

11

WORKFORCE & JOB TRAINING CAPACITY

A. INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the occupational characteristics of the Texarkana region's labor force, the consultants conducted an analysis of occupational data obtained from the Texas Workforce Commission. The list of over 270 occupations was sorted and arranged by job type and skill level. The occupational grouping was subjective, based upon the consultant's common knowledge regarding typical occupational skill and educational requirements. The following sections provide an analysis of current occupational employment, projections through 2012, including a summary of the largest and fastest growing occupations in the region, and implications for Texarkana industries and workforce.

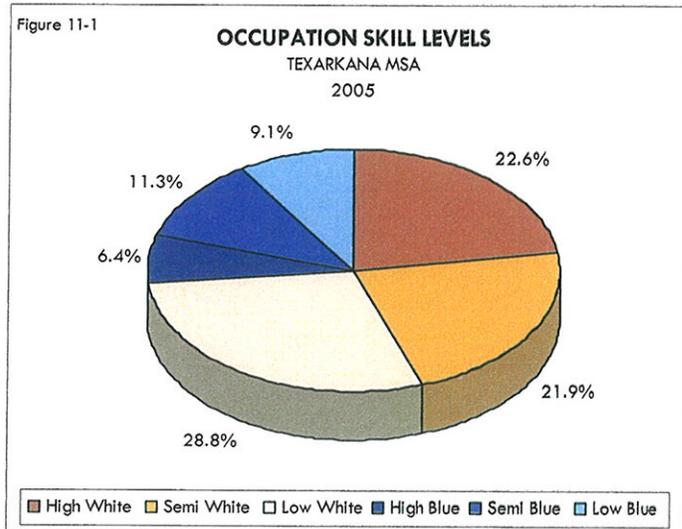
B. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The Texarkana MSA, which consists of Miller County, Arkansas and Bowie County, Texas, had a high concentration of white-collar jobs in 2005. Over 73% of all jobs were white-collar, with a concentration in low-skilled, white-collar jobs (28.8%).
- In terms of future opportunity, almost all of the largest growth occupations are white-collar positions. Of these, low skill white-collar jobs are expected to add the most jobs (3,600) from 2002-2012. This is consistent with the finding that low-skill white-collar jobs will continue to account for the largest share of regional employment through 2012.
- Semi- and high-skilled white-collar positions are projected to grow more quickly than low-skilled positions, indicating the local economy is expected to produce more quality jobs. The occupation projected to experience the greatest growth, in terms of percent gain, is the medical assistant occupation, expected to grow by 66.7% through 2012. The growth in semi- and high-skilled white-collar positions is likely to increase the demand for a more educated workforce.
- There is a wide variety of training programs available to assist both employers and individuals in attaining job skills. The Texas Workforce Commission funds the two main on-site training programs (Skills Development Fund and Local Activities Grant). Support for the fund comes from the Texas Legislature, which set aside \$40 million for the Skills Development Fund (\$15 million was appropriated for 2006 and \$25 million for 2007).

- Funding for Local Activity grants is obtained from the Department of Labor as part of the Workforce Development Act of 1998. All the states in the country receive funds from the Department of Labor based on a formula that takes into account unemployment statistics, population and other various indicators. The North East Texas Board received \$125,000 for the FY 2007 to distribute to industries in the region.

C. CURRENT OCCUPATION DISTRIBUTION (2005)

The Texarkana MSA, which consists of Miller County, Arkansas and Bowie County, Texas, had a high concentration of white-collar jobs in 2005. Over 73% of all jobs were white-collar, with a concentration in low-skilled, white-collar jobs (28.8%) (Figure 11-1). The majority of jobs fall into the low-skilled white-collar grouping, which generally possess lower annual salaries than other skill levels. For example, the largest occupation in 2005 was retail salespersons (1,730), which has an average annual salary of \$17,137 (Table 11-1). Out of 25 occupations, only six other occupations make wages lower than retail salespersons.



