

A Publication of National Industries for the Blind

OPPORTUNITY

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Meet Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind employee Tram “Jessie” Tran, who sews entrenching tool pouches used by the U.S. military.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

CREATING JOBS IN AMERICA

When you hear the words “Made in America,” what comes to mind?

We know that many businesses think about the benefits of domestic manufacturing and service delivery — greater quality control, lower transit costs and support of the American economy, just to name a few. Many companies, large and small, have already shifted or plan to shift manufacturing back to the United States from overseas locations. The strategy of “onshoring” is gaining momentum.

We also know that consumers think about quality, patriotism, environmental responsibility and the socioeconomic benefits that come with buying products and services from U.S.-based labor. Recent consumer surveys reveal that the vast majority of Americans would buy American-made products to keep jobs in the United States and to keep the U.S. economy strong.

Delivering quality products and services through the AbilityOne® Program is the core of our business — it’s what we’ve done best for more than 75 years. When our federal customers purchase products and services from us, they help create jobs right here in America.

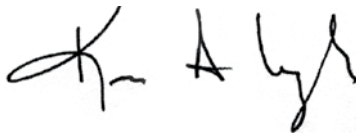
Given continued federal budget reductions and uncertainty, we are also pursuing opportunities outside the AbilityOne

Program to create and sustain employment for people who are blind. We’ve already begun to take the skills and expertise we’ve developed through the AbilityOne Program and apply them to the commercial market, specifically in some of our niche and textile capabilities.

In this issue of *Opportunity*, you’ll read about how NIB and its associated agencies are working to bring jobs back to America by partnering with commercial companies.

Our U.S.-based workforce is just one in a long list of benefits we offer our customers, both government and commercial. Customers also benefit from the value, quality and timely delivery; highly skilled, trained and dedicated employees; and a broad portfolio of product and service capabilities.

All of us at NIB are excited about the revival of American-made and the new opportunities it brings. As we forge new partnerships in private industry, we will also stay focused on maximizing sales through the AbilityOne Program, while creating U.S. jobs along the way.



Kevin A. Lynch
President and
Chief Executive Officer



OPPORTUNITY

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Mary Jane Surrago
Editor

Laura Reimers
Vice President, Communications

Mike Johnson
Communications Program Director

Martha Fassett
Senior Communications Specialist

OPPORTUNITY welcomes news and stories about the careers and capabilities of people who are blind. Contact editor@nib.org.

To add or change a mailing address, contact opportunity@nib.org.

Executive Team:

Kevin A. Lynch
President and Chief Executive Officer

Angela Hartley
Executive Vice President and Chief Program Officer

Steven T. Brice
Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

John Qua
Vice President, Services

Marie-France Vareilles
Vice President, Products

Carrie Laney
Executive Director, New York State
Preferred Source Program for People Who Are Blind



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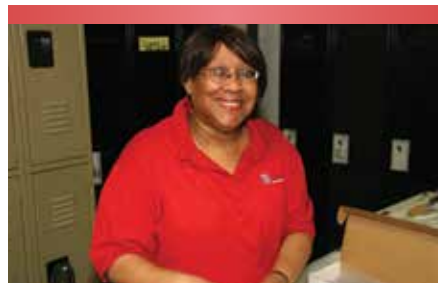
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ABILITYONE CHAMPION

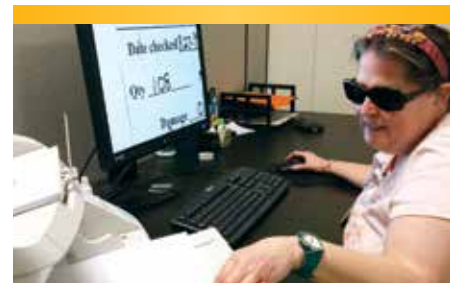
Representative James Lankford (R-OK5) demonstrates support for the AbilityOne® Program.



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LASTING IMPRESSIONS

More than just a print shop, Envision Print delivers quality and service beyond expectations.



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DELIVERING FIRST-CLASS SERVICES

Administrative services support changing business requirements.

ABILITYONE CHAMPION

U.S. Representative James Lankford (R-OK5) channeled his passion for family and country into a career of public service.

A one-time youth camp director, Representative Lankford never imagined he would run for Congress. For more than a decade, he served as director of Falls Creek Youth Camp in Davis, Oklahoma. As the nation's largest youth camp, it is supported by a staff of 150 with more than 51,000 students and adults attending each summer. But in the fall of 2008, "My wife and I sensed a calling to step away from our long ministry with students to join the national conversation on the issues that affect our families and the nation," said Lankford. "I resigned my position in 2009 and ran for Congress."

AbilityOne Advocate

Soon after his election in 2010, Lankford visited NewView Oklahoma and became an avid supporter of the AbilityOne® Program. "I learned about the value of the AbilityOne Program the first time I visited NewView in May of 2011. The commitment to help people who are blind find fulfilling work was evident when I walked in the door," said Lankford. "Not only was it great to see their work, but I also saw one of their finished products [wheel chocks] while traveling to Afghanistan two years ago."

Lankford serves on the House Committee on the Budget as well as the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, where he is chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Health Care and Entitlements. He was elected chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee for the 113th Congress.

Hiring People With Visual Impairments

Despite his very busy schedule, Lankford has returned to NewView several times when the agency held



▲ Representative Lankford holding one of NewView Oklahoma's wheel chocks he spotted in the back of a DC-10 during his trip to Afghanistan in January 2012.

special events. He has also hired qualified people who are visually impaired to work in his congressional offices.

