



# PI Events

A monthly publication of news and views at Person Industries

November  
2008

Volume 11, Issue 11

## Person Industries Provides Satisfying Results

Each year Person Industries surveys our stakeholders to find out if we are providing satisfactory services. Our stakeholder list includes consumers to whom we provide vocational services, businesses for whom we do contract work (both in house and in the community), employers who hire the consumers we have trained, and other community agencies who refer consumers to us. While consumers participate in satisfaction surveys regarding the particular program in which they were served, the PI organization sends out surveys to agencies, businesses and employers. We ask our stakeholders to rate us on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 representing "poor" and 5 representing "excellent." They rate us on things such as quality, timeli-

ness, customer service, etc. For fiscal year 07-08 we had a 62% return on the surveys we sent out. We truly appreciate the time our stakeholders take to give us feedback to help us improve our programs.

One of our primary referring agencies is Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), so we ask all of the VR counselors to give us feedback on our vocational programs. This year, Vocational Evaluation services was rated 5 on quality, 4.5 on timeliness and 4.5 on effectiveness. Work Adjustment Training received a 4.5 rating on each of these objectives. Supported Employment was ranked "excellent" in all three areas. All these programs saw an improved rating as compared to last year. The coun-

*"The counselors also rated as 'excellent', the positive impact the programs had on the consumers whom we both serve."*

sultors also rated as "excellent" the positive impact the programs had on the consumers whom we both serve.

Other community agencies were asked to rate us on our quality, supportiveness, timeliness and effectiveness. These agencies ranked Person Industries as 4.4 in all of these

Continued on page 2

## Special points of interest:

*If you receive Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), you will receive a 5.8% cost of living adjustment beginning in your January 2009 check. This is the largest increase since 1982.*

*Other changes to take place in January 2009 is an increase in the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security Tax. The maximum will increase to \$106,800 from \$102,000.*

## Inside this issue:

From the Director— Learning from "the Tree"	2
Recycling Update	2
Employees Reminded to Wear Seatbelts	2
Craig Salter Asks for Your Help	3
PC Sponsors 2nd Flu Clinic	3
What's in the News at PI?	3
Words of Wellness	3
PI Calendar of Events	4

## Former OCS Student Receives High School Diploma

In a day of declining jobs and a sour economy, the American workforce is ever conscious of keeping job skills up and most importantly, getting the necessary education. That need is always stressed at the Person High School Occupational Course of Study Program, where students who are not on academic track, pursue a diploma based on occupation, i.e., work.

As of early October, that pursuit is over for Karen Ramsey, an employee in the

PI Production Department. Karen graduated in June of 2008 from Person High School, but like Brandon featured in last month's issue of PI Events, she did not have the required amount of hours for her diploma. She



**Karen proudly displays her long awaited high school diploma**

received a certificate instead. So, as allowed by the program, she continued to work to meet the hour requirement.

With assistance from PI Job Coach Pauline Porterfield, she worked at a local physician's office doing clerical tasks such as filing, shredding and arranging appointments. Then, as PI had a need for numerical filing, she was hired to work in the PI Production Department. It was there that she achieved the necessary hour requirement to receive the coveted high school diploma—Yeah Karen!

Karen continues to work at PI while keeping in focus her career goal of finding a job that allows her to use her strong clerical skills.

a philosophical introspective

## From the Director—What I've Learned from "The Tree"



**Wanda Rogers**

If you have ever had occasion to visit Person Industries, then you've seen "the tree". You may even have heard of "the tree" from other visitors, amazed at the sheer size of it. But in any case, "the tree" has

become legend among the PI Family. "The tree" I'm referring to, is the large scheffler plant that dominated our reception area until a few weeks ago when it received a well deserved pruning. The plant had reached to the ceiling, and when it could go no further, it continued trying, each new frond expanding until it hit the unmoving tile dome, and then dying. And where the plant was not able to move upward, it, ever resilient, expanded outward, extending into the treasured space of visitors waiting to see PI personnel. The result was a massive tree that, although beautiful in many ways, was growing at an

awry angle and was extremely root bound.

How often we said, "That tree needs to be cut". It was a favorite topic of conversation among visitors, some even putting in orders for a piece when we gave it the necessary trimming. As we procrastinated, the concern became, *if we were going to do the necessary trimming.*

You may be asking, why did it take you so long to prune the tree? Well, that's where PI history comes into play. The plant had been with us since 1987, according to PI Business Manager Veronica Wilkerson. At least that is what she says. I seem to recall that we inherited the fledgling slip from the program that we replaced in No-

vember 1984. The fact that we have been around long enough to quibble over that many years, fully explains why we are unsure. In any case, it has been with us a long time, well over 20 years.

