

The Pronghorn Pronk

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Moving forward by leaps and bounds...

President's Monthly Report

John Marrin, President

from February 2015

Student Success Goal: The demands of Colorado businesses and communities shall be met through the development of a high skilled work force.

- Wednesday, February, 18 over two hundred students from Campo, Eads, Holly, Lamar Schools, Plainview, Springfield, Walsh, and Wiley competed in the annual Southeast Regional Science Fair. The SE Regional Science Fair represents a culmination of student research from the beginning of the school year. Projects vary in their scientific interest but are all judged based on the depth of scientific method presented. Prizes were awarded to first, second, and third places within each category and a Grand and Reserve Champion were chosen from each of the elementary, junior high, and high school levels. Nearly \$2,000 is awarded annually to these students and 24 students advance to the State Science Fair held at CSU in April.
- Lamar Community College was again the host site for the CHSAA District Basketball Tournament. The Wellness Center was packed with enthusiastic high school teams and their supporters.
- Lamar Community College's Kelly Union cafeteria was the location for the monthly Lamar City Breakfast. The Mayor of Lamar, several members of the Lamar City Council, Prowers County Commissioners, Prowers County Development Inc, City of Lamar staff, community members, and LCC faculty and staff enjoyed breakfast in the cafeteria along with LCC students. The monthly breakfast event is a time for city council members to meet with the public and discuss community ideas.

Student Success Goal: Colorado students shall have the opportunity to succeed through high quality, cutting-edge instruction and educational services.

- Tax Help Colorado at LCC started February 12 and continued on Thursday and Friday through February 20. The free tax service was quick, confidential and available to families earning less than \$50,000, saving them hundreds of dollars they might otherwise pay to commercial tax preparers. Lamar Community College is one of many free Tax Help Colorado sites.
- College Goal Sunday was held in the Betz Technology Building on the Lamar Community College campus Sunday, February 8. There were 12 high school students from Granada, Holly and Lamar along with their parents and siblings that filled out FAFSAs for the 2015-2016 school year.
- A new LCC Colorado Pride Scholarship is available for the 2015-16 year. The Colorado Pride Scholarship program will replace and expand the former Service Area Scholarship program. LCC is now offering \$1000 to every 2015 high school graduate in the entire state. Students must meet application deadlines and certain exclusions.

Operational Excellence Goal: The financial stability of the system's institutions and the physical safety of its students shall be ensured.



Classroom



Restroom



Student practices welding skills in the established section of the welding shop while waiting for the final inspection and certification of the renovated part of the shop.

CHAMP Welding Program Renovation Update



Water Fountains



New Welding Unit

*COMING TO THE COUNTRY**Two Easterners Move to Lamar*

This is part one of a two-part story

By: Susan Frankel

My husband David and I moved to Lamar three and one-half years ago after he accepted a teaching position at Lamar Community College. We came here from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, where for fifteen years we'd led a pleasant life, swimming in the Atlantic Ocean and attending dinner parties at the Kennedy compound (well, not that last part—our invitations kept getting lost in the mail). In June 2009, in the depths of the recession, our world went a bit pear-shaped when David lost his high school teaching job. A year later I lost my job as well. Thankfully we were both eligible to collect unemployment, which helped keep the wolf from the door—and us in our house—as we hunted for work. David was able to do some adjunct instructing at the local community college, but, though the people were wonderful and he liked the work, they had no full-time openings. I applied for anything remotely within my skill-set, but nothing was forthcoming. So we had to ask ourselves, Now what?

For me, when things aren't going the way I would like, the best thing I can do is help somebody else, so I started volunteering at Habitat for Humanity, as well as job-hunting, attending workforce development classes, and engaging in a slew of other projects, many of them granddaughter-related. Meanwhile, David was adjuncting, sending out resumes, and going to the few interviews that came his way. In 2009, teachers were getting laid off all over the country, and if you had a Ph.D., the standard union contract made you too pricey for most K-12 school districts. Colleges, especially state-supported ones, were making do with adjuncts. It was not an encouraging situation.

After eighteen months and many, many job applications, David was still working part-time, and I was still volunteering. It is a little unsettling to know that you are one of hundreds of people applying for every job. You start to ask yourself and each other a lot of questions. Are we willing to relocate, and if so, where? Do we pack up, sell the house, and hope things will work out? Do we rent out the house just in case we need to move back? Do we dip into savings and try to start a business? Do we join the Peace Corps? (Yes, that was discussed.) But, as with many other unemployed people at the time, everything we tried just kept not working. We were lucky: we had each

other, supportive family and friends, a home, two elderly but still-functioning cars, and food on the table; and, we even had health insurance. But you are conscious, at such times, of the thinness of the thread by which you're hanging. You are also conscious of those for whom the thread has snapped.

Sometime around Christmas, I sent an email to my dear longtime friend Lori, whom I hadn't had contact with for over two years and had not seen in seventeen. I had no idea whether she would receive the email or not; over the course of our friendship, we had lost and found each other many times. A month later, I received a letter—an actual, handwritten one, with an envelope and stamp—saying that six months earlier she had taken a job in La Junta, Colorado. I called her and we talked for hours. I, like most Easterners, assumed that everyone in Colorado lived in the mountains, and although Lori tried to dispel my illusions, I kept picturing her scaling snow-capped peaks.