"Our communications director, Kelly Ferguson, who is colorblind, serves as my official spokesperson and handles all of the press inquiries in our Washington office in addition to social media, video editing and website maintenance," said Lankford. "She previously served as legislative correspondent in my office and as an intern for my predecessor."

Mark Ivy, who is losing his peripheral vision, is Congressman Lankford's newest Oklahoma City office intern.

Ivy's strong academic background in organizational communications, customer service skills and keen knowledge of Oklahoma's 5th District made him a good fit for the position.

While serving in Congress, Lankford continues to work diligently on issues facing Congress and has become an AbilityOne Champion for his strong advocacy of the program. "The AbilityOne Program empowers people to find meaningful work in their communities and to feel the success that comes from working and contributing to their family and our community." ■

NIB RECEIVES GRANT FROM MARRIOTT FOUNDATION FOR BUSINESS LEADERS PROGRAM

To support NIB's Business Leaders Program, the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation awarded NIB a \$50,000 grant for fiscal years 2014 and 2015. The Business Leaders Program prepares individuals who are blind for careers in business by providing educational and employment opportunities through five professional development tracks. The grant will support the development of two new projects:

- An entry-level, advance-to-leadership model to be implemented by NIB associated agencies, leading to career advancement of people who are blind through customized replication of the model nationwide.
- A new Leaders At All Levels module to teach skills on how to ensure that an individual's actions are based on complete, balanced information and not on limited assumptions.

The award from the Marriott Foundation is affirmation of NIB's initiatives to enhance business-related employment opportunities and independence of people who are blind. The Foundation – which supports community initiatives related to education, disaster relief, people with disabilities and employment opportunities for youths and young adults – also awarded NIB a grant in 2009. □

NIB NAMES NEW ADVOCATES FOR LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT

NIB's second class of nine Advocates for Leadership and Employment began their term in January 2014, working with NIB's Public Policy team to advance national issues affecting employment in the blindness community, including the impact of budget uncertainty on NIB associated agencies. The Advocates program, which trains employees who are blind from NIB associated agencies on the public policy process and how to effectively engage legislators, is a win-win-win for the employees, the agencies and their communities.

The new group of advocates will build on the success of the inaugural class, who routinely met with elected officials during the past two years. Employees who are blind from NIB associated agencies in the second class of the Advocates for Leadership and Employment program are:

- **Deborah Ambro-Crandell**, customer service representative, Virginia Industries for the Blind, Charlottesville, Virginia
- **Emma Conilogue**, business planning and marketing specialist, Lighthouse Works!, Orlando, Florida
- **Stephanie Davis**, optical customer service representative, Winston-

- Salem Industries for the Blind, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
- **Sean Dobbs**, director of public relations and fund development, Inland Northwest Lighthouse (satellite of The Lighthouse for the Blind Inc.), Spokane, Washington
- **Michael Guajardo**, assistive technology specialist, San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind, San Antonio, Texas
- **Markita Cooper Lane**, regional manager, East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind, Tyler, Texas
- **Steven Ogletree**, general production employee, Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Cincinnati, Ohio
- **Cody Steinfeld**, warehouse employee, Alphapointe, Kansas City, Missouri
- **Pamela Wright**, community access specialist and low vision clinic marketer, NewView Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

"The Advocates for Leadership and Employment program is a very important part of getting our message out to elected officials across the nation," said Kevin Lynch, president and CEO of NIB. □

SAVE THE DATES: 2014 NIB/NAEPB CONFERENCES

NIB and the National Association for the Employment of People Who Are Blind (NAEPB) are making plans to host two conferences this year. The Public Policy Forum enables NIB associated agency leaders and staff to network, communicate with their members of Congress and learn about current

legislative initiatives. The National Conference and Expo includes general sessions featuring government and industry leaders, a vendor fair, and recognition of NIB associated agency Employee of the Year nominees and national award winners.

**2014 NIB/NAEPB
Public Policy Forum
May 20-21, 2014
Westin Arlington Gateway
Arlington, Virginia**

**2014 NIB/NAEPB
National Conference and Expo
October 6-9, 2014
Hyatt Regency Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia**

Check the NIB website for details: www.nib.org/about-us/events.



MAKING IT IN AMERICA

NIB associated agencies have a long history of manufacturing excellence — from traditional janitorial lines to the innovative office supplies and high-tech textiles that give these nonprofits a world-class reputation for excellence.

Manufacturing is the backbone of America and jobs are the foundation of the nation's economy. Americans know how to build and they are among the most productive employees in the world. Over the last few decades, global competitiveness and outsourcing put manufacturing on life support in America. The United States lost millions of jobs with the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 and China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001.

With wages in overseas markets rising significantly, trading closer to the customer is becoming more attractive. Increases in fuel prices due to rising energy costs, and natural disasters and disruptions in recent years, have affected global supply chains, causing

companies to rethink their product sources. There is now a buzz about U.S. manufacturing's comeback. American manufacturers are adding to their payrolls and creating economic growth across the nation. "Some companies are realizing the geographic proximity to customers and supply chains; a productive workforce; logistics; and reasonable transportation, labor and logistics costs make it possible to be competitive with companies that have overseas locations," said Kevin Lynch, NIB's president and CEO.

Buying Close to Home

Besides creating jobs in the United States, there are many other reasons to buy American-made products. American manufacturers must abide by strict regulations to protect the environment.