Source: Texas Workforce Commission and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

Semi-skilled jobs account for the largest share of blue-collar jobs (11.3%). Occupations in this category include manufacturing positions such as sheet metal workers, machine setters, and steel workers, as well as a variety of repair and motor vehicle operation occupations. The blue-collar jobs in this region are comparable in pay to white-collar jobs. For example, in 2005, the largest blue-collar occupation was truck drivers (a semi-skill position) who make a salary of \$30,966. This is generally comparable with that of semi-skilled white-collar positions, which range from \$21,067 to \$39,650.

Table 11-1
Largest Occupational Categories (by employment levels)
Texarkana MSA
2005

Occupation	Skill Level	Employed	Annual Median Wages
Retail Salespersons	Low White	1,730	\$17,137
Registered Nurses	High White	1,540	\$52,663
Cashiers	Low White	1,210	\$14,046
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Inc	Low White	950	\$13,609
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	High Blue	890	\$39,485
Waiters and Waitresses	Low White	760	\$12,788
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	High White	750	\$29,533
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	Semi Blue	723	\$30,966
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	Low White	720	\$16,121
Secretaries, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	Low White	660	\$20,393
Physical Therapist Assistants	Semi White	650	\$39,650
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	Semi White	620	\$24,778
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	Low Blue	612	\$17,470
Office Clerks, General	Low White	600	\$19,292
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	Semi White	590	\$16,874
Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services	Semi Blue	553	\$23,015
General and Operations Managers	High White	550	\$55,040
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	Semi White	520	\$17,966
Vocational Education Teachers, Middle School	High White	490	\$32,266
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping	Low White	470	\$15,912
Correctional Officers and Jailers	Semi White	450	\$30,147
Maintenance and Repair Workers	Semi Blue	450	\$21,067
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales	High White	430	\$31,277
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	High White	420	\$36,139
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Office and Admin.	High White	420	\$33,703

Source: Texas Workforce Commission and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

D. OCCUPATION PROJECTIONS (2002-2012)

The following section provides an analysis of future occupation projections based on a twenty-three county region in the State of Texas, which includes Lamar, Red River, Bowie, Delta, Franklin, Titus, Camp, Morris, Cass, Rains, Wood, Upshur, Marion, Van Zandt, Smith, Gregg, Harrison, Panola, Rusk, Cherokee, Anderson, Henderson, and Hopkins counties. The projections are based on 2002 occupational data, as opposed to 2005 data in the previous section. Though the data sets do not cover the same geographical boundaries and timeframe as the current occupational analysis, it provides a general understanding of occupation growth in the State of Texas.

Low-skilled white-collar jobs are projected to continue to account for the largest share of jobs in 2012 (26.6%) (Table 11-2). However, the share of high-skilled and semi-skilled white-collar jobs is projected to grow at a faster rate than low-skill white-collar jobs, which may indicate a need for better skilled labor. Currently, educational attainment in the Texarkana MSA is slightly below national levels. In 2000, 76.4% of Texarkana residents received their high school degree (compared to 80.2% nationally) and 9.6% completed a four-year degree (compared to 15.8% nationally) (Cities Ranked and Rated, 2004).

1. Occupational Growth by Skill Set

In terms of future opportunity, almost all of the largest growth occupations are white-collar positions. Of these, low-skill white-collar jobs are expected to add the most jobs (3,600) (Table 11-3) during the study period.

National and local trends indicate that manufacturing facilities are downsizing. In Texarkana, Cooper Tires is planning to cut its current workforce of 1,900 employees by several hundred by 2008. The impact of underemployment on skill levels, in light of manufacturing facilities either closing or laying-off workers, is currently unknown. However, it is reasonable to assume that blue-collar workers need to be retrained for new careers and are filling some portion of low-skilled white-collar positions.

Though blue-collar positions are projected to decrease in their share of total employment from 35.5% of occupational employment in 2002 to 33.1% in 2012, blue-collar occupations are expected to see an overall growth in the number of positions. Truck drivers, meat slaughterers and packers, automotive technicians, farmers and ranchers rank among the largest growth occupations and combined are projected to add 1,000 positions (Table 11-3).

