

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEETING

March 25th – 26th, 2013

Best Western Ramkota – Sioux Falls, SD

Members Present: Elaine Roberts, Craig Eschenbaum, Grady Kickul, Brett Glirbas, Carol Kirchgesler, Nikki Darland, Leo Hallan, Joe Rehurek, Lyle Cook, (Matt Cain and Melissa Flor were in attendance on Tuesday. **Members Absent:** Robert Kean and Darla McGuire (Kathy Hassebrook and Barb Storbeck resigned). **Others Present:** Bernie Grimme, Colette Wagoner, Faith Korkow, Rich Eschenbaum, Jessica Rykhus (Interpreter), Rachel Hatle (Interpreter), Katie Gran, Cindy Stewart, Wendi Sathe, Julie Briggs, Colleen Moran, Terry Rist, Kevin McCarthy and Michael Vasek.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Elaine Roberts, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:15 pm and asked members to introduce themselves. Robert Kean and Darla McGuire were unable to attend and notified staff. **OPENING ACTIONS:** Elaine reminded members of the Meeting Protocol which was included with the agenda. The Chair moved to the agenda and called for any additions or changes. Staff noted that with the resignation of Kathy Hassebrook, there might not be an ERN report. **MOTION (M) TO APPROVE THE AGENDA, SECONDED (S) AND CARRIED (C).**

The minutes from the December 13-14, 2012 meeting were received and reviewed the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 13-14, 2012 MEETING MINUTES AS PUBLISHED – MSC.**

The Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from March 13, 2013, were reviewed and attention was called to the two motions contained within the minutes approving funds for the Mobridge Disability Summit and the 2013 NDEAM events. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH 13, 2013 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES AS PUBLISHED – MSC.**

UPDATE WITH BUSINESS RESOURCE NETWORK (BRN): Elaine welcomed and introduced Julie Briggs, Executive Director of the Business Resource Network (BRN) in Sioux Falls. Julie thanked the group and introduced two BRN Board members, Colleen Moran, Assistant City Attorney/ADA Coordinator/Human Relations Manager for the City of Sioux Falls, with special focuses on ADA topics, and Terry Rist, Senior Commercial Credit Analyst with Home Federal Bank in Sioux Falls. Julie also acknowledged Cindy Stewart, Sioux Falls office VR District Supervisor and a BRN Board member.

Julie presented information about the BRN in a PowerPoint (see attached). The BRN is a liaison linking employers, the general public, people with disabilities who are job hunting, service providers and VR counselors. They were awarded a contract through the Division of Rehabilitation Services. BRN provides educational opportunities regarding the employment of persons with disabilities; creates greater awareness of the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities; and they are a resource for both prospective employees and employers regarding employment opportunities and worksite modifications. Julie handed out BRN promotional cards (See Attachment). Julie has a monthly goal of visiting at least six new business contacts and belongs to a number of organizations to network and share information.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- A description of Disability Mentoring Day, a national day to help promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Eight students were identified as well as their area of interests or career path and matched with an adult in the given career. BVR members may forward names of young adults who could benefit from Disability Mentoring Day or employers that might participate.
- Disability Friendly Sticker Program which are two-sided window stickers utilized to tell patrons the business is disability friendly. The stickers are placed in a front window or glass front door, given to businesses that are known to be active in hiring persons with disabilities, or have made modifications to their business to meet accessibility guidelines.
- Organized panels of employers to conduct mock interview sessions, appropriate behavior and how to dress during the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Transition Week.
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). The first year an event was held in conjunction with the Fall Conference with Sanford Health as a sponsor. The event has grown with 125 people attending. A panel discussion was held with area employers talking about the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities, and of the 70 attendees, almost 70% were employers. Working through SHRM, the event was offered for credit hours. Through surveys and polling contacts regarding future training topics, the focus for the 2013 NDEAM event will be on accommodations and/or modifications.
- BRN actively helped with the "Spread The Word – To End The Word" Campaign (STWTENW) which was created through Special Olympics. Persons are educated through the schools and the public about ending the use of the "R" word. 16 businesses participated in the campaign. Grady shared this coincides with the Governor's signing of Senate Bill 26 to remove the "R" word and other derogatory language from state statutes.