As we entered the New Year, David continued to apply for jobs nationwide (we celebrated when he mailed his six hundredth resume). In the spring of 2011, LCC called, and he received a webcam interview which, if I remember correctly, had some technical glitches. (Job-hunting tip: if you ever have a webcam interview, make sure the webcam works. Otherwise the conversation becomes strained.) Several weeks later, he was asked to come to Lamar for an in-person interview. He made the final arrangements, and off he flew from Boston.

We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us. —
Attributed to: E.M. Forster

At Denver airport, he rented a car and took the back more easterly route to Lamar, passing through Limon, Kit Carson, and Eads, which, for all he knew, were towns as large as the one to which he was traveling. At one point he called me a little panicked, thinking he might have wandered into one of those post-nuclear-apocalypse movies. He had been sitting for twenty minutes in a silent line of trucks, their ignitions off, in the middle of a treeless no-man's-land. There was no sign of a work crew, and he thought perhaps someone had just given up on the road halfway, had decided there was no point to finishing it. Finally he approached the cab of a

semi, and the driver told him they were fixing a two-lane road, with both sides taking turns waiting for thirty minutes while the opposing traffic used the one functioning lane. In a place where you don't understand the rules, a rational explanation is very precious.

He took photos of Lamar and the surrounding area to share with me, and of course we talked daily as he reported on his encounters and observations. It was interesting to hear him describe his interview and teaching demonstration. Something had happened—something positive. When he talked about the people he'd met at the college, he sounded alive, and I could tell he had respect for them. The landscape was more difficult: he said he felt as if his eyes were being propped open with toothpicks as they tried to take in all that sky. In New England, the horizon feels as if it's a few miles away, and there are trees clustered everywhere to keep you company. Looking at the plains was like looking at a dry ocean. He said it had its own kind of beauty, but for both of us, it was a very new kind of beauty.

He planned to drive back to Denver via Pueblo and Colorado Springs, so that he could take in the sights; he also wanted to see if there was any prospect of my working as a mental health clinician, which pointed him to La Junta, where Southeast Mental Health had its main headquarters. La Junta sounded familiar: didn't it have something to do with Lori? I couldn't find her phone number, but I did find the envelope with her return address, and I called David back and gave it to him. He wanted to stop and visit; I knew she worked during the day, but he thought if he could find her house, he could at least leave a note so that she'd know what we were considering. After spending considerable time at the wrong address—luckily the dogs were fenced up—he located Lori's house on the outskirts of town. Strangely enough, she had taken the morning off for a dental appointment, and was just heading out the door when he pulled into her driveway. They had met once, seventeen years before, but when he introduced himself as "Sue's husband," she claimed to recognize him and invited him in for a cup of tea. Then Lori went on to work, and David went on to the Front Range. A good luncheon place in Pueblo was reason enough for a phone call. Garden of the Gods was reason enough for many phone calls.

(Part two will be published in the April Pronk)

CHAMP Navigator Role

The U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Colorado Helps Advanced Manufacturing Program (CHAMP) grant, which helps to train and prepare workers for welding jobs in the manufacturing industry, has people at the local and state levels who implement the grant's directives. LCC's co-project leads Kelli Gaines and Curtis Turner oversee the grant to insure that we are complying with its mandates, meeting its objectives, and producing its deliverables according to the grant. They are also responsible for curriculum development and for coordinating with other participating colleges and with the program's administrator. An additional duty of the co-project leads is to provide guidance, support, and resources to the CHAMP navigator.

What is a CHAMP navigator? What does the navigator do, and with whom? The CHAMP navigator assumes a variety of duties to help welding students who are working towards stackable certificates or towards an Associate of Applied Science degree. The goal is to help those students become successful in both the academic and the working worlds.

At LCC the navigator synthesizes a host of roles to be able to provide students with comprehensive support tailored to their collective and specific needs. The role is a combination of educational case manager, academic advisor, career counselor, instructor, advocate, coach, and liaison. The navigator is tasked to:

- Work with students to identify their academic and career goals and establish a course of study;
- Work with them, when applicable, on credit for prior learning;
- Provide students with student success and employability skill information and education;
- Help students identify obstacles – whether academic, technological, financial, or personal – and work with them to overcome those obstacles;
- Work with other CHAMP Navigators in the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) to share information and ideas, create discipline-relevant Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), problem-solve, and provide mutual support;
- Document all individual and group interactions with students;
- Track student success;
- Work to establish student internships with area businesses;
- Publish the *Pronghorn Pronk* newsletter; and
- Provide assistance with planning the LCC Career Expo.

In order to accomplish these objectives, the navigator networks with the CHAMP project co-leads, welding instructors, learning support services, resource counselors, workforce center specialists, and industry partners in order to provide a multi-dimensional support system to students who enter and continue in the CHAMP welding program. ■

LCC Events Calendar —March 2015

The wealth of activities and events are too numerous to share in this space.

Please view our full calendar of events at <http://www.lamarcc.edu/calendar/>

LCC Sports: Runnin' Lopes Baseball Lady Lopes Softball Rodeo

5th-7th Runnin' Lopes Basketball Region IX Tournament

Youth basketball

14th 8:00 am —GED testing

16th--22nd Spring Break

26th 10:00 am —Southeast Colorado Power Association Meeting —Wellness Center

28th 8:00 am —GED testing

April Previews

2nd Adam's State University Recruiter

15th Career Expo

"If you think you're too small to make a difference you haven't spent a night with a mosquito."
— *African Proverb*

DOL Disclaimer

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