In particular, Southern Refrigerated Transport is a local company that plans to expand their workforce of truck drivers. In 2006, Southern Refrigerated Transport relocated their facility from Ashdown, Texas (approximately 20 miles north of Texarkana) to a new \$17 million headquarters just east of Texarkana on U.S. Highway 67. The company wishes to expand their current fleet of drivers from 625 employees in 2006 to 1,000 truck drivers by 2008. The relocation and expansion of Southern Refrigerated Transport is consistent with occupation projections provided by the Texas Workforce Commission, and may even accelerate these projections, since they were made before Southern Refrigerated Transport announced their relocation plans.

Table 11-2
Occupational Skill Set Projection
North East Texas Region
2002-2012

	2002	2012	Change	% Change
NET TOTALS				
All Occupations	125,850	143,450	17,600	14.0%
White Collar	81,200	95,900	14,700	18.1%
High-Skilled	26,150	31,050	4,900	18.7%
Semi-Skilled	22,200	26,750	4,550	20.5%
Low-Skilled	32,850	38,100	5,250	16.0%
Blue Collar	44,650	47,550	2,900	6.5%
High-Skilled	6,150	6,550	400	6.5%
Semi-Skilled	14,600	15,900	1,300	8.9%
Low-Skilled	23,900	25,100	1,200	5.0%
SHARE OF TOTAL				
All Occupations	100.0%	100.0%	-	-
White Collar	64.5%	66.9%	2.3%	-
High-Skilled	20.8%	21.6%	0.9%	-
Semi-Skilled	17.6%	18.6%	1.0%	-
Low-Skilled	26.1%	26.6%	0.5%	-
Blue Collar	35.5%	33.1%	-2.3%	-
High-Skilled	4.9%	4.6%	-0.3%	-
Semi-Skilled	11.6%	11.1%	-0.5%	-
Low-Skilled	19.0%	17.5%	-1.5%	-

Source: Texas Workforce Commission and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

Table 11-3
Largest Growth Occupations
North East Texas Region
2002-2012

Occupation	Skill Level	Employment		# %	
		2002	2012	Change	Change
Personal & Home Care Aides	Low White	2,300	3,400	1,100	47.8%
Registered Nurses	High White	2,500	3,250	750	30.0%
Retail Salespersons	Low White	4,000	4,600	600	15.0%
Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers, including Fast Food	Low White	2,250	2,850	600	26.7%
Waiters & Waitresses	Low White	1,150	1,700	550	47.8%
Home Health Aides	Semi White	1,050	1,600	550	52.4%
Cashiers	Low White	3,400	3,850	450	13.2%
Farmers & Ranchers	Low Blue	8,150	8,550	400	4.9%
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, & Attendants	Semi White	1,850	2,250	400	21.6%
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	High White	1,650	2,050	400	24.2%
Medical Assistants	Semi White	600	1,000	400	66.7%
Slaughterers & Meat Packers	Low Blue	2,000	2,350	350	17.5%
Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	Low White	1,600	1,900	300	18.8%
Child Care Workers	Semi White	1,400	1,700	300	21.4%
Teacher Assistants	Semi White	1,100	1,400	300	27.3%
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	Semi Blue	1,550	1,800	250	16.1%
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Vocational Education	High White	1,100	1,350	250	22.7%
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales Workers	High White	1,600	1,800	200	12.5%
General & Operations Managers	High White	1,550	1,750	200	12.9%
Customer Service Representatives	Semi White	1,250	1,450	200	16.0%
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	High White	1,150	1,350	200	17.4%
Receptionists & Information Clerks	Semi White	750	950	200	26.7%
Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	Semi White	600	800	200	33.3%
Cooks, Restaurant	Semi White	450	650	200	44.4%
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	High White	350	550	200	57.1%

Source: Texas Workforce Commission and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

2. Fastest Growing Occupations

Semi- and high-skilled white-collar positions are projected to grow more quickly than low-skilled positions, indicating the local economy is expected to produce more quality jobs. The occupation projected to experience the greatest growth, in terms of percent gain, is the medical assistant occupation, expected to grow 66.7% through 2012 (Table 11-4). This finding is consistent with other indicators of a growing health industry in Texarkana. For instance, a health related consortium of companies including Woodley Regional Medical Center, Christus St. Michaels Health Center, Novatron Corporation, and JCM Industries partnered with Texarkana Community College and received a work-training grant of \$685,555 in 2006 from the Skills Development Fund. This funding source, along with other available education and workforce training programs, will help keep the skill levels of Texarkana residents consistent with occupational demand.