- Conducted disability etiquette training for Wells Fargo employees. Wells Fargo Management Team will tour the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind to learn about accommodations and assistive technology.
- BRN is an active member of several local and state committees.
- The BRN Board meets monthly, and has an executive/finance committee, a marketing/media committee, and a programs /events/education committee. Grady and other BVR members encouraged the BRN to continue to ensure the majority of their board members are representatives from the private sector.

Terry shared that he has been on the BRN Board from the very beginning and was involved in the process of hiring an Executive Director and that Julie was an excellent choice for the BRN.

Colleen thanked the group and explained that she wears many hats including the city's ADA Coordinator, and Human Relations Manager. Colleen said that BRN has been a great match for different areas that she promotes (i.e. equality, diversity, hiring people with disabilities) which requires continual public education and awareness. These projects are touching lives, and the effects are being felt. We are proud to continue working to see progress made in the areas of inclusion, accessibility and the employment of people with disabilities.

Questions from BVR members included:

Fundraising: Julie indicated that they have been involved with pancake feeds, bingo nights, restaurant "charity" nights.

What are the issues businesses are bringing forward? Most questions are about accommodations, requests for disability etiquette training and various questions about hiring people with disabilities. Trainings or presentations are tailored to fit the needs of whoever was asking.

What is the timeframe of the agreement with the Division? It is renewed annually (October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013). Grady added a request to keep BRN's focus on the private business sector than state agencies. BRN is a partner who can help businesses make money – promoting everyone can work with the right supports.

Julie thanked the group and reminded them to check out www.sfbrn.org for details or to contact her for anything. Elaine and Grady each expressed appreciation to the BRN representatives for the information and their work.

BREAK

PUBLIC COMMENT: Elaine welcomed the group back and called for public comment. With no comments, the meeting moved to the next agenda item.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chair called for announcements. Staff reported that Robert Kean, BVR Member and Executive Director of SD Advocacy Services wanted the BVR to be aware of the Partners in Policymaking (PIP) breakfast and listening session on April 27th, 8 – 9 am at the Sioux Falls Ramkota. Members are welcome to attend, if interested, call Staff for details.

SD Parent Connection received a grant through the SD Council on Developmental Disabilities to coordinate Family Planning Together (FPT) trainings. Trainings are underway; one event was held in Aberdeen; Yankton/March 30th; Redfield and Chamberlain/April 4th; Sioux Falls SDPC/April 25th; and Sisseton/May 6th. Visit www.sdparent.org for more details.

Nikki announced that on Wednesday, April 3rd, 10 am–12 noon, there will be a Diversity Fair held at Southeast Technical Institute, in Sioux Falls

Through the chair the board received a thank you card from Shelly Pfaff, SD Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities for the \$65 donation and the \$35 organizational membership dues.

FUTURE'S INITIATIVE UPDATE: Future's is an internal leadership succession training implemented almost 7 years ago by the Division. Division staff members apply and go through a process to be accepted into this intense, three year commitment. All individuals identify a project, plus other assigned activities. Bernie shared that the first group of trainees had five people, including Joe Rehurek. All who have participated in the program to date are still with the Division. Round Three began a couple years ago, which includes Ronda Williams, State Office, and Steve Resick, Chamberlain Office. The staff that recently joined: Katie Gran, Sioux Falls office; Ronda Lynch, Rapid City office and Kim Hoberg, Aberdeen office. Katie Gran was invited to share her experiences as a new Future's member.

Katie Gran thanked Bernie and members for allowing her to share information. She is proud to be a Future's Initiative member. Originally from Kimball, Katie graduated from SDSU in 2004 with a degree in Sociology, and worked at Goodwill Industries in Sioux Falls. Through that experience she realized her passion was working with persons with disabilities; and accepted her position with VR. She studied online from

January 2010 until August 2012, and received her Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling through Virginia Commonwealth University.