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MAKING IT IN AMERICA

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▼ Tommy Mack, molding machine packer for Saunders Manufacturing's plastic storage clipboards made at LC Industries' Hazlehurst, Mississippi, plant.



Workplace standards prevent labor abuses. Products produced close to the customer eliminate the use of large amounts of petroleum and unnecessary emissions to ship products and reduce the risk of supply chain disruption of critical items.

Products made in NIB associated agencies support America's economy, not only with their employees spending money on goods and services, but also with these employees paying taxes on the wages earned. In many cases, the components and raw materials are also produced in the United States. This is particularly true for textiles, bedding, paper, injection-molded plastics, chemicals and other cleaning products.

Exhibiting know-how and innovation, many NIB associated agencies are partnering with companies that want American-made products for the superior quality, faster turnaround time and quality assurance. Overseas labor and transportation costs are rising, creating more demand for vendors to look for domestic sources.

Bringing Jobs Back to America

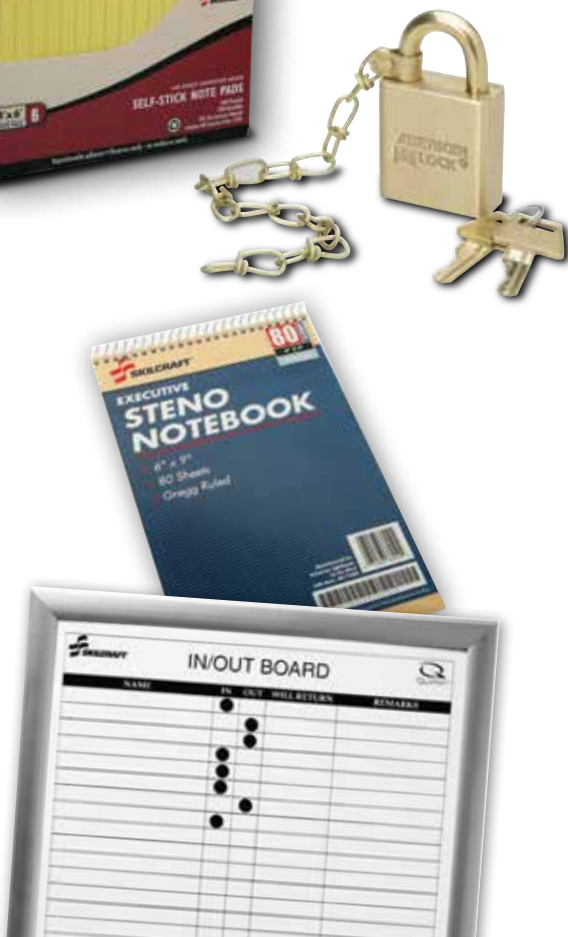
Saunders Manufacturing is one of those companies. Based in Readfield, Maine, Saunders' goal is to provide more products in the United States to support America's industrial base and job creation. A few years ago, the company began reshoring its plastic manufacturing process from China to the United States by partnering with LC Industries, an NIB associated agency headquartered in Durham, North Carolina. With plastic injection molds provided by Saunders, LC Industries' plant in Hazlehurst, Mississippi, makes all the components for the Saunders plastic storage clipboard line, including the DeskMate™, SlimMate™ and other portable clipboards, which are on the AbilityOne® Program Procurement List.

In another innovative partnership, LC Industries approached Master Lock

Company, an iconic American brand recognized around the world. For some time, LC Industries was selling a variety of Master Lock's padlocks in its base supply centers. When learning that one of Master Lock's solid steel padlock components was made in Milwaukee, but then shipped to Mexico for assembly, LC Industries approached Master Lock about assembling one of the high-demand padlocks for sale in LC Industries' base supply centers.

"We saw the ability for us to create jobs for people who are blind in a product we already sold in our stores," said DuWayne Gilbertson, vice president, business development at LC Industries. Since that time, LC Industries worked with NIB to add padlocks to the Procurement List. LC Industries now offers 36 different types of solid body steel and solid brass padlocks, in various sizes, and with different keying options. "It is a win-win scenario for everyone. The Defense Logistics Agency and Master Lock are thrilled that the padlocks are produced in the USA, and LC Industries creates more jobs for people who are blind," Gilbertson added.

When NIB connected The Lighthouse for the Blind Inc. in Seattle, Washington, with ACCO Brands, one of the world's largest manufacturers of branded office products, the Lighthouse opened a new satellite facility in Spokane to provide employment to residents in eastern Washington. ACCO was making their Quartet® dry erase and cork wallboards in Mexico, and then China, which meant ACCO would no longer be providing this product in compliance with the Trade Agreements Act. Rather than lose this business with the federal government, ACCO partnered with the Lighthouse to grow it, while bringing jobs back to the United States. When the facility in Spokane opened in 2008, six people who are blind were hired. Today, this facility employs more than 40 people



who are blind, deaf-blind or blind with disabilities making Quartet/SKILCRAFT® dry-erase and cork wallboards.

Long-Time American Suppliers

LC Industries is also a long-time supplier of plastic and biobased plastic flatware to the federal government. Its performance as a reliable supplier was tested in 1990 and 1991 during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm when LC Industries and several other NIB associated agencies produced and packaged hundreds of millions of plastic knives, forks and spoons for the military. These agencies operated seven days a week, 24 hours a day for several months to meet the demand. When the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were in full swing, LC Industries' Hazlehurst, Mississippi, plant was producing 2.2 billion pieces a year for the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration and military commissaries. That demand has declined significantly with the drawdown of American troops in the Middle East.

