

## **Partners Help Haulmark Employees with Job Fair**

### **August 28, 2007**

On July 26<sup>th</sup> a meeting was held with Steve Bentson, COO of Universal Trailer; Mayor of Duncan, Gene Brown; Duncan Chamber President, Debra Burch; and President of Duncan Area Economic Development Foundation, Lyle Roggow. The announcement came from Bentson that Haulmark Trailer manufacturing would be closing their Duncan facility September 28<sup>th</sup>.

The reason for the closing was based on the economic softness in sales of trailers nationwide. While everyone attending the meeting was disappointed to hear about the loss of a local manufacturer, there was much to begin preparing for. Haulmark would be laying off almost 100 individuals in the area. At the July 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, the group asked what they could do to assist the company. Bentson's response was centered on helping the employees find new job opportunities. Roggow asked, "Can we hold a career fair at Haulmark for the employees and allow interested companies a chance to interview those employees?" The answer was an absolute "yes".

The Duncan Area Economic Development Foundation (DAEDF) began pulling the local partners of Workforce OK, ASCOG and Red River Technology together. As they started reviewing the needs of other local industries, it was felt that additional training would be beneficial in helping the individual employees become more diversified for other metal fabrication jobs. The employees who were interested in participating in this training would take an assessment test followed by training focused on welding or familiarization in basic machining.

Roggow said, "Boosting their skill levels only helps those individuals become more marketable". DAEDF is coordinating with their local partners to have two job fairs for the Haulmark employees. The first job fair will be held on August 30<sup>th</sup> with 15 companies interviewing and a second job fair will be held on September 14<sup>th</sup> with 12 different companies interviewing.

"Our goal is to see that every Haulmark employee is gainfully employed in the Duncan area," added Christy Dixon, Business and Industry Development Specialist at DAEDF. Roggow was quick to respond, "We could not have this job fair without the great partnership of each community entity involved; it's the true definition of a community rallying to show support for each other".