

ACTE Convention a Big Success in Nashville

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EXUBERANT ATTENDEES, A PACKED EXPO HALL, INSPIRING SPEAKERS, AND INFORMATIVE SESSIONS made the 2009 Association for Career and Technical Education's (ACTE) Annual Convention and Career Tech Expo an event to remember. Thousands of career and technical educators descended onto Nashville in November for a Convention that brought them renewed energy and focus on the important role career and technical education (CTE) plays in the lives of their students, schools and communities. ACTE's executive director, Jan Bray, told attendees at the Opening General Session November 19 that this is CTE's time. There is a window of opportunity for CTE to show its value in developing a skilled workforce, and a skilled workforce is inextricably linked to economic recovery, she said.

"It is only by coming together are we going to take advantage of this opportunity," Bray said. "When this window closes, we may never get it again."

Bray said that while the Association is reaching out to legislators on Capitol Hill and forging relationships with key organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Governors Association, various industry partners and state education boards, it is important that CTE professionals do their part in their own communities. Every community needs to understand the diversity of careers in CTE and the significant contributions that the field makes locally and nationally, Bray said.

She asked educators to work to increase the Association's membership so

that it can have an even greater impact in policy and decision making.

"When you go home, tell all your CTE colleagues that they need to join," she said.

She added, "I want to be able to go on Capitol Hill and say ACTE has 300,000 members and what we say is important, we're here, and we mean business."

OVAE's New Assistant Secretary Says CTE is at Forefront of Obama Administration's Education Agenda

When compared to other students, those who take CTE coursework are closing the gap in their academic achievement, high school graduation rates and post-secondary transition rates, said Assistant Secretary Brenda Dann-Messier, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, who had only been in her position for five weeks when she joined ACTE in Nashville.

"All of this is thanks to your hard work," she told attendees at the December 20 General Session. The challenge now, she said, is to do more to strengthen the CTE system so that all students are equipped with the education they need to be success stories through better education and employment opportunities. American students are not just competing against each other, they're competing against students from around the world, Dann-Messier said, and thus it is imperative that they receive a world-class education.

Dann-Messier noted that the U.S. Department of Education has identified four areas where American education has fallen short and needs to be strengthened:



▲ ACTE President Ed Melott greets attendees at the Annual Convention in Nashville.



▲ Attendees at the Annual Convention flocked to the exhibition hall.

- Building a workforce of effective educators.
- Adopting college and career readiness standards and assessments.
- Turning around low-performing schools.
- Developing robust data systems.

"There is no question that a stronger education system is the foundation for a strong economy," Dann-Messier said.

"Recognizing the ties between workplace development, economic development and K-16 education reform will help our keep our students competitive and our nation competitive in the marketplace."

Oates: DOL and OVAE Working Hand in Hand

For the first time, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and OVAE are working

together to ensure the success of programs, said Jane Oates, assistant secretary for Employment and Training, during her presentation at the December 20 General Session. Among the ventures is to work with OVAE to "expand and grow the nature of apprenticeships" in areas such as allied health care, early childhood education and, most importantly, green jobs. Oates noted that many existing jobs are already going green; plumbers, HVAC technicians and welders, for instance, have to learn new green technologies; and food safety, soil conservation, water testing and biofuels, to name a few, are already green jobs.

Green jobs will be instrumental in the nation's economic recovery, Oates said, and CTE is integral in helping to develop a pipeline of green workers for those jobs.

"There will be new jobs created and, unfortunately, that [falls] on your doorsteps because as these jobs are created you'll have to be more nimble and flexible than you've ever been in the past."

Chef Jeff: From Prison to Prestige



Chef Jeff Henderson personifies change. Once a drug dealer, Henderson was indicted and sent to prison for 10 years—a predicament that for many would signal the end. But for Henderson it would herald in a new beginning because it was in prison that he discovered a passion for cooking, one that would put him on a path to becoming a celebrated chef. Raised by a single mother in a home where there was often very little to eat, he turned to a life of crime. But his luck ran out when he was convicted and sent to federal prison for drug dealing. He began working in the prison kitchen on a cleaning detail and

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Awards Recognition

ACTE honored several career and technical educators on November 20 this year at the 2009 Annual Convention. We would like to extend our congratulations again to the following teachers for the impact they have on our industry.



Teacher of the Year: H. Mark American Horse

This award recognizes teachers who are providing outstanding CTE programs for youth and/or adults in their respective fields and communities. American Horse's criminal justice courses received praise from the community, parents and colleagues. In addition, he counsels new teachers coming into the CTE industry.