Katie has attended Person Centered Thinking (PCT) classes and expressed excitement over the PCT tools and their use with persons with disabilities. As a Future's project, Katie created an "Employment Workbook", slanted towards employment and job hunting. Katie is also involved with the Family Support 360 program. She will be speaking about the Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS) program and the new Employment Workbook at the "Feel the Joy" Conference, April 12th, at Joy Ranch (an accessible retreat located outside of Watertown).

Katie is involved with the Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) which is focusing on an "Employment First" initiative. Katie has been involved with the group which includes Parent Connection, Independent Living Choices, and VR in the development of a record keeping system for adults (MYFILE) which contains information necessary for many aspects of life, i.e., health information, benefits, job information, housing, etc.

Bernie reported that Future's members attend management meetings, and they assist with mentoring and job interviewing. The Division is trying to provide different skill sets necessary to become a leader.

Cindy Stewart provided an update on the Sioux Falls Offices. Five out of seven counselors are now Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. Cindy is interviewing for a counselor position with the pending retirement of Connie Altman.

Grady shared that Future's members are delivering presentations to different groups and agencies, providing great exposure and awareness of available services. The BVR commends the Division for understanding the need for leadership succession training and building a strong course of direction for the Division.

DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT: DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS – Grady shared that he will retire from state government after 33 years of service effective April 5th. He is comfortable with his decision, leaving very experienced staff in place who made his job easy – Bernie, Denise, Ronda, Steve, Janet, to name only a few, and all the staff in the District offices. Gaye Mattke, Director of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI), has been named the Interim Director of DRS until Secretary Gill and her executive team select a replacement. Grady said he plans to spend time with his grandchildren and time at the lake. Grady thanked the Board, past and present, for the advice and direction provided to the Division over the years. He will miss these meetings and the people.

Grady requested that an item be added to the agenda and without objection the Board took up the item. He referenced the BVR Executive Committee minutes regarding a funding request from a BVR member, to organize a disability awareness event in early June. The committee had follow-up questions regarding the application and had not made a decision to fund because of the lack of details about the event. The application was received via email and Staff contacted the member via email to get additional information. Staff made several attempts to obtain answers – asking for information such as what individuals or groups were involved with planning, other funding sources, and details on how and where the money will be spent. The member became frustrated with the process not understanding that the committee was attempting to have information to approve the request. The member sent a letter of resignation to the Division and a copy of the letter was distributed to the Board. . Grady expressed it was a very unfortunate situation due to miscommunication. The member asked that the following points be shared with the Board.

1. The rules or guidelines for requesting BVR Strategic Planning Funds are too vague, the application form lacks specificity;
2. The entire BVR Strategic Planning funding application process lacks transparency; and
3. Using email communication alone is not effective, and that clarification should also be done by phone, if necessary.

Funding for the member's event has been received from another source. Grady asked the member to reconsider the resignation and notify the Board Chairperson or Board Staff of the decision prior to the June meeting. The member's letter of resignation was copied to DHS Secretary Gill and Governor Daugaard. Grady has discussed the letter and situation with the Secretary and the Governor's office and if the member reconsiders, we will request that the resignation not be accepted so the member can return to the board.

Grady wanted the minutes to reflect that he believes, that the funding guidelines for requesting BVR Strategic Planning Funds are vague, the process lacks transparency, and communication needs to be done in a variety of ways to seek clarification. His recommendation is that the process be reviewed including who makes decisions and the timelines

Elaine indicated that the Executive Committee followed up with emails as that was how the application was received. However, a phone call might have eased the situation.

After Board discussion regarding the application process, a motion was made

MOTION THAT STAFF SEND THE INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDING APPLICATIONS TO ALL MEMBERS FOR REVIEW, BUT HAVE AN AD HOC COMMITTEE WORK ON THE LANGUAGE AND PROCESS, AND BRING THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FULL BOARD FOR REVIEW BY THE NEXT MEETING – MS.