Veronica took the expiring plant into her office and nourished it with food, water and light, but most especially, tender loving care. I recall her buying a plant light and periodically wiping each leaf individually until the plant began

to grow and indeed thrive. As it grew too big for her office, she moved it to the reception area and the rest is history—it became "the tree".

Veronica's fondness for the tree has hindered our efforts to be more aggressive in the pruning. But

**Continued on page 4**



**LtoR, Jeff Villines, William Powell & Merriell Jay repotting "the tree"**

<b>Roxboro</b>	<b>Recycling</b>
----------------	------------------

- The excitement about recycling is growing in Person County. This is reflected in the number of requests PI has received for recycling bins in Person County Office Buildings. This extra paper volume will be needed when PI opens the Materials Recovery Center (MRF).
- Request for Proposals to build the MRF were released in early October. Bids will be opened on November 6, 2008 at the Person County Office Building. PI will present the recommended contract to the County Commissioners at the November 17, 2008 meeting.
- All Person County Departments who contract with Person Industries for shredding will receive a 20% discount. For information on our confidential shredding service, please contact Lisa Jeffreys at 336-599-7571, ext. 24.

## Person Industries Provides Satisfying Results (cont. from page 1)

areas. All of the agencies said they would recommend our services to other agencies and consumers.

In order to provide quality vocational services to consumers, we have to have good working relationships with businesses and industries in the community. When employers work with us by providing work opportunities to our consumers, we want them to be satisfied with the workers they have hired. In order to assess their satisfaction, we ask them if we provided good customer service/support and

if we put the right person in the right job. This year PI was ranked 4.4 in customer service and 4.5 in employee/job match. All of the employers would recommend our service to other businesses.

The way we are able to provide training to consumers is through in-house and community contracts with local businesses and industries. We ask our contractors if they are satisfied with quality, timeliness and customer service. For this year, we were ranked 4.6 for quality, 4.5 on meeting deadlines/work needs and 4.5 for customer service. One

employer felt the need for more supervision on the contract and we will be following up on that suggestion. This is the kind of feedback we need to keep all stakeholders satisfied with the services we provide. All of the contractors would recommend Person Industries' services.

While we take the time to survey satisfaction once a year, PI is open to suggestions for improving services all year round. We thank the consumers, agencies, employers and businesses for continued support and feedback.

## Employees Reminded to Use Seatbelts in PI Vehicles

North Carolina law requires that all passengers in vehicles wear a seatbelt. This is a change from the previous law that required seatbelts for front seat passengers only. This law, as with other safety laws, was enacted with the goal of saving lives.

So at PI, staff and employees are reminded to follow the law and wear seatbelts while in any PI vehicle. Staff who transport employees are responsible for making sure every one is buckled in correctly before moving the vehicle.

PATS, PI's contracted transporta-

tion provider, requires that all riders wear seatbelts as well. So again, we remind employees who use this service to comply with the PATS drivers when they request that you buckle up. Failure to do so could result in losing this transportation option.

## Former OPC IT Director Asks for PI Help



**Craig Salter, Former OPC Director of Information Technology**

Craig Salter, the former Director of Information Technology with OPC LME is well known to the PI Family. Craig was the go to person whenever there was a computer crisis. Although stationed in Chapel Hill, he was often seen in Roxboro, going from site to site responding to and maintain-

ing the OPC Computer and Internet System.

When PI divested from OPC in 2005, we continued to keep in touch with Craig, who was on leave with a heart condition diagnosed as cardiomyopathy. Since that time, his health condition has deteriorated to the point that he has been placed on the heart transplant list at Duke University Medical Center.

The transplant can cost approximately 500,000 and he will need a lifetime of follow-up care and anti-rejection medications that will range from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per month. Even with insurance, Craig and his family are facing huge out of pocket costs.

Craig and the NC Foundation for transplants (NFT) are raising money for co-payments for his monthly medications. If you are able to assist by making a donation, large or small, it will be greatly appreciated. All donations are tax-deductible.

Please mail your check to: National Foundation for Transplants in honor of Craig Salter, PO Box 11223, Durham, NC 27703.

If you prefer to make a secure online donation, go to [www.transplants.org](http://www.transplants.org). Click on *Patients We Help* and search for *Craig*.

Craig has a wife and a 10 year old daughter. He and his family will appreciate your donation.

## Person County Sponsors 2nd Flu Clinic

For your convenience and good health, Person County Government has partnered with Wellpath and Maxim Health Systems to host a 2nd flu clinic for those unable to attend the October 22nd clinic. Everyone covered by Wellpath is invited to participate in the upcoming clinic because vaccination is the best protection against the flu.

The clinic will be open on November 14th from 9:00—11:30 a.m. at the Person County Office Building Auditorium. Please bring your Wellpath ID card. Also, a consent form will have to be completed onsite.

Any PI staff person planning to attend should inform their immediate supervisor.

