

WOODWARD NEWS

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Local employers recognized

Northwestern Electric Cooperative (NVEC) and the Woodward County Health Department were recognized with 2010 Oklahoma Certified Healthy Business Awards recently for promoting health and wellness opportunities.

NVEC received a certificate of recognition and the health department an award of merit for their efforts.

“We hope other businesses and organizations will be encouraged to participate in this program and compete for awards next year,” county health department administrator Terri Salisbury said.

There are 3 award categories. They include certificates of excellence, certificates of merit and certificate awards. Employer types are grouped as education, restaurants, not-for-profit and for-profit. They were broken down by the size of their organizations, ranging from 1 to 25 employees to corporate workplaces of 1,000 or more.

The health department was in the smaller category, with its 12 workers, while the electric cooperative was in the 26 to 100 group with its crew of 51.

Salisbury said participants had to meet specific criteria, including providing health screenings, workplace health and nutrition education, opportunities for physical exercise activities, management support for healthy workplace environments, tobacco use prevention steps and sharing wellness activities with the community.

Rhonda McMakin, human resources administrator at Northwestern Electric, said its staff was definitely active in the wellness program.

“We have annual health screenings, and we asked the employees what they do to have a healthy lifestyle,” McMakin said. “We have a health questionnaire, and we design programs around the answers.”

She said the questionnaire helps make the workers more aware of what they can do for a health program.

“We’re trying to educate the workers,” McMakin said.

Salisbury said some of the county health department’s activities included “Lunch and Learn,” in which the staff brought sack lunches and discussed healthy eating menus, or sometimes, heard from a guest speaker about those topics.

“Until the weather got bad, we took walks during our 15-minute breaks,” she said.

Businesses which want to sign up for the Healthy Business Awards program may go to www.okturningpoint.org, Salisbury said, and she added that Lana Shaffer, located at the Harper County Health Department, is the coordinator for Oklahoma Turning Point and the Healthy Business program in the region served by the health department. Those desiring information may contact her toll-free at (800) 507-5029.

Along with the Turning Point Council, the Woodward Area Coalition and the local health department, the state health department, the Oklahoma Academy and the state Chamber of Commerce also backed the healthy business awards effort.