



South Western Oklahoma Development Authority

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## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Youth Experience Summer of Work Through SWODA WIA Program

"A chance to see what work is all about **and** money in their pocket." - That's what some local youth are experiencing through the South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA) WIA Summer Youth Employment Opportunity. As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (often known as the stimulus package), nearly 40 young people in the eight-county SWODA area will be taking advantage of a summer work experience. Generally between 18 and 24, these youth are working in either a public or private worksite, under supervision, and earning a summer paycheck while learning what employers often call "soft skills." Those are the basics of what is required to be a good employee: being at work on time, taking direction from a supervisor, working with others in a team, and more. In addition, many of these summer workers will also be improving their academic skills through workbooks that deal with on-the-job scenarios.

Two youth, Erica Holiwell and Tevin Smith, are getting their experiences in Hobart. Tevin is taking inventory of all historical memorabilia that is brought into the General Franks Museum, while Erica is helping with clerical work for Elkview Home Health as well as assisting with home health visits. Erica said she is "thankful for the opportunity this program has given me. I'm enjoying working in the health care field and believe this will help me obtain more skills." As often as possible, youth are placed in worksites that relate to their career interests. The youth receives all the benefits stated above, and the employer gets some pre-paid help for the summer.

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*SWODA is one of 11 Councils of Government in the state. SWODA's region of service includes municipalities, counties and conservation districts in Beckham, Custer, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa, Roger Mills and Washita counties. SWODA was created to strengthen the economic and social development of the region through various specialized services such as the following: 911 Administration, Aging Services, Community and Economic Development, Geographic Information Systems, Rural Fire Defense and Workforce Development.*

While the youth summer program only runs through September, there are still opportunities for youth who might be interested in working, and for employers who might have summer work for an interested youth. Claire Woodard, youth coordinator, urges youth or employers to call her at 580-726-5503 or 580-774-4668 for information.

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