Table 11-4
Fastest Growing Occupations (% Gain)
North East Texas Region
2002-2012

Occupation	Skill Level	Employment		# %	
		2002	2012	Change	Change
Medical Assistants	Semi White	600	1,000	400	66.7%
Home Health Aides	Semi White	1,050	1,600	550	52.4%
Personal & Home Care Aides	Low White	2,300	3,400	1,100	47.8%
Waiters & Waitresses	Low White	1,150	1,700	550	47.8%
Cooks, Restaurant	Semi White	450	650	200	44.4%
Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	Semi White	600	800	200	33.3%
Correctional Officers & Jailers	Semi White	450	600	150	33.3%
Registered Nurses	High White	2,500	3,250	750	30.0%
Teacher Assistants	Semi White	1,100	1,400	300	27.3%
Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers, including Fast Food	Low White	2,250	2,850	600	26.7%
Receptionists & Information Clerks	Semi White	750	950	200	26.7%
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	High White	1,650	2,050	400	24.2%
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Food Preparation & Serving Workers	High White	650	800	150	23.1%
Food Preparation Workers	Low White	650	800	150	23.1%
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Vocational Education	High White	1,100	1,350	250	22.7%
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, & Attendants	Semi White	1,850	2,250	400	21.6%
Child Care Workers	Semi White	1,400	1,700	300	21.4%
Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	Semi Blue	750	900	150	20.0%
Landscaping & Groundskeeping Workers	Low White	500	600	100	20.0%
Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	Low White	1,600	1,900	300	18.8%
Clergy	High White	550	650	100	18.2%
Slaughterers & Meat Packers	Semi Blue	2,000	2,350	350	17.5%
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	High White	1,150	1,350	200	17.4%
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	Semi Blue	1,550	1,800	250	16.1%
Customer Service Representatives	Semi White	1,250	1,450	200	16.0%

Notes: Occupations in this list must have 500 or more employment in 2002.

Source: Texas Workforce Commission and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

3. Labor Force Implications

As mentioned previously, the faster growth of semi- and high-skilled white-collar positions indicates an increased demand for an educated workforce. While there is a disconnect between the education achievement levels of Texarkana and those needed for semi- and high-skilled white-collar positions, various educational programs at Texarkana Community College and Texas A&M are striving to meet this demand. However, it is possible that additional educational programs will be needed to help create a more educated workforce in Texarkana.

Though the share of blue-collar jobs is projected to decrease, the number of overall blue-collar positions will increase 6.5% from 2002-2012. This shows a relatively strong growth compared with national trends. The growth in positions indicates that more types of logistical industries, such as warehousing and transportation, that employ blue-collar occupations, might want to cluster in the region. In addition, workforce-training programs are available and already used by local manufacturing companies such as HUMCO Incorporated and the International Paper Company (discussed in more detail in the Workforce Training Programs section). The large amount of land and existing infrastructure at the Lone Star/Red River sites add further incentives for logistical industries to locate in Texarkana.

A healthy economy in Texarkana will include opportunities for both blue- and white-collar occupations. It will be necessary to prepare both types of occupations for future growth. By creating job and educational opportunities, Texarkana will continue to show economic strength and prospects.

E. WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAMS

The following section summarizes the workforce training programs that are available in the Texarkana region, including both on-site training offered through the North East Texas Workforce Board and on-campus certification programs offered at local community colleges. Specifically, this section will provide information on The Skills Development Fund and Local Activity grants, which are two of the main sources of funding for on-site worker training programs. In addition, an overview of distance learning, displaced worker, and apprenticeship programs will be discussed. This section concludes with a summary of the future of job training programs in the Texarkana region.