The chair confirmed that an ad hoc committee could work on the process and bring recommendations to the full Board. If any applications are received before the June meeting, they would be processed per the current guidelines. The chair asked for volunteers to serve on a committee to review the funding application forms. Leo Hallan and Nikki Darland volunteered. The chair will work with the ad hoc committee and with Bernie and Colette to provide staff support. Staff will forward the two funding applications (Individual/Organization) to all members and arrange a conference call for the committee. The chair encouraged members to review and provide ideas or changes. **MOTION CARRIED.**

LEGISLATIVE SESSION – Grady reported that during the 2013 session, the Department had three bills proposed and each was passed:

1. House Bill (HB) 1022 – which was the removal of language that is unnecessary;
2. HB 1023 – revising the administrative rules impacting the Medicaid waiver program; and
3. Senate Bill (SB) 26 – regarding updating antiquated language, i.e. removal of the “R” word, and replacing language such as developmental disabilities with intellectual disabilities, etc.

BUDGET UPDATE - Grady reported that last day of the Legislative Session, the Division’s 2014 Budget was approved. The Division received a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase of \$212,000; and Disability Determination Services received an increase of \$250,000 for case examiners. Provider inflation received an increase from 1 – 3%. Everything requested in the budget was approved. Currently for 2013, the Division is under budget, and Grady is confident it will be fully expended by the end of the year, providing service to all those who are eligible without any waiting lists needed.

Grady expressed his appreciation of member input on the DHS Strategic Plan and goals. The Department listened, reviewed the comments and now the management team is working on the details (i.e., strategies to meet goals, concrete measurements). Later this spring, Department staff will be going to five locations around the state for a

presentation of the new strategic plan. Prior to the public presentations, sessions will be held for Department staff and stakeholders.

Liz Fabiano Training Update – The training is for VR counselors in using *cognitive motivational tools* to negotiate behavior change in consumers. The Division is creating modification assessment forms to assess the consumer's willingness to change and where they are in that process. A handout, 'Building Intrinsic Motivation', which shows how a counselor assesses the client's stage of change, was distributed. These new methods will be implemented by January. Bernie reported that VR numbers are improving on outcomes and success rates using these new methods. Fabiano will be in SD in April to deliver three, 2-day trainings for staff.

Katie Gran indicated that the tools make you think about the big picture and long term for the consumer to identify motivational factors. One tool is called the CAF – Consider All Factors, thinking of hidden, outside forces impacting a person's desire of choosing to work or not. There is also the PMI – the Plus/Minus/Inventory, where the pros and cons are identified for a client in terms of employment.

VR counselors are learning to assess the client's entire situation and learning to be more effective with time and resources identifying those wanting to work. With others, they are learning what motivates clients from the inside, and help them towards employment as a lifelong commitment.

Technology –Does technology need to remain as a standing agenda item any longer? A member reminded us that the DHS Strategic Plan has language about staying abreast of social media and maintaining a relevant presence. After discussion all agreed that Technology can be posted on the agenda on an as needed basis.

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC): Bernie reported that about a year ago Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) changed the interpretation of their guidelines. RSA's directive was that the 2 term limits applied to the Director's position. Since then, Bernie has been appointed and serving on the SILC in this capacity. Bernie noted that both Matt Cain and Lyle Cook are also members of SILC. The SILC met on February 27th at the Governor's Inn, in Pierre. Bernie reported that agenda items included the RSA's guidelines on the role of the SILC, what it is, and sometimes more importantly, what it isn't. There was also discussion of a Consumer Satisfaction Survey and a committee forming to address issues of gathering input. The SILC is also hosting the Center for Independent Living (CIL) staff training April 10-12, in Ft. Pierre. One section will highlight information on the Aging and Disability

Resources and another section will focus on autism. The SILC will meet April 30th, at the Fort Pierre AmericInn.

STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL – Grady reported the Council met January 3rd. Secretary Gill is attending these regularly in her own appointed position; Grady had been the designee attending on her behalf. He shared that the Council is watching the Workforce Act on the federal side with different versions being proposed in the house and senate. In the House of Representatives, the SKILLS act barely passed and general consensus was that it is not expected to pass the Senate.

Elaine thanked everyone for attending today. There were a couple of items to cover before adjourning for the day.