## What's in the News at PI?

- **Stew Sale**—It's time to place those orders because PI is cooking a stew. On Friday, November 21st, PI will sell stew for \$6.00 per quart. No bowls will be sold.
- **Christmas Orders at Bee-Line Designs**—December 5, 2008 is the last day to place Christmas orders. All Christmas orders will be completed by December 22nd. Bee-Line Designs will be closed December 23rd—January 2nd. The store will reopen on Monday, January 5, 2009.
- **GKN Meeting**—There will be a meeting of all GKN employees on Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the PI Conference Room. All PI employees working at GKN are expected to attend.
- **Personality Festival**—The Personality Festival will be held on Friday and Saturday, November 14 & 15, 2008. PI will host a recycling awareness information booth. Please drop by the booth to show your support.
- **Quarterly Safety Address**—Employees and staff are reminded to attend the PI Quarterly Safety Address at their work location on November 20 & 21, 2008. Each will focus on health and safety needs and reminders for the respective worksite.

## Words of Wellness



*Leigh Ann Creson,  
Health Promotion  
Coordinator  
Person County  
Health Department*

With shorter days and less time to squeeze in all the extra errands and gift shopping it's no wonder the holidays bring added stress and for many, overeating and weight gain. But with most of us not losing the extra weight after the holidays, those pounds begin to add up each year.

Fortunately, Eat Smart, Move More NC is gearing up for the third annual Eat Smart, Move More – Maintain, Don't Gain! Holiday Challenge. The challenge will run from Nov. 24 – Dec. 31 (the week of Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve), with the goal being that North Carolinians maintain their current weight during the holiday season.

The Holiday Challenge is open to everyone – those with a few pounds to lose, those who have already lost weight and are looking to keep it off, as well as those already at a healthy weight. To sign up for the Eat Smart, Move More – Maintain, Don't Gain! Holiday Challenge, go to [www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com](http://www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com) beginning November 1st. It's free to sign up and to participate. All you need is an email address to receive the weekly newsletters with tips and recipes.

Last year the 2007 Holiday Challenge was a success with 84% of participants maintaining their weight throughout the season. And what about those that didn't maintain? Almost 70% lost weight.

This holiday season, add to the success – join and promote the Holiday Challenge!

## Person Industries

601 N. Madison Boulevard  
Roxboro, NC 27573

Phone: 336-599-7571  
Fax: 336-597-2834  
E-mail: vwilkerson@personcounty.net

[www.personindustries.com](http://www.personindustries.com)

**People investing in  
people**

## From the Director—What I've Learned from "The Tree" (cont.)



**Veronica Wilkerson  
inspecting "the tree"**

when we finally convinced her that it was time, I moved to my more philosophical side, thinking of what the tree means to Person Industries. I concluded that in its own way, it is a stirring symbol of PI. I know it sounds odd but please keep reading.

I thought about what a fledgling program PI was in those early days. We were low on revenue, working from a condemned building and struggling for community acceptance. But through the years, we have been cared for by others—OPC Area Program, the community that includes businesses, agencies and employers, very capable staff with vision and determination and most recently, Person County Government. As we have grown, we received accolades and have become the topic of conversation for those looking for services and supports. We grew in contracts, reaching the ceiling with one major customer and moving outward in our array of services to the point where we were running out of referrals for job placements. Then, like the tree, we were "cut back". The announcement was made that our major customer was shipping a good portion of the work to China, therefore making it necessary to close one facility. How devastating! How could this happen after we worked so hard to get here?

There were layoffs. There was a scaling down of benefits. But in the days and weeks that followed, we explored other avenues for work. We expanded our customer base so as to not put "all of our eggs in one basket". And the result...

PI is on the verge of opening a Materials Recovery Center in Person County (see article on page 2). Where there was one major customer, we now have several important customers. Where we were running low on referrals for community jobs, we are now working with referrals in surrounding counties. And where there were layoffs, we have been rehiring our workforce into new jobs and providing a more diversified list of jobs for our employees with disabilities.

So what have I learned from the tree? That at times it is good to be cut back—as long as the plant continues to receive food, water and light. In our case, all of the entities mentioned above provided the food, water and light in one form or another. So like our plant, we are a little smaller, but stronger and poised for future growth.

## November 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 DST Ends Turn clocks back 1 hour	3	4 Election Day	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 Veteran's Day Employees should not report to work unless requested by their supervisor	12	13	14 & 15 Personality Festival Please visit the PI booth for information on recycling.	
16	17	18	19	20 Quarterly Safety Address PI Main—3:45 (Safety Address will be held at PI Mfg on 11/21/08—3:45)	21 Stew Sale See inside for details	22
23	24	25	26	27 & 28 Thanksgiving Holiday PI closed to staff & Employees		29
30						



People Investing in  
People