1. On-Site Workforce Job Training Programs

On-site workforce training programs provide customized training directly at the business's facility, rather than in a classroom setting. In most cases, a company partners with a technical or community college to upgrade the skills of their existing workers, or to train new workers. The Texas Workforce Commission distributes the two main workforce-training grants available to companies in the Texarkana region. They are the Skills Development Fund and the Local Activity Fund, which are both explained in more detail in the following sections.

a.) Skills Development Fund

The Skills Development Fund is available to Texas businesses that partner with technical or community colleges to upgrade the skills of existing workers or train new workers. It provides customized training to close skill gaps between the worker and employer needs. Support for the fund comes from the Texas Legislature, which distributes the money to the Texas Workforce Commission. For the 2006-2007 biennium, the 79th Texas Legislature set aside \$40 million for the Skills Development Fund (\$15 million was set appropriated for 2006 and \$25 million for 2007).

Any of the thirteen workforce boards in the State of Texas can apply for a Skills Development grant to the Texas Workforce Commission. The Commission then allocates the funds based on the quality of the grants, and there is no limit on how many companies can apply or receive grants from a certain region. For example, the North East Texas Workforce Board received the second largest share of funds (\$1,455,404) (Table 11-5) distributed for the FY 2006 period, even though northeast Texas has a smaller population than many other regions.

Companies become aware of the Skills Development grant through marketing efforts by the local workforce board and by local community and technical colleges. Companies in the area primarily partner with Texarkana Community College (other colleges companies can partner with are located outside of Texarkana and include Northeast Texas and Paris Junior College).

Table 11-5
Skill Development Grant Fund
Award Amounts by Region
FY 2006

Region	Amount	% of Statewide Funds
Alamo	N/A	N/A
Capital	348,733	2.49%
Central Texas	391,153	2.79%
Coastal Bend	1,133,157	8.08%
Gulf Coast	564,595	4.03%
High Plains	750,000	5.35%
Metroplex	4,030,360	28.75%
Northwest	90,683	0.65%
South Texas Border	N/A	N/A
Southeast Texas	462,299	3.30%
Upper East Texas	1,455,404	10.38%
Upper Rio Grande	1,158,181	8.26%
West Texas	N/A	N/A
Statewide Total	10,384,566	74.08%*

*Not all of the appropriated \$15,000,000 was distributed during FY 2006. The extra funds will be carried over into FY 2007.

Source: Texas Workforce Commission and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

The amount of money a company can receive is based on the cost per trainee. Generally, it is \$2,500/employee, and the North East Workforce Board will not fund a grant if it exceeds \$4,000/employee. There is a \$500,000 cap on the amount of training funds any one company can apply for (excluding business consortiums).

According to David Vershaw, Program Coordinator for the North East Texas Workforce Board, the Skill Development Grant is very popular and the workforce board receives applications on a continual basis. The majority of companies that apply for grants are manufacturing based. Most notably, in 2006, a four-member business consortium (Wadley Regional Medical Center, Christus St. Michael Health Center, JCM Industries, and the Novatron Corporation) partnered to receive over \$680,000 to train

workers as production supervisors, sales representatives, billers, line assistants, and social workers (Table 11-6). Another consortium of businesses is applying for a grant of over \$900,000 and will be reviewed by the Texas Workforce Commission in the upcoming months.

b.) Local Activity Grant

Funding for Local Activity grants is obtained from the Department of Labor as part of the Workforce Development Act of 1998. All the states in the country receive funds from the Department of Labor based on a formula that takes into account unemployment statistics, population and other various indicators. The North East Texas Board received \$125,000 for the FY 2007 to distribute to industries in the region.

Similar to the Skills Development Grant, the Local Activity grants are used to provide on-site training to improve the skill level of new or existing workers. However, there are some main differences between the two grants. The primary difference is that the maximum amount of funds a company can receive from the Local Activity grant is \$50,000, as compared to the Skill Development grant maximum funding of \$500,000 per company. The Local Activity grants are also geared toward companies that wish to expand the skills of their current workforce, and are not necessarily seeking to add new positions to their company (The Skill Development grant encourages companies to create 40% of their current employment base in new jobs). In addition, while collaborating with a technical or community college is encouraged, it is not required for the Local Activity grants. The companies that have received Local Activity grants are primarily manufacturing companies (Table 11-7).