Elaine recognized Kathy Hassebrook, fellow member from Aberdeen, who is now working with the State Bureau of Human Resources in Pierre. As such, Kathy felt she no longer represented the “employer” category, and felt it necessary to resign. A plaque was shown and read, which will be presented to Kathy at a later date. Members thanked Kathy for her dedication and contributions to VR - especially her investment with Employer Resource Network (ERN), and her work with other Society of Human Resource Managers chapters across the state.

Elaine recognized Nikki Darland, who will be terming off as of June 30th with a thank you plaque for her dedication and contributions while serving on the Board. Nikki felt that her hectic schedule and taking on more duties, that she should finish her first term and not consider re-appointment. She thanked the group for the wonderful things she has learned through the Board, it has been a growing experience and she’s very grateful for the chance to have served with people who care about employing people with disabilities. The Members thanked Nikki for her service.

And finally Elaine turned to Grady, stating they have sat through a lot of meetings together – but this has got to stop! And so it shall in early April as he retires to a slower lifestyle. The Board presented a plaque as a gift to Grady for his long-term dedication and commitment to the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services and the employment of persons with disabilities in South Dakota. Members wished him good luck, and to enjoy time with family. Thank you again to Grady Kickul.

Elaine invited everyone to mingle, enjoy some appetizers, providing everyone the opportunity to visit and say their goodbyes to Grady and Nikki.

MEETING ADJOURNED FOR THE EVENING.

8:30 AM, Tuesday, March 26th, 2013. The meeting was reconvened by Elaine Roberts, Chairperson. She welcomed everyone to Sioux Falls and called for introductions, asking members to state what capacity they fill on the Board for the benefit of the guests. Chair noted the need to return to unfinished agenda items from yesterday's meeting.

DISABILITY SUMMIT/PUBLIC GATHERING IN MOBRIDGE – PARTNERING WITH BSBVI, SILC AND DIVISIONS - Staff explained this public gathering originated through Gaye Mattke having communications with Jon Eagle from the Standing Rock VR program. His program was interested in collaborating on an event in McLaughlin, switched later to Mobridge. The Division and the Board are required to host public meetings to gather input. The SILC, BSBVI and Divisions have at times joined forces to host events to meet with individuals to gather input. Thus, the Board has been invited to co-sponsor a Disability Summit/Public Gathering, on Tuesday, May 7th, 11 am – 2 pm, at the Grand River Casino & Lodge. Lunch will be served, which helps draw attendance. It will be “summit style”, with agencies and staff having tables to share materials and information in a casual atmosphere over a meal. The SILC has a requirement to post a public notice a minimum of thirty days in advance, thus display notices will be disseminated by the end of this week. There will be flyers and posters distributed around the region, disseminating via mailing lists as well as radio announcements featuring the summit. KLND radio will be asked to provide public service announcements (PSAs) as well as conduct live interviews that day.

Bernie added that Standing Rock is a rare example because it serves individuals in North Dakota and South Dakota. Russ Cusack, Vocational Rehabilitation Director, is expected to attend; he is Grady's counterpart in North Dakota. Elaine shared she's heard many positive things about the Public Gathering held in Lower Brule from special education teachers who thought it was very worthwhile. Leo asked approximately how many people attended the Lower Brule public meeting; and Elaine replied around 70 - 75 attended.

Grady said he wanted BVR members to fully understand how instrumental Lyle Cook, has been to efforts in strengthening relationships with the other Native American VR programs. Grady said he wanted to take this opportunity to thank Lyle for his contributions; and the Division appreciates his assistance. Grady stated that Jon Eagle holds the same title as Lyle, Director of the VR program on Standing Rock Reservation. There are only four programs in South Dakota at this time. Jon is committed to VR and reaching out to people in rural areas. The Division appreciates his help organizing

this gathering as an avenue to hear from people – and for them to learn of available services and programs.

Grady reminded members that they are welcome to attend the Disability Summit on May 7th; travel would be covered, for further details, contact staff.

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH (NDEAM) UPDATE – A committee reviewed the NDEAM proposals on March 19th via video conference. In attendance were Lyle, Craig, Darla, Julie Briggs (B/SBVI), Bernie, and Colette. Annette Gamber, the SILC representative on this committee had a family emergency and was not able to attend.

