

# OPPORTUNITY

Volume 8 | Issue 2 | Spring 2015



PAGE 6

## Closing Contracts, Changing Lives

The CMS Program Celebrates Five Years

PAGE 4

Paying it Forward  
NIB Welcomes a  
New Board Chairman

PAGE 10

Celebrating the Past,  
Embracing the Future  
Bosma Enterprises is  
Ready for its Next Century

PAGE 13

NIB Launches Video,  
Social Media Campaign  
New Tools Highlight  
Mission and Capabilities

NEXT PAGE

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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# DELIVERING THE AMERICAN DREAM

Opportunities to make a living, raise a family and contribute to a community are all integral parts of the American Dream. At NIB, our mission helps people who are blind attain the American Dream by providing meaningful employment.

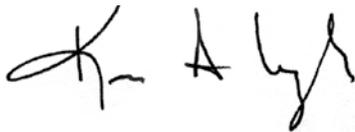
Our name – National *Industries* for the Blind – brings to mind our proud history of working to cultivate manufacturing jobs for people who are blind. Today, as the United States moves from a manufacturing economy to a services economy, NIB is right in step, continually working to develop new career tracks that give people who are blind an opportunity to build skills highly valued in a service economy.

The Contract Management Support Services (CMS) program in this issue's cover story is a prime example of the work NIB is doing to create employment opportunities in the services sector. The CMS program enables people who are blind to perform vital services for the Department of Defense, preparing contracts for close-out by not only assembling and reviewing required documents, but by analyzing contract provisions and performance to ensure the military has received value for every tax dollar spent.

For the Department of Defense, the return on investment has been great: to date, employees of the program have processed more than \$830 million of de-obligated funds through the procurement system.

This year, as the program celebrates its fifth anniversary, demand for CMS services continues to grow. Employees with these sought-after skills are being hired from NIB associated agencies by federal employers that provide upwardly mobile, career-track positions – a sure sign of the program's success and exactly the result we at NIB like to see.

As the U.S. economy expands and changes, NIB will continue to develop new training and employment programs to provide people who are blind with the skills valued in today's competitive global economy, and to help them achieve the American Dream.



Kevin A. Lynch  
President and  
Chief Executive Officer



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## OPPORTUNITY

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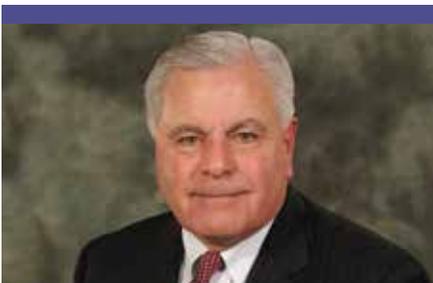
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## 6

### CLOSING CONTRACTS, CHANGING LIVES

NIB's Contract Management Support Services program celebrates five years of preparing people who are blind for upwardly mobile careers.



## 4

### PAYING IT FORWARD

NIB's new chairman of the board, Lou Jablonski, shares his enthusiasm for NIB and his personal desire to "pay it forward" with service to others.



## 10

### CELEBRATING THE PAST, EMBRACING THE FUTURE

After 100 years and tens of thousands of clients, Bosma Enterprises is poised for its next century.



## 13

### NIB LAUNCHES VIDEO, SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

New tools tell the story of the mission and capabilities of NIB and its associated agencies.

## 02 LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Delivering the American Dream

## 05 CHARGING THE HILL

NIB's Public Policy Team is working hard to help associated agencies tap into the energy on Capitol Hill.

## 14 NIB HEADS EAST

Representatives from NIB pursue exciting opportunities for partnerships in South Korea.

## 16 READY TO LAUNCH

NIB associated agencies introduce and update AbilityOne® products.

