

In the **SPOT** light

for **BEST PRACTICES**

INNOVATION IN BUSY OFFICES

At its February 6, 2007 Board meeting, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board recognized Houston Works and two members of its staff for coming up with several ideas to serve a growing volume of customers more efficiently at its largest offices. The Board thanked HoustonWorks for encouraging staff innovation, appreciating its management's willingness to invest in technology and staff time to find better ways to help The WorkSource customers. Those recognized at the meeting were (left to right) Russell Tomlin, Shaun Loether, Kenneth Mirinda and Terry Hudson.

Innovations included (1)

installing electronic people counters in all HoustonWorks managed offices. These counters have helped management know where the customers are when determining staffing needs. The counters have also made it possible to identify trends that point to especially busy times of the day and days of the week. Management has adjusted staff accordingly. (2) A Resource Specialist at The WorkSource – Hobby, Kenneth Mirinda, developed a computer program to allow each staff person in that office to see a list of waiting customers on her personal computer screen. This allowed Greeters to stay at the front of the office and Employment Counselors -



and other staff - to know when customers were waiting. It helps staff manage time more efficiently when they see that people are waiting. (3) Shaun Loether, in HoustonWorks IT department, perfected the program so that now management and staff in all HoustonWorks offices know who is waiting for what service and how long they have waited. Managers and supervisors move additional staff to help customers entering the office anytime the wait exceeds ten minutes. They also have a record of how long it takes staff to deliver particular services and how long customers may have to wait for those services. (4) Finally, a pilot project at Hobby has Greeters and Resource Specialists using earpieces and small microphones to communicate with other office staff without leaving the public areas.