Eleven communities submitted proposals for funding. The overall request was for \$19,655. There are arrangements between some communities to “cost share” keynote speaker fees. One town, had estimated some expenses too high because of speaker sharing, so after modifying one budget figure, the total proposed was \$18,605. In the past, the BVR has asked the SILC and BSBVI to help provide financial support. Typically, the BVR has obligated an amount to support these events and the B/SBVI and SILC are approached to make up the difference. Lyle indicated that as a member of BSBVI, he heard from Gaye Mattke that the BSBVI would agree to support up to \$4,000. That covers \$16,000 of the needed \$18,605. For the remaining balance, we have two options on how to approach the SILC; either the BVR Chair can officially ask the SILC Chair for funding support or the Board can submit a funding application for SILC Strategic Planning funds. Bernie added that the Division will be agreeable to assisting with some financial support towards NDEAM if there’s still a need.

Elaine explained that the review committee has carefully reviewed the proposed NDEAM events, including all proposed funding needs, and is recommending the approval of \$18,605 from the Board; and asked for a motion to approve. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE REVIEW COMMITTEE’S FUNDING RECOMMENDATION FOR THE ELEVEN COMMUNITIES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$18,605 FOR 2013 NDEAM EVENTS – MSC.** Staff will continue working closely with the committee and move forward with sending out award notices to the communities. An NDEAM report should be provided at the next meeting.

STATE PLAN SUBMISSION PROCESS - Bernie shared a handout of the 2014 SD State Plan Public Meetings (See Attachment), stating that details of the State Plan and process are laid out in this document. Meetings held to date were described including date, location, and type of meeting. Bernie explained that much of the State Plan stays the same, but one section required to be updated annually are some

attachments. He added that this and all other State Plan documents are available on the Division's website for further comment.

Bernie noted on page two of the handout, the list of attachments required to be updated and spoke to each one. Attachment 4.2(c) is a summary of input and recommendations of the Board. Board staff prepares this attachment by reviewing the minutes and any action that the Board may have taken during this timeframe. Attachment 4.10 is about personnel development; 4.11(b) provides estimates of people served and overall cost; 4.11(c)(3) confirms if the state is on an Order of Selection, which the Division is not, (Division has been able to serve all who are eligible with no waiting lists). The Division must also show that it has not spent more than 5% of the budget on administrative costs. Bernie referred to attachment 4.11(e)(2) and one of RSA's findings concerning third party contracts which in terms of the Project Skills contracts, the Division had to request a waiver of statewideness because there are some schools that don't participate. The other attachments listed are not required to be updated and remain unchanged. Bernie reviewed the timeline of submitting and approval dates for the State Plan. Plus, the Consumer Services Committee will be meeting to review the draft attachments and bring forth any recommendations to the Board at their June meeting. Grady said that Bernie can skip the step of having the State Workforce Development Council approving the plan since it's only updating a few attachments. Grady assured the Board, if Division would ever have to go to an Order of Selection, the Board will know about it before it is implemented.

Grady asked for permission from the Chairperson to recognize two staff members who came to hear the next presentation. Permission was granted, and he asked them to introduce themselves. Janet Ball explained she is with the Division's state office in Pierre and works as the Deaf Services Program Specialist; she's involved with the SD Relay, the cochlear implant program, the Telecommunications and Assistive Devices (TAD) program, plus the mentoring program. Ronda Williams is also with the state office and she explained that she assists and monitors the VR Faces Case Management System, and they are switching systems soon, so that will entail a lot of work with Bernie; she also is involved with the business outreach projects.

CONVERSATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS - VR AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (VR & E): Bernie reported that the 2013 Fall Conference will be in Pierre, October 15–17, and it will have a veteran's focus. In terms of learning, sharing information and developing partnerships, an invitation was extended to Kevin McCarthy, VR Counselor to attend and talk about the VR & E program with Veterans Affairs. Michael Vasek also in attendance is a recipient of VA's services.