Alphapointe in Kansas City, Missouri, is another major producer of plastic injection-molded products, making more than 50 million prescription bottles a year. A long-time supplier to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Alphapointe has been manufacturing specimen containers, spray bottles and prescription bottles since the late 1990s for the VA's seven Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy locations in the United States. Alphapointe employees perform all aspects of the many processes to support production, including quality control, customer service, warehousing and shipping.

Perhaps one of the most experienced producers of American-made mattresses is Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB). Since 1925, VIB has been making mattresses and procuring its raw materials from American-based companies. Binding

tape comes from Bo-Buck Mills in South Carolina. Cotton materials are supplied by Jones Fiber Products, based in Tennessee. Eddington Thread Manufacturing Company in Pennsylvania and American and Effert, headquartered in North Carolina, provide the thread. Pennsylvania-based Herculite supplies the vinyl materials.

The end product is 100 percent made in the USA. VIB produces one-third of the U.S. Navy's shipboard mattresses, which make up almost 10 percent of VIB's sales and provide employment to 12 people. Mattresses that are used on Navy ships are also made at NIB associated agencies in Durham and Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

For decades, VIB and Mississippi Industries for the Blind (MIB) in Jackson have been supplying replacement cotton mop heads. VIB procures mop yarn from Jones Yarn Company in Tennessee. There are several sewing steps involved before winding the cotton into a mop head, and employees make both tangle-free and loop-ended mops.

"Brooms and mops were a staple product for NIB associated agencies many decades ago," said Michael Chew, executive director of MIB. "When the NAFTA came into force 20 years ago, it hit us hard as a significant amount of our business went to factories in Mexico and China." To sustain jobs at MIB, the company transitioned into making sponges that are sold to the General Services Administration and in military commissaries. Raw materials come in large 41-inch square and 18-inch thick sheets, supplied by 3M Company's New York or Ohio plants. MIB employees cut the sponges into layers. These layers are moved to die press machines where the sponges are cut to size. Some are simply packaged, while others are compressed before being packaged.



▲
Walter Gainwell, lead employee in the sponge department at Mississippi Industries for the Blind in Jackson. Gainwell was MIB's 2012 Employee of the Year and promoted to this position in 2013.

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MAKING IT IN AMERICA

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A laminate scrubber sheet is added for another type of the many sizes and varieties offered in this product line.

Equipping America's Warfighters

The Department of Defense (DoD) has long been a procurer of American-made products because the Berry Amendment requires DoD to give preference in procuring domestically made products and components of those products to ensure a reliable supply chain of mission-critical products in times of war. Helmet accessories, combat and T-shirts, outerwear, belts and other sewn products

are made in NIB associated agencies by experienced sewing operators and sold to the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines.

One of the more unique products is the entrenching tool pouch procured by the DLA. Depending on order quantities, the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind (DLB) in Texas runs a 35-station line with experienced sewing machine operators to make the fabric pouches. DLB is the only producer among the NIB agencies that manufacture these pouches, and many of DLB's sewers are cross-trained on the different

ALL-AMERICAN TEAM SPIRIT

Shannon Wilder is an all-American — at work and at play.

Shannon Wilder enjoyed a successful career as a project manager in the construction industry when declining vision forced him to find other means to support his family. Diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa in 2007, Wilder transitioned into another career at Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB). He became proficient in all aspects of producing mattresses, which are used on Navy ships, in correctional institutions and in college dorms.

Using his project management background, Wilder often devises more efficient ways of handling production and demonstrates leadership skills to get the job done, while also being a team player. As a result, he was trained as an internal auditor to help maintain VIB's ISO 9001 certification. Wilder is also working on the Quality Work Environment initiative as part of VIB's new strategic plan and was chosen to be an Employment Practices Implementation Committee member.

Today, Wilder is a team leader in order fulfillment at VIB. His accomplishments earned him designation as VIB's 2013 Employee of the Year. "I have been

a hardworking, dedicated employee my whole life," said Wilder. "After being home for some time as a result of my vision loss, VIB has given me the opportunity to be engaged and challenged each and every day."

When he is not front and center on the production floor at VIB, Wilder can be found coaching baseball. Involved in youth sports and managing baseball teams since 1999, Wilder has been president of the Lane Babe Ruth League of Charlottesville since 2006. "While I work hard to teach the fundamentals of the game to the younger players and the finer points to the older players, my focus is to help them develop as individuals," said Wilder. "It is very satisfying for me to be involved in their growth."

Still, he is surprisingly modest about his accomplishments. "At this point in my life, my goals are rather simple," said Wilder. "To be challenged each and every day, take pride in my work, but most importantly, spend quality time with my wife, Laurel, and my two sons." ▣



Shannon Wilder, team leader, order fulfillment, Virginia Industries for the Blind in Charlottesville.

operations. Sewing operator Tram “Jessie” Tran is one of those employees who takes great pride in the quality of her work. “I have worked approximately five years in the sewing department and can do virtually all of the sewing operations for the entrenching tool pouch. The cross-training that was provided to me was most helpful,” said Tran. “The station that I enjoy the most is the “closing operation.”

