the IAAP World Headquarters at 816/891-6600 or e-mail: membership@iaap-hq.org.

As suggested by the name, TAPSS provides networking and development opportunities for office support staff personnel on the Texas A&M University campus. An Annual Professional Development Conference, Bosses Day Luncheon and Staff Appreciation Luncheon are all events sponsored by TAPSS. To encourage professional development, TAPSS established the Educational and Professional Development Committee, which to date has awarded over \$4,500 in scholarships. For more information on TAPSS, you may contact Bobbie Gross at 862-3748 or e-mail bgross@tamu.edu or Lois Mercatoris at 845-6216 or e-mail lmercato@tamu.edu.

The 14th Annual TAPSS Professional Development Conference is being held on June 11 in Rudder/MSC. The theme this year is *Soaring to New Heights*, featuring keynote speaker Rick Rigsby, along with eight breakout sessions.

— Gloria Schwind



Habit is a cable; we weave a thread of it every day, and at last we cannot break it.

— Horace Mann

Exceeding Employment-After-Retirement Limits Affects Annuity Payments

A number of TRS retirees saw their annuity payments forfeited for the month of March because they exceeded limits of employment after retirement by working more than six months on a full-time basis following their retirements. Under state law, working more than six months on a full-time basis requires that the retiree forfeit his or her retirement annuity in any additional months working during any remaining months of the fiscal year. The retiree will continue to forfeit his or her monthly retirement annuity during each remaining month in which work is performed in the fiscal year unless the work is done by a person who retired *before* January 1, 2001.

A retiree can work one-half time or less each month and continue to receive his or her retirement annuity. Working half-time means that a

retiree does not work more than one-half the time required for the full-time job for that particular month.

The laws and rules governing employment after retirement do not address compensation paid but rather time worked. Therefore, volunteering in a position normally filled by a regular employee may be considered employment and result in the loss of the retirement payment for that month(s).

Employees who plan to return to work should consider these important limits and consequences *prior* to retirement.

A new brochure on this topic titled "Employment After Retirement" is now on the TRS web site (www.trs.state.tx.us). — Patsy Schoppe

Want to be Self-Employed?

By Dan Miller

In live seminars I often ask, "How many of you are self-employed?" Typically, about 30% of the audience will raise their hands. Then I ask, "How many of you are working for yourselves?" A few more hands go up. Then I may ask, "How many of you currently have only one customer for the services you provide?" Eventually, everyone realizes that no matter what the situation, we are all really "self-employed."

The company is not going to pay your mortgage or choose the private school you want for your children. You must do that based on your ability to provide a service that someone finds beneficial enough to write you a check at the end of the day. Whether that turns out to be one company, five or a thousand customers across the country, you are providing a service and someone has agreed to pay you for that.

Are you working just like you would if your name were on the front door? Just today, Joanne and I went to eat lunch at Genghis Grill, a brand new

restaurant here in Franklin, TN. Lots of promotion had gotten us to the front door. Unfortunately, the young lady at the front door thought she was working for a paycheck, not for herself. If she was paid for her direct efforts, she would fail quickly and I do suspect that she will find herself "unemployed" very soon. She has not yet realized the company doesn't owe her for her "time" but only for her unique contributions. Without those, her "time" is meaningless.

What would you change about your work habits if it were your own company? Would you show up earlier, provide better customer service, stay off the Internet on company time and quit reading novels in between phone calls? Recognize you ARE working for yourself - and you are either working to promote yourself, maintain the status quo, or making yourself vulnerable to being "let go."

— Dan Miller is president of Business Source in Brentwood. www.48days.com, 615-373-7771