Kevin McCarthy thanked the group and stated his goal for today, is if down the road, you encounter a veteran, you will be able to refer them by learning more about the services. He spoke about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), which are very common and the number of returning veterans with these injuries is growing. VR & E provides services to veterans to find/maintain employment to include accommodations, assistive technology, specialized training and independent living skills training. Honorably discharged veterans can apply for services, but must have a service connection to the disability; otherwise the person is referred to the Department of Labor and Regulation or Vocational Rehabilitation. When the soldier is discharged, most of those injured are identified during the exit interview, however not all are identified, thus the reason for referrals.

A full and complete comprehensive evaluation will occur. The assessment takes into account the veteran's goals, strengths and weaknesses, and helps to create a rehabilitation plan towards their employment goal. Kevin mentioned they can aid a veteran with up to two months support while job hunting including rental assistance. They also have a 60 day follow-up routine to ensure they check with the veteran and the employer, ensuring they're on the road towards their goals. The video "*VetSuccess*" was played at this time.

Kevin explained some veterans return to the US and they are skilled and very employable, and many successfully go back to work. Some have newer skills learned in the service and only need help matching their skills to a civilian career path. The VA has a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Labor (DOL) to provide services to veterans who are exploring career paths and job hunting. Kevin added that if it appears a veteran will not likely be employable, the VetSuccess program will focus on Independent Living (IL) skills such as cooking, shopping, especially online shopping for groceries, cleaning, personal hygiene, etc. Some veterans may need help being stateside again, relearning things because of the injury. Of course, many things are based on the severity level of their disability.

Another option Kevin referenced was self-employment, which is appropriate for some individuals that express an interest or have a certain skill. Some veterans are ready for that level of commitment and work, while others are not and need to reintegrate more slowly in the regular work world.

Kevin explained that he goes to area schools and universities to help educate college professors, on how to accommodate non-traditional students – veterans in the classroom. Those with PTSD can be a bit more disruptive in class, have behavior

issues, and there are usually valid reasons or explanations behind their actions. Providing a basic understanding of PTSD can make a big difference in how educators proceed with classroom situations.

Kevin wanted to introduce a veteran who is living proof that VetSuccess can help veterans become successfully employed. He introduced Michael Vasek to members.

Michael shared that as a returning veteran, he could identify with some of the classroom disruption stories Kevin mentioned. He had severe PTSD; and some days were really bad. He could be a terrible employee, very hard to work with, and hard to work for. Michael explained how his years of service had hardened him, made him a full-blown, fighting machine that did what he was told, when he was told. The awful experiences you see, endure and live through are with you, in your head forever. Those memories don't vanish once you're home. Michael said that the VetSuccess program literally saved his life. Through the VA Center, Michael met his counselor and that relationship worked, because he pushed. The counselor knew what it was going to take to get him to the point of wanting to change on the inside. Hopefully, a person learns to pick up and move forward, getting better, becoming more normal bit by bit. Michael said he knows the hardest thing to tell other veterans battling personal "demons" is to not give up.

Michael stressed veterans can get help, become employed and become a valued member of the community. It takes VR and veterans' programs like this to reach out and be there when the vet is ready. Michael thanked the Division, for their contributions to the VR world that helps serve veterans and others. Thank you to members for their commitment to helping those who have served their country.

Bernie mentioned again that this topic is the theme of the Fall VR Conference; one focus is sharing information about programs available to veterans, especially on PTSD and TBI. The keynote speaker will be Richard Pimentel, a Vietnam veteran, who advocates in the veteran's world promoting programs to serve their needs. Kevin added that the VA is excited about the Fall VR Conference, that the regular VR program acknowledges the rising numbers of veterans amongst the overall cliental.

Lyle asked a question about an individual he knows and has worked with about qualifying for the program, and needing assistance with locating the individuals' service records. Michael suggested finding an advocate with either DAV or VFW or another service organization – someone that won't give up. The conversation continued and Michael provided Lyle with some contact information.

As Chair, Elaine thanked Kevin, Michael and Lyle for sharing their stories, it's educational to learn more about the programs available; and we agree, returning veterans are worthy of all the help we can provide. Kevin and Michael returned the thanks, and told members they can call any time with questions.