New Alliances

MidWest Enterprises for the Blind (MWEB) in Kalamazoo, Michigan, developed an alliance with Iceberg, a manufacturer of blow-molded tables. Based in Des Plaines, Illinois, Iceberg is one of the largest producers of resin folding tables in the United States. Iceberg’s manufacturing facility in Sturgis, Michigan, blow molds high-density polyethylene tabletops, which are then shipped to MWEB where employees assemble the tables and ship to GSA’s furniture center. “We are very pleased with the business relationship we’ve developed with Iceberg. They have been instrumental in making this new product line successful through their assistance in setting up production lines, establishing appropriate quality control processes and work instructions, as well as training manufacturing and quality personnel. As a supplier, they always provide on-time delivery of material components, and willingly expedite delivery when necessary,” said Karen Walls, president and CEO. “MWEB is very proud to offer our customers a quality product that’s made in the USA.”

New Products

Care is also given, whenever possible, to ensure that newer products made in NIB associated agencies are 100 percent American-made. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) safety vest line is made by employees at the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind (DLB) in Texas and Bestwork Industries for the Blind in Runnemede, New Jersey. The vests are designed for use by airport ground, roadway construction, survey, utility

and emergency response personnel. 3M™ Scotchlite™ reflective material provides enhanced visibility in low-light conditions and at night and meets new ANSI standards. While there are many competing products made overseas, these vests are 100 percent made in the United States. The mesh is provided by Bruin Plastics in Rhode Island and reflective materials are supplied by 3M Company. DLB’s production line includes up to 20 people at a time who cut, sew and package different classes of vests in various sizes for shipment to the General Services Administration. Employees are cross-trained on the operations so that production lines can be adjusted with the volume of orders.

“We are happy to have this business to create jobs for people who are blind,” said Nancy Perkins, DLB president and CEO. “As more federal agencies realize that these vests are 100 percent made in America, we expect that the DLB will expand this product line.”

After decades of erosion of the American manufacturing base, there is now a resurgence because overseas wages and distribution costs are rising. Manufacturing is a critical component of the economy and Americans’ renewed interest in it may create more opportunities for NIB to partner with more small businesses and large corporations. Proximity to customers and supply chains, exceptional quality and highly skilled and productive employees make NIB associated agencies attractive partners for American businesses interested in bringing jobs back to America. ■

Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind employee Tram “Jessie” Tran sews entrenching tool pouches for the military. ▼



LASTING IMPRESSIONS

From business cards to annual reports, Envision Print creates lasting impressions for government and commercial customers.



▲ Jamie Musson works a printing press at Envision Print.

"Our reputation for superior customer service sets us apart from others in this business." - Mike Montana, senior vice president, strategic business development, Envision

The constant hum of printing presses is music to the ears of the employees of Envision Print, a division of Envision Inc., located in Wichita, Kansas. Equipped with low to high volume, black and white and color printers, as well as a variety of machines to emboss, cut, trim, stack, slit and crease paper, Envision Print is a full-service turnkey solution for printing, print management, mailing and information distribution.

Established in 1997, Envision Print has grown in size and scope. Today, it is housed in a 10,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility that operates five days a week, 24 hours a day. Hours of operation can be expanded to seven days a week to meet production schedules. Envision Print

is an ISO 9001:2008 compliant entity, having received its certificate of registration in 2010. The certification recognizes that Envision Print's policies, practices and procedures ensure consistent quality in the services and printing provided to customers.

Employees handle all aspects of the business from graphic design, to setting up the order, operating the printing machines, Brailleing, cutting, binding, warehousing, packing and shipping the final product.

Exceptional Quality and Service

Last year, Envision Print generated \$2 million in sales for Envision. One of the larger projects is business cards, with employees printing almost 2 million



Envision Print ▼ business cards.

▼ Envision Print employee Russell Romine assembles promotional buttons.



▲ David Thomas binds a printed piece at Envision Print.

cards each month and generating \$1.3 million in annual sales through the AbilityOne® Program. Envision Print's online ordering site allows customers to quickly and easily create business card proofs from thousands of card templates, or upload their own designs and place orders in just minutes.

While its biggest customers are the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice, Envision Print also serves the Internal Revenue Service; the Environmental Protection Agency; the General Services Administration; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; Small Business Administration; and the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Labor, Interior, Transportation, Treasury, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services. Envision Print's excellence in customer service has been acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which named the company the AbilityOne Contractor of the Year in 2009, 2010 and 2011 for providing outstanding support and service.

More Than Just Printing

Although business cards are Envision Print's bread and butter, it also specializes in color brochures, annual reports, price sheets, direct mail flyers and scanning and archiving documents. Envision Print's national and international mailing services provide fulfillment services for government and commercial customers. And customer service team members handle graphic design, answer inquiries and provide personal attention to orders.

"At Envision, we believe we can continue to grow our printing division to expand job opportunities for people who are blind or have low vision," said Mike Montana, senior vice president, strategic business development at Envision. "Our reputation for superior customer service sets us apart from others in this business." □

A SHINING EXAMPLE

Envision Print's Regina Henderson loves working with customers.



▼
Regina Henderson, sales support representative at Envision Print.

Talk to Regina Henderson over the phone and you aren't likely to forget the experience. She exudes energy, confidence and enthusiasm. And if you are the type of person who likes to chat to a "live" person when placing an order or resolving an issue, you've come to the right place at Envision Print. Henderson is a shining example of what customer service is all about. "The best thing about my job is the people — both my colleagues and our customers," said Henderson. "I am a 'people' person, and I enjoy getting to know my customers."