## 18 NEWS & NOTES

- Applications for Roeder Scholarship Now Available
- Boeing Signs Three-year Agreement Supporting NIB and AbilityOne
- NIB Explores New Avenue for Professional Careers
- DLA Names NIB a Superior Supplier
- NIB Recognizes DeCA for Product List Additions
- Defense Acquisition University Teams Up with AbilityOne

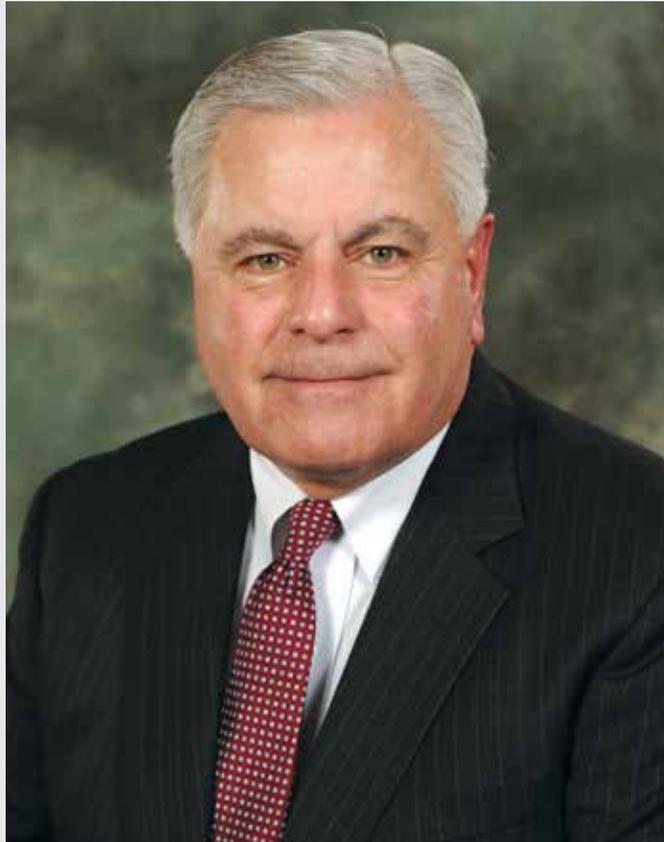
# PAYING IT FORWARD

**NIB's new chairman of the board, Lou Jablonski, shares his enthusiasm for NIB and his personal desire to "pay it forward" with service to others.**

BY MARY JANE SURRAGO

Lou Jablonski loves being in charge — not for the sake of power, but for the meaningful and purposeful impact he can create. For him, being elected the new chairman of NIB's Board of Directors is all about his ability to serve others.

Jablonski's passion for service stems from the great adversity his family overcame when his son, Peter, needed a kidney transplant in 2000. After regaining his health, Peter started raising funds for the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) and soon, the whole family was involved. Jablonski felt a strong need to not only embrace the effort by joining the NKF Board in 2012, but to lead by chairing the organization's largest single fundraising event, the 2014 New York City Kidney Walk, which raised \$883,000.



 Lou Jablonski

### Positive Energy and Attitude

When asked to join the Board of NIB in 2009, Jablonski was immediately drawn to the organization's mission. "It didn't take much for me to become motivated," he said. "One of the most exciting directions NIB is undertaking now is our new strategic planning initiative," he explained, referring to strategies underway to transform NIB's business model. "We have a proud history of creating jobs for more than 75 years, but now we must redirect strategies to ensure our growth for the next 75 years."

One of those strategies is accelerating the success rate of new service opportunities within and outside the

AbilityOne® Program. Jablonski hopes to have 25 percent of the employees in NIB associated agencies employed on service contracts in the next few years. "But to be successful, we must address the learning and development needs of employees, many of whom are aging Baby Boomers who need these services from our associated agencies," he explained. "If a few leading agencies embrace this goal and show success, others will follow."

No stranger to leadership during his career, Jablonski served as a senior executive with 30 years of experience in sales, operations, strategy and financial management in the public and private sectors. He has directed

major turnarounds, delivered corporate growth approaching \$1 billion, executed cost containment initiatives and been an architect of strategic alliances. In 2012, he retired from his last position, as executive vice president and general manager of KGB, the world's largest independent provider of directory assistance and enhanced information services. Earlier, he held executive positions with AT&T, Convergys, TeleTech Holdings and Stream International.