BREAK

PROVIDER SURVEY: Bernie shared a handout addressing the SD VR Service Providers Training Needs Survey Executive Summary (See Attachment). This was done via a link on the Internet through Survey Monkey. The survey was done through contacting providers, through email, providing the link to Survey Monkey. An incentive was offered to every the 50th entry, and they would receive a \$50 gift card. A total of 79 survey responses were received and he described the makeup of the respondents.

The surveys reflected that the highest training needs in the 'Employment Category' are marketing to employers, accessing the hidden job market, job retention, self-employment, working with employers, and job development and placement methods. The highest training needs in the 'Disability Category' are mental illness, brain injury, Asperger's/autism, and neurological impairment. The highest trainings needs in the 'Disability Aspects' category was assistive technology, working with ex-offenders, Ticket To Work program, and Work Incentives.

A point learned through this survey was the overall level of education amongst staff at the provider level was higher than thought. Under training preferences, the survey results reflected that they seemed to prefer a combination of different learning styles. If they had a choice, they would prefer trainings on weekdays and in the summer. A final item Bernie referenced as surprising was - getting approval from supervisors to attend training and thus miss work - was an issue for 59.5% of the providers. The Division feels they can better pinpoint training areas to the right audiences. Elaine added that it is great to have more direction on training topics, because we may think we know what they want or need, but that's not always the case.

BRAINSTORMING TIME – Elaine reminded members that DHS Secretary Gill encouraged the Board to have time on meeting agendas for brainstorming – and opened the floor to discussion.

Nikki shared that she thinks that members can share information about vocational rehabilitation services with groups, agencies, and employers to create more awareness. She added that as members we attend many events, go to other meetings, etc. and that we can help raise awareness. Nikki suggested if members

submit articles or news pieces about VR or other upcoming events, this information in disability related newsletters also helps.

Leo expressed that he really liked the Mentoring Day that Julie Briggs mentioned during the BRN presentation. He said he could see this working for more consumers and business owners. Maybe think about how to use the concept with other events; possibly tie in with an NDEAM event.

Grady added that the Board consider having the BRN present more often; to discuss ideas and this could possibly help BRN grow statewide. A question was asked about VR counselors and them belonging to groups such as a Chamber, and the response was that staff in various offices are members of different groups. A suggestion was made that the Division as an agency become a member of the State Chamber of Commerce.

A question was asked about hearing from more consumers, gathering input. Who else could be considered as possible partners? Nikki added that she feels the Disability Advocacy Network, or the DAN, seems to be a growing source of powerful partnership opportunities. Maybe those connections could be used to reach a broader consumer base. Elaine agreed that some of the people involved with DAN, such as Robert Kean, with SD Advocacy Services, Terry Dosch with the Council of Mental Health Centers and Substance Abuse, and Shelly Pfaff with the SD Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities – were very active during session with people from all across the state. People have connections to others in various settings and these avenues could be a means of growing initiatives such as BRN, ERN and others.

Lyle mentioned we're doing a good job hosting public meetings on Native American reservations – Lower Brule, Eagle Butte, and now a meeting with Standing Rock. Lyle pointed out with caution, that we are missing several other Native American reservations, only four of the nine reservations have a VR program. Lyle wanted to plant the seed to be creative and come up with ways to reach those other outlying areas. Lyle offered and said he would help and do whatever it takes to see more VR programs promoted on the other reservations. Grady thanked him for that offer, and agreed the need is there. He feels that the Native American theme at last year's Fall VR Conference was a step in the right direction, but there will always be work to continue building upon those relationships.

OTHER BUSINESS – Elaine called for any other business, and hearing none, moved forward.

CLOSING ACTIONS – Future Agenda Items: Brainstorming should be added again. Brett added an update on the individual/organizational funding requests; State Plan Review; discuss steps needed to host a public gathering on a reservation without a 121 program. If members have anything they would like added on the agenda, please contact staff.

Schedule Next Meeting: The next Board meeting be held in Aberdeen in conjunction with Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) Luncheon. The goal is to schedule two half days, Thursday afternoon, June 6th, and Friday morning, June 7th, 2013. Staff will make arrangements and forward details.

The members gave a special, final thank you to Grady and wished him “Happy Retirement”.

MOTION TO ADJOURN, M-S-C. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:50 AM.