Having low vision since birth, Henderson has been with Envision on and off since 1990. Starting as a receptionist, she left that position to work for a bank. She returned to Envision as assistant to the director of rehabilitation and was promoted to activities of daily living (ADL) trainer in the rehabilitation department. She then took an opportunity to work for eight doctors in a local vision rehabilitation center, handling patient scheduling and charting. When Envision entered the printing business in 1997, Henderson decided to take

on the challenge of running one of Envision's retail print stores. She has been with Envision ever since.

Today, Henderson is a key member of the Envision Print team serving as a sales support representative. With 15 years' experience in the commercial printing business field, she is looking forward to a long career at Envision. She researches and writes proposals for government contracts, works with large commercial customers and assists customers with placing orders for printing and fulfillment.

When she is not at Envision Print, Henderson spends time on her original love — music. Having majored in music education in college, Henderson is an accomplished singer. She performs solos at various events, is part of the church choir, and enjoys coaching and judging a middle school science Olympiad team.

She and her husband celebrated their silver wedding anniversary last year. Their daughter is majoring in chemistry and art at Wichita State University. □



▲
Medical transcription department at The Lighthouse of Houston in Texas.

DELIVERING FIRST-CLASS SERVICES

NIB administrative services support changing business requirements — keeping both government and commercial operations running smoothly.

While NIB and its network of associated agencies are generally known for producing SKILCRAFT® and other products through the AbilityOne® Program, the delivery of business services is a growth area that serves customers in both government and commercial markets, providing new career opportunities for people who are blind. In fact, NIB associated agencies increased sales in the services sector by 15 percent in fiscal year 2013, supporting customers through Contract

Management Support, contact center operations, supply chain services and administrative service offerings.

Providing Information When and Where Needed

Generally working behind the scenes, staff who provide administrative services keep business operations humming, reduce the use of paper, transmit vital information, and ensure system accessibility. Employees who are blind at NIB associated agencies — well-trained, experienced, reliable and flexible — support customers' ever-changing business needs with a broad array of secure administrative services such as:

- Medical and legal transcription
- Document management services
- Mailroom operations
- Section 508 Assurance services
- Office administration and clerical services
- Data entry

Advances in computer and adaptive technology have made it possible for people who are blind to successfully build their careers in new directions, including the delivery of administrative services.

Transcribing Essential Medical and Legal Details

Most people who are blind seeking careers in medical transcription are trained, either onsite or online, by The Lighthouse of Houston in Texas, which has equipped people who are blind for transcription careers since 1973. The field demands that medical transcriptionists be highly skilled, with strong attention to detail and knowledge of medical terminology, to prepare precise and accurate medical documents.

Medical transcriptionists listen to dictated recordings made by physicians and other healthcare professionals and transcribe them into medical reports and correspondence, while editing for grammar and clarity. Using this transcribed information, transcriptionists produce physical examination reports, medical histories, operation summaries, consultation reports, discharge summaries, diagnostic imaging studies and autopsy reports.

The Lighthouse provides medical transcription services for U.S. military and Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities, as well as for other government agencies and private sector and university medical centers.

New technologies have enabled many transcriptionists to telework from locations nationwide, using an internet-based capability to receive voice files to be transcribed and to produce electronic documentation shared among providers, third-party payers, regulators and health information systems.

Some transcriptionists also work in the legal field, listening to recordings of court proceedings to produce reports for attorneys and judicial staff.

Converting Paper Files to Electronic Documents

Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind (CLB) in Washington, D.C., and Arizona Industries for the Blind (AIB) in Phoenix are among NIB's associated agencies providing Section 508 Assurance services to customers to scan documents, reduce ever-increasing piles of paper and enhance efficiency of business operations by making electronic information readily accessible.

To create electronic files, employees who are blind first review and take inventory of what paper documents must be converted, preparing documents for scanning by removing staples, post-it notes and other attached materials, then running the documents through a scanner. The scanned electronic documents are then indexed, and loaded onto a hard drive to be accessible by all users.

NIB is a schedule holder on the General Services Administration's Office Imaging and Document Solutions Schedule 36, which enables federal customers to efficiently procure document management services. Both CLB and AIB hold contracts with federal government customers and AIB also provides document management services for Arizona state agencies.

Facilitating Efficient Mailroom Operations

NewView Oklahoma in Oklahoma City is the prime contractor for the U.S. Navy



▲ Filomon Rosa works in Business Services at Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind, one of NIB's associated agencies providing Section 508 Assurance services.



▲ Greg Ambeau is a document handler in Arizona Industries for the Blind's Digital Data Scan Unit.



▲ Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind staff work as a team to conduct Section 508 services.

Commander, Fleet and Industrial Supply Centers (COMFISCS) Nationwide Consolidated Mail Management Support Services contract. NewView manages the operation of six U.S. Navy mail centers in the eastern United States, creating positions for 27 people who are blind.

Under the contract, employees use adaptive technology to handle all aspects of the mail — receiving letters and packages, performing screening and running mail routes — with the exception of driving. Additionally, these employees provide essential cost savings to the U.S. Navy by consolidating and optimizing outgoing mail.

Ensuring System and Website Accessibility

NIB offers Section 508 Assurance services to address software, systems and website accessibility and usability conformance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the web content accessibility guidelines.

Many government and commercial customers are requesting contractor support to perform Section 508 services and NIB has surveyed its associated agencies to determine staff capabilities. Twenty of NIB's 93 agencies are staffed to perform Section 508 testing, reporting and remediation at various levels.

Under new Section 508 contracts in FY 2013, Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind provides testing as a subcontractor to two large information technology integrators for the Department of Veterans Affairs and Transportation Security Administration.