Table 11-6
Skill Development Grant
Award Amounts for North East Texas
2006 & 2007 (Pending)

Year	Grantee	County	Amount
	Wadley Regional Medical Center, Christus St. Micheal Health Center, JCM Industries, Novatron Corporation	Bowie/Cass	\$685,555
2006	HUMCO Incorporated	Bowie	\$231,000
2006	Kimberly Clark	Lamar	\$333,102
2006	Campbell's Soup	Lamar	\$729,751
Pending	International Paper Company	Bowie	\$212,850
Pending	Flow Serve Incorporated	Hopkins	\$324,319
	Capps Insurance, Newly Weds Foods, Dekorun, Priefert, Safe-T, TXU	Titus	\$934,954

Source: North East Texas Workforce Board and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

Table 11-7
Local Activity Grant
Award Amounts for North East Texas
2006 & 2007 (Pending)

Year	Grantee	County	Amount
2006	Newly Weds Foods	Titus	\$50,000
2006	Kimberly-Clark	Lamar	\$28,944
2006	HUMCO Incorporated	Bowie	\$23,215
2006	Campbell's Soup	Lamar	\$50,000
2006	Harper Corp. Services	Lamar	\$11,100
2006	International Paper Company	Cass	\$50,000
2006	Morningstar Foods	Hopkins	\$15,000
Pending	Flow Serve Incorporated	Hopkins	\$5,000
Pending	International Paper Company	Bowie	\$1,700

Source: North East Texas Workforce Board and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

The Local Activity grants are marketed much the same way as the Skill Development grants. The North East Texas Workforce Board members network with various organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the North East Texas Regional Economic Developers Roundtable, as well as present information to individual employers. According to David Vershaw, this program is as popular as the Skill Development grants and there is a continual flow of applicants.

2. Certificate Programs

In addition to on-site worker training programs, there is also a variety of certification programs available to workers seeking employment in the Texarkana area. Texarkana College offers programs ranging from Child Care Development to Welding and Electronics (Table 11-8). Most of the certification classes are one-year long and students receive their training on-campus.

Texarkana Community College also offers a Work Certified program, which was created to meet the needs of regional employers by training jobseekers in basic skills. The program is 90 hours and students become Work Certified after obtaining an 80% or above on a comprehensive exam. The courses include: (1) Reading Comprehension, (2) Business Tools, (3) Business Writing, (4) Pre-Employment, (5) Customer Service, (6) Job Skills 1 (Work Maturity), (7) Job Skills 2 (Employment), (8) Business Math, and (9) General Business Knowledge.

There are also certificate programs located at The University of Arkansas Community College at Hope, which is approximately forty miles from Texarkana. There are a few slightly different programs offered at the University of Arkansas Community College than are offered at Texarkana, such as Industrial Maintenance, Truck Driving Training, and Diesel Technology (Table 11-9). Due to the close proximity and offering of slightly different

**Table 11-8
Texarkana College Certification Programs
2007**

One-Year Certificate Programs
Heating/Air Conditioning/Refrigeration
Automotive Body Repair
Automotive Technology
Diesel Technology
Cosmetology
Vocational Nursing
Office Careers
Networking administration
Child Development Worker
Emergency Medical Technician
Computer Programmer
Certification at Cisco Networking
Electronics
Welding
Small Engine Repair (6-Months)
Truck Driving Class (Short-Term)

Source: Texarkana Community College and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

**Table 11-9
University of Arkansas Community College- Hope Arkansas Certification Programs
2007**

One-Year Certificate Programs	Certificate of Proficiency (typically 6 months)
Crime Scene Investigation	Crime Scene Investigation
Law Enforcement Administration	Law Enforcement Administration
Accounting	English as a second language
Office Systems Technology	Child Development Associate
Funeral Directing	Emergency Medical Technician
Practical Nursing	Welding Technology
Child Development Associate	Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning
Emergency Medical Technician	Industrial Technology
Diesel Technology- Engines and Fuel Systems or Power Trains	Truck Driving Training
Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning	-
Industrial Electricity	-
Industrial Maintenance	-
Welding Technology	-

Source: University of Arkansas Community College- Hope, and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

certification programs, it is reasonable to assume that a percent of Texarkana residents commute to the University of Arkansas Community College for work certification.