Outstanding Career and Technical Educator: Bea Paul

This award recognizes career and technical educators who have recently provided or currently are providing significant contributions to professional associations and CTE programs for youth and/or adults in their fields, communities and/or states. Paul's work to bring industry and job opportunities to her school is being replicated in other parts of the state because of its success.




Outstanding New CTE Teacher: Stormie Roberson

This award recognizes new career and technical educators who have recently provided or currently are providing significant contributions to professional associations and CTE programs for youth and/or adults in their fields, communities and/or states. Roberson's dedication to her nursing students goes far beyond the classroom and always revolves around industry best practices and activities that develop communication, teamwork, leadership, conflict management, dependability, honesty and integrity.



Outstanding Teacher in Community Service: Diane M. Bull

This award recognizes teachers with significant accomplishments and outstanding leadership in programs and activities that promote community involvement. It's Bull's commitment to the philosophy that "successful businesspeople give back to the community" that helped her to win over the judges. To learn more about all of the ACTE winners honored at the ACTE Convention or how to nominate your colleagues, visit us at www.acteonline.org/awards.aspx. 

eventually became a chef. He cultivated his cooking talents while he took other CTE classes such as drywalling, plumbing and painting. When he was released from prison he eventually landed in Las Vegas looking for a job as a chef. Although his criminal past was a significant barrier to finding employment, his talents so impressed the head chef at Caesar's Palace that he was hired on the spot after cooking an impressive six-course meal for the chef and his staff.

Years later he also impressed the head chef at Bellagio; he was hired on the spot after a demonstration of his skills. Three months later he was promoted to executive chef, becoming the first African American to hold that position in the hotel's 35-year history. Today Henderson considers himself an educator—using food to reach out to students from disadvantaged backgrounds on his Food Network program *The Chef Jeff Project*. He notes that many students just need a chance and a mentor in order to reach their full potential, and he wants to serve as role model for them to show just what can be achieved.

Graham: Be the Best You Can Be



Businessman and author Steadman Graham said that great leaders encourage us to be the best we can be, and CTE educa-

tors are the leaders who can help students reach their full potential. Every day CTE professionals work to make students co-creators of their world—a world in which they must remain relevant, think outside the box, be consistent and assimilate. The world is full of potential, but we are often limited by the mental blocks and beliefs we carry with us about ourselves and our



▲ More than 200 exhibitors packed the Expo Hall showcasing the latest software, hardware, products and services aimed at helping career and technical educators be more successful.

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world. He urged CTE educators to think every day about what they've accomplished within 24 hours, so that every day is a new beginning and an opportunity to maximize that full potential in their lives and in the lives of their students.

Exhibit Hall


The 2009 ACTE Career Tech Expo exhibit hall was sold out and full of exciting opportunities. More than 200 exhibitors showcased the latest software, hardware, products and services aimed at helping career and technical educators be more successful. The always popular Exhibitor Workshops were standing room only this year. Exhibitor Workshops gave attendees the opportunity to learn about new products and services from exhibitors. Green emerged as a hot new topic. Everything from green construction to greening

of the workforce were covered in these extremely informative sessions. Look for more green Exhibitor Workshops again in Las Vegas as ACTE and Career Tech Expo exhibitors help your school build effective green programs.

The support of the companies and organizations that participate in the Career Tech Expo is invaluable to the industry and to ACTE. The Association encourages its members and attendees to contact and work with these exhibitors to meet your school or program needs. A list of all the exhibitors and sponsors will appear in the March issue of *Techniques* magazine.

UnConference

This year ACTE broke new ground with its first ever unConference, a series of informal mini-sessions and discussions held at the ACTE and National Research

Center for Career and Technical Education booths on the exhibit floor. Fifteen presenters hosted intimate presentations and conversations on topics ranging from professional development for CTE educators to Science-in-CTE research to business curricula ideas. In addition, ACTE continued offering online communication tools to enhance the event, including a Convention blog with session profiles and feedback from member bloggers. To get connected with ACTE's social media initiatives, visit www.acteonline.org/e-media.aspx. 

Sessions Available Online

ACTE has posted well over 100 of the sessions presented during the 2009 Annual Convention, in addition to the General Sessions remarks by Chef Jeff Henderson, Steadman Graham, Brenda Dann-Messier and Jane Oates. To download handouts and materials, and to watch some video clips, check out www.acteonline.org/conventionsessions09.aspx.



See you in Las Vegas

It's never too early to start planning. ACTE is already well into planning the 2010 ACTE Annual Convention and Career Tech Expo for December 2-4. Bookmark www.acteconvention.com and check it often for updates, including the Call for Presentations (which is currently open), registration and housing information, and new and exciting opportunities and offerings.

 Interested in exploring this topic further? Discuss it with your colleagues on the ACTE forums at www.acteonline.org/forum.aspx.