By gaining experience in delivering Section 508 services, some NIB associated agency employees have accepted employment offers with private-sector employers. ▣

THE NATURAL

Optical customer service representative **Stephanie Davis** brightens up the day for customers and co-workers alike.



▲ Stephanie Davis, optical customer service representative, Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind in North Carolina.

Early in life, Stephanie Davis' family called her a "chatter box." The nickname was a fitting one, considering her love of interacting with people. Little did they know at the time that she would adapt these skills as an adult to become a successful customer service representative at Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind (WSIFB).

As a teenager, Davis learned valuable organizational skills and became independent at an early age. "When both of your parents are blind, you grow up fast," said Davis, who selected her own clothes, prepared meals, kept schedules and made other preparations for the day on her own, as her parents went off early to work each day. In high school, she took advantage of computer and keyboarding classes. Davis did not have the convenience of hand-held assistive technology devices that are available today, so she transported her huge closed-circuit television and large print books from class to class on a cart.

All-Star Employee

Davis has been with WSIFB since 2005, starting as a sewing machine operator — an early work experience that instilled a great deal of confidence in her. She worked in the Army Combat Uniform, Army Physical Fitness Uniform and Navy Fleece departments as a skilled operator. In 2008, Davis

began filling in as the front desk switchboard operator, as well as the receptionist in the optical dispensary. From there, she landed her current position as an optical customer service representative, where she puts her winning smile and well-developed communication skills to work. As a customer service representative, Davis responds to inquiries from 27 Department of Veterans Affairs locations across the country on a daily basis, a function that was previously handled by three representatives.

"Watching some of my peers move into management positions continues to motivate me to challenge myself to achieve more," said Davis. "I am so grateful to WSIFB for offering me more challenging opportunities and taking chances on me, regardless of my experience." She is hoping to someday advance into a management position in the organization.

A "Can Do" Attitude

Davis attributes some of her success to the experience of participating in WSIFB's Toastmasters club, where she learned to project her voice and speak with confidence. She also participates in the Forsyth Blind Bowlers League and WSIFB sports activities.

Last year, Davis was nominated by WSIFB for NIB's Milton J. Samuelson Career Achievement Award. She was among the few nominees who were selected for the Employee of the Year Showcase during the NIB/NAEPB National Conference and Expo in October 2013. Totally at ease and comfortable speaking before hundreds of people, Davis shared her experiences and achievements, ending her remarks by tossing her hat up in the air just as Mary Tyler Moore did in her 1970s television series. □

"I am so grateful to WSIFB for offering me more challenging opportunities and taking chances on me, regardless of my experience."

ASSOCIATED AGENCIES HONORED BY CUSTOMERS, COMMUNITIES



Arizona Industries for the Blind (AIB) received the 2013 Outstanding AbilityOne® Program Vendor Award from the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). Presented to organizations that exemplify overall excellence in product quality, on-time delivery, customer service, dependability and accuracy, AIB was recognized for its partnership with DLA. AIB provides warehousing and distribution services for four federal stock classes (insignia, springs, lighting and bushings/shims) to America's military forces worldwide.

Georgia Industries for the Blind (GIB) was honored with the State Labor

Commissioner's Cup Safety Award for 2013, the state's top workplace safety award. As one of six organizations recognized for achievement in workplace health and safety, GIB has successfully implemented sound safety processes, training employees to focus on personal safety and the safety of fellow team members.

Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind (CLB) received the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services' (DORS) 2013 Excellence in Partnership Award, for outstanding creativity and innovation in providing services to people with disabilities.



▲ Pictured left to right: Vice Admiral Mark D. Harnitchek, director of the Defense Logistics Agency, presents 2013 Outstanding AbilityOne Program Vendor Award to Arizona Industries for the Blind (AIB); the award was accepted by Tim Adams, AIB distribution services manager.

◀ Kevin Kelley, executive director, Georgia Industries for the Blind (GIB), pictured at center holding award, and Mark Butler, commissioner, Georgia Department of Labor, pictured on far right, with GIB employees (left to right): Dennis Talley, David Iddens, Angie Monson, Mike Harrell, Willie Moody, Rosalina Moody, Teresa Roberts, John Roberts and Mike Jackson.

CLB, in partnership with DORS, has expanded its constituency and service area to include the entire state of Maryland and people who are deaf-blind, offering core services of employment training, independent living skills, and orientation and mobility.

Bosma Enterprises received the 2013 Employment Award from the Indianapolis Mayor's Advisory Council on Disabilities. The award recognizes organizations that demonstrate extraordinary commitment to training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. ▣

NIB REACHES OUT TO WOUNDED WARRIORS

The NIB Wounded Warrior Program provides one-on-one support to wounded veterans at military hospitals and at military job fairs, sharing information about training, internships and job opportunities at NIB and its network of associated agencies. At the 68th National Convention of the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) in 2013, NIB staff participated in Operation Peer Support, visiting with blinded veterans of every

conflict from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Inland Northwest Lighthouse in Spokane (satellite of The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. in Seattle) exhibited at the conference and hosted an agency tour for visitors to observe the manufacture of wall boards and hanging file folders. ▣



▲ Pictured left to right at the Blinded Veterans Association conference: Mark Wilson, U.S. Army veteran; Ned Rupp, veterans affairs specialist, NIB; Chris Rader, U.S. Marine Corps veteran; Laura Russell, executive assistant, NIB.