3. Distance Learning

Texas A&M is primarily a four-year institution for students seeking bachelor or graduate degrees. However, there is also a distance-learning program for those who wish to learn from home (Table 11-10). This program is geared toward an older target audience and only offers graduate degrees. These degrees encourage more white collar and management opportunities, as opposed to blue-collar or manufacturing employment. Texas A&M chose to offer only graduate programs in order to increase the overall amount of graduate students at the university.

Table 11-10
Texas A & M
Distance Learning Degrees Offered
2007

College	Type	Degree
College of Liberal Arts	PhD	Hispanic Studies
College of Science	M.S.	Math
College of Science	M.S.	Statistics
College of Engineering	M.S.	Engineering Systems Management
College of Engineering	M.E. or M.S.	Petroleum Engineering
College of Engineering	M.S.	Industrial Distribution
College of Education and Human Development	M.Ed.	Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education and Human Development	M.Ed. Or M.S.	Educational Psychology with Bilingual Emphasis
College of Education and Human Development	M.Ed. Or M.S.	Educational Technology
College of Education and Human Development	M.S.	Educational Human Resource Development
College of Agriculture and Life Science	M.S.	Master of Agriculture
College of Agriculture and Life Science	M.S.	Master of Fisheries Science
College of Agriculture and Life Science	M.S.	Master of Wildlife Science
College of Agriculture and Life Science	Ed.D	Agricultural Education
George Bush School	Graduate Certificate	Advanced International Affairs
George Bush School	Graduate Certificate	Homeland Security
Cross-College	Graduate Certificate	Certificate Program for Math and Science Teachers

Source: Texas A & M Distance Education, and RKG Associates, Inc., 2007

4. Other Training Programs

There are other, more individualized programs available in Texarkana to increase the skill level of its workers. For example, the Apprenticeship Training Program offered through the Texas Workforce Commission provides funds to local public educational institutions to support the costs of related classroom instruction in registered apprenticeship training programs. The program is a job training system for skilled trade and journey workers. Specifically, the training program is designed to prepare individuals for occupations in skilled trades and crafts and combines structured on-the-job training, supervised by experienced journey workers, with related classroom instruction.

There is also a Dislocated Worker program offered through the Workforce Investment Act (a national funding mechanism for training and employment programs) and administered by the local Workforce Development Boards. This program offers employment and training programs for eligible workers who are unemployed due to no fault of their own or have received official notice of a layoff. A recent example of workers who may use this program stems from the local Cooper

Tire and Rubber plant, which will downsize from approximately 2,000 employees to approximately 1,200 employees by 2008.

5. Workforce Training Implications

There is a wide variety of training programs available to assist both employers and individuals in attaining job skills. The two main on-site training programs are funded by grants from the Texas Workforce Commission. Other programs, such as certificate and apprenticeship training, are additional tools available that can help create a more skilled workforce.

Matching the training programs with the specific skill demands of employers is pivotal toward keeping a workforce that is attractive to employers. For example, both Texarkana Community College and the University of Arkansas Community College offer truck-driving classes. Southern Refrigerated Transport is planning an expansion, and could potentially utilize the training offered at the community colleges to boost their workforce. In fact, the company wishes to expand its current fleet of 625 trucks to about 1,000 trucks in the coming years (Texarkana Gazette, 2006).

According to representatives from both North East Texas Workforce Board and Texarkana Community College, the future of job training lies in teaching the workforce basic skills such as reading and math. To help workers acquire these skills, the Work Certified program offered at Texarkana Community College teaches basic skills classes such as accounting and business writing, as well as business etiquette.

Manufacturing companies, including the International Paper Company, JCM industries, and HUMCO Incorporated have already utilized grant funding available from the Texas Workforce Commission to train their workers. However, The Texarkana region is also going to see large growth in the construction industry. New projects, such as the expansion of Southwestern Electric Power Company located in Fulton, Arkansas, a new four-year college at Texas A&M (Engineering and Science Building), and continual highway construction projects, are expected to bring with them a large amount of new jobs. In light of new construction projects in the area, The North East Texas Workforce Board is currently in the process of creating a construction academy. This new academy, along with other workforce training programs, offers a variety of ways for industries to attract new and skilled workers to their companies, and for employees to get the skills they need to advance in the ever-changing work environment.