NIB AWARDS 2013 ROEDER SCHOLARSHIP

Graduate student Philip So was named the 2013 recipient of the Joseph Roeder Assistive Technology Scholarship, a \$2,500 grant awarded by NIB.

The annual scholarship is awarded to an individual who is blind; interested in pursuing education in computer science, information systems or a related field; and pursuing a career in access technology. The

scholarship is named in memory of Joe Roeder, who served as senior access technology specialist at NIB from 1997 until his death in 2010.

So is pursuing a master's degree in computing in education at Columbia University in New York City. As a research analyst at GfK, a user-experience research firm that advises Fortune 500 companies, So collaborated with IBM on its

statistics software to make it more accessible to people who are blind.

"My aspiration is to play a leading role in helping unlock the ability of every individual by harnessing the power of technology and the determination of our human spirit," said So. "With a bit more creativity and boldness, one day, we can enable all Americans of diverse abilities to fully unleash their potential." ▣

MEDIA COVERAGE RAISES AWARENESS OF CAPABILITIES OF PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND

NIB and many of its associated agencies have been featured in a variety of publications recently, supporting NIB's education campaign to raise awareness about the capabilities of people who are blind.

The final edition of **MarkeTips** magazine, published by the General Services Administration in the fall of 2013, focused on "AbilityOne - It Works!" The magazine is distributed to federal acquisition specialists and procurement professionals. NIB worked closely with the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® and SourceAmerica™ to highlight the capabilities of individuals employed through the AbilityOne® Program and the products and services provided to government customers.

Also published in the fall was **AbilityOne** magazine, the Commission's annual publication that coincides with National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, distributed to federal government customers.

NIB secured an article in the American Foundation for the Blind's **Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness**. The op-ed from NIB President and CEO Kevin Lynch is

in the November/December special issue on transition and employment. The "Survey Reveals Myths and Misconceptions Abundant Among Hiring Managers About the Capabilities of People Who Are Visually Impaired" article addresses NIB's hiring manager survey conducted in 2012.

NIB and The Carroll Center for the Blind in Newton, Massachusetts, were highlighted in a story in **The Associated Press** (AP) about the challenges people who are blind face in finding jobs. NIB also worked with the North American Precis Syndicate (NAPS) news service on the "People Who Are Blind Equip the Military" article, describing the

contributions people who are blind make to both the U.S. economy and armed forces. Both the AP and NAPS stories resulted in widespread media coverage nationwide.

An article in the November/December 2013 issue of the Veterans Administration's (VA) **Supply Chain News** focuses on how NIB and its network of associated agencies deliver mission-critical items to the VA, as well as how to purchase AbilityOne products and services through mandatory blanket ordering agreements. The newsletter is distributed to all of the VA's logisticians. ▣




SINGAPORE VISITORS LEARN ABOUT ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AT NIB

Delegates from the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore and Singapore's Ministry of Social and Family Development met with U.S. AbilityOne Commission®, NIB and SourceAmerica™ staff in October 2013 at the Commission's Arlington, Virginia, office.


The Singapore visitors learned about the history and structure of the AbilityOne® Program and how the integration of assistive technology is a crucial part of the AbilityOne product and service development process.

NIB's Doug Goist, accessible technology program manager, shared with the five Singapore delegates how technology is becoming a great equalizer in

employment for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities. At NIB's Alexandria, Virginia, headquarters, they participated in a hands-on assistive technology demonstration with Goist, who is blind, and Nghia Nguyen, NIB technical support specialist – assistive technology.

The guests also visited NIB's Customer Care Center to observe how agents use assistive software and hardware tools in the professional call center setting. They departed with new insights about how Singapore might also use a diverse selection of assistive and adaptive technology tools to help provide economic and personal independence for Singaporeans who are blind. 




Doug Goist, NIB accessible technology program manager, demonstrates assistive technology for Singapore visitors. 

THE CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE MANAGES ILLINOIS TOLLWAY CALL CENTER

The state-of-the-art Illinois Tollway Call Center, located on the University of Illinois at Chicago campus, is being managed by The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, providing critical employment opportunities for individuals who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise disabled. The call center enables

the Tollway to better serve its I-PASS customers with personalized, one-on-one assistance when they need help with their accounts.

Lighthouse President Dr. Janet Szlyk joined Congressman Danny Davis (D-IL7) and other guests in cutting the ribbon to the new facility in a dedication

ceremony November 5, 2013. Dr. Szlyk thanked Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and Tollway officials for their vote of confidence in the Lighthouse. Marcin Okreglak, who is visually impaired and employed in the call center's mailroom, addressed attendees and thanked Dr. Szlyk and the Tollway for giving him this opportunity. 

HOUSE MEMBERS RECOGNIZE NIB IN CONGRESSIONAL SPEECHES

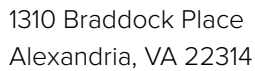
Before leaving for holiday recess in December 2013, several U.S. House of Representatives members made statements from the House floor to recognize NIB's 75th anniversary in 2013 and the work of its associated agencies in their respective districts.

These members of Congress are:

- **Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC5)** – Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind Inc.
- **Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX1)** – East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind

- **Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX30)** – Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind Inc.
- **Rep. James Lankford (R-OK5)** – NewView Oklahoma Inc.
- **Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-NC10)** – Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind Inc. (Asheville facility)
- **Rep. Lee Terry (R-NE2)** – Outlook Nebraska Inc.
- **Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV1)** – Blind Center of Nevada Inc.

View the speeches on NIB's YouTube page:
www.youtube.com/NatIndBlind1938.



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