### Setting the Example

Besides devoting time to NKF and NIB, Jablonski also enjoys a full family life in retirement with his wife, Mary Beth, three grown sons and three grandchildren. "It's important for my sons to see me serving others," said Jablonski, who was very involved in his community in the past as a member of the Board of Education, a coach and member of the boards of the baseball and football associations. "My volunteer work is my way of repaying the good fortune my family has enjoyed. It's the right thing to do."

In the novel, "Pay it Forward" a young boy performs good deeds for others in need but spurns recognition, asking instead that the recipients "pay it forward" by helping someone else. Lou Jablonski has found the perfect way to do just that. 

*Mary Jane Surrago is former editor of Opportunity magazine and author of "Empowering People: The Story of National Industries for the Blind and its Associated Agencies," published in 2013 to mark the 75th anniversary of NIB and the AbilityOne® Program.*

# CHARGING THE HILL

The Public Policy Team at National Industries for the Blind is working hard to help associated agencies tap into the energy on Capitol Hill.

BY DARREN WYATT

Participants at the 2015 Public Policy Forum (PPF) sponsored by National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and the National Association for the Employment of People Who Are Blind (NAEPB) will converge on Capitol Hill April 29 to engage with their members of Congress. After spending the prior day with the NIB Public Policy Team learning about current political issues and effective communications strategies, PPF participants will focus their discussions on critical issues facing the AbilityOne Program, such as non-compliance with the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act, and the larger conversation around protecting and reforming Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

Last year's Public Policy Forum participants met with Congressional representatives to enlist their support for NIB and the AbilityOne® Program. Advocacy efforts begun at the Forum culminated in a bipartisan Congressional sign-on letter, led by Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-GA2) and Rep. Lee Terry (R-NE2) and promoted during the August Grassroots Forum, which ultimately gained 63 signatures.

### NIB Expands Advocates Program

This year, NIB is enhancing its public policy presence on Capitol Hill with expansion of the Advocates for Leadership and Employment program. The Advocates program provides a crucial grassroots link in building relationships with key members of Congress. To date, 19 Advocates have participated in the program, with an additional 13 slated to begin training at this year's Public Policy Forum.

Of the 63 members of Congress who signed onto last year's letter, 30 had close ties with their Advocate's NIB associated agency. After the Public Policy Forum, Advocates continue engaging influential policymakers and community leaders on AbilityOne issues, and others impacting independence and opportunity for Americans with vision loss. NIB is expanding the size of each class of Advocates to significantly increase the number of empowered voices communicating issues critical to people who are blind or visually impaired.

While NIB previously accepted applications for the two-year program every other year, it will now accept applications each January, allowing members of the prior year's class to mentor members of the new class. Joining the Advocates program this year are:

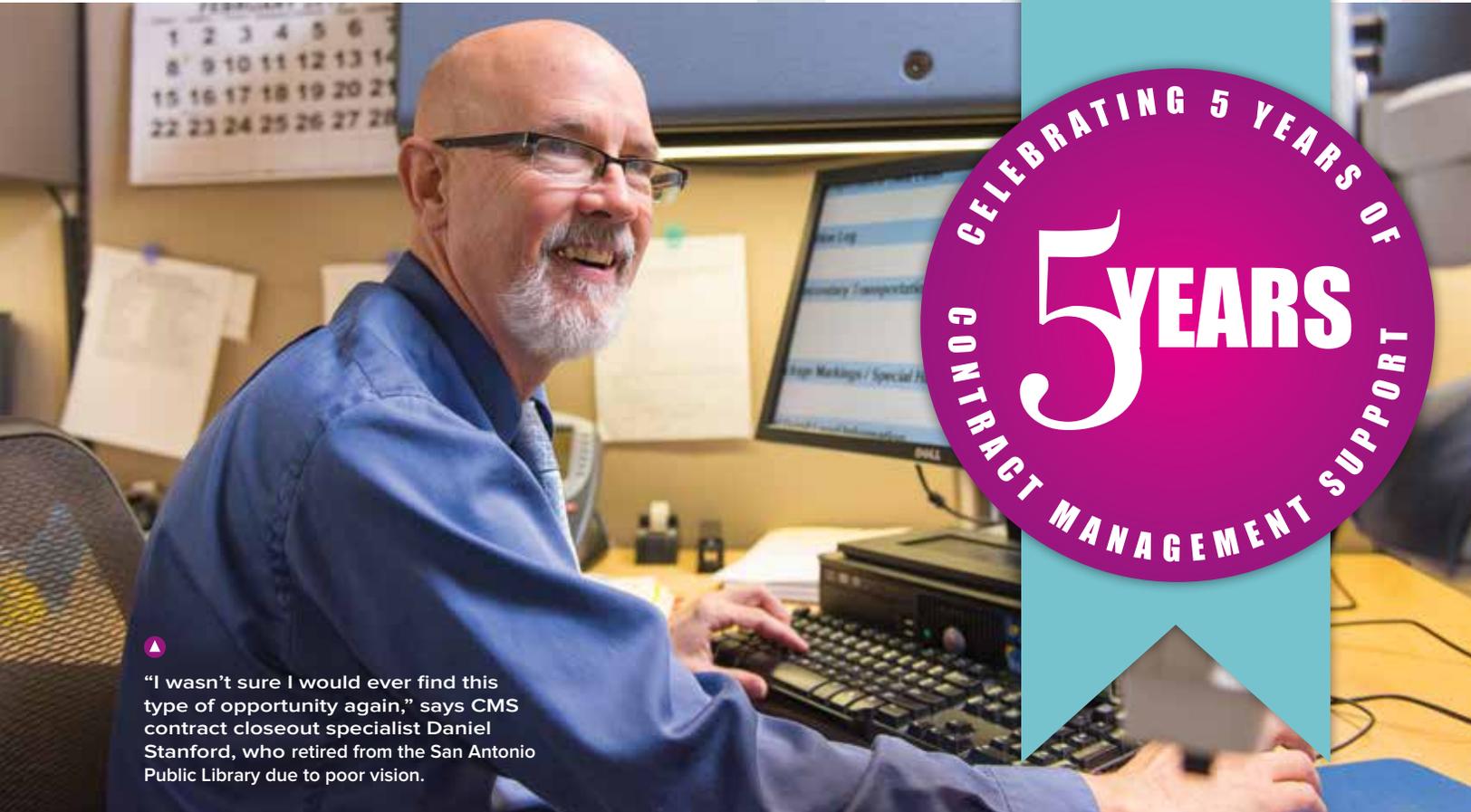
- Steve Britton, North Central Sight Services, Williamsport, Pennsylvania
- Kyle Coon, Lighthouse of Central Florida, Orlando
- Bettina Dolinsek, Lighthouse of Ft. Worth, Texas
- Randy George, VisionCorps, Lancaster, Pennsylvania
- David Green, Lighthouse Louisiana, New Orleans
- Steve Heesen, Industries for the Blind-Milwaukee, West Allis, Wisconsin
- Michael Huckaby, Alphapointe, Kansas City, Missouri
- Herbert Humphrey, Mississippi Industries for the Blind, Jackson
- Robert "Bob" Porter, Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Utica, New York
- Maureen Reid, Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Illinois
- Robert Studebaker, Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind, Washington
- Gary Wagner, Olmstead Center for Sight, Buffalo, New York
- Manuel Zavala, West Texas Lighthouse, San Angelo

Experience has shown participants' best learning experiences come through the spring Public Policy Forum and August Grassroots Forum. The Public Policy Team is using these opportunities, and placing greater emphasis on National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) in October, to create a natural cycle for solid experiential learning that can be replicated from year to year. The team is also working more closely with past-year participants, to solidify and strengthen a nationwide network of advocates for people who are blind. 

*Darren Wyatt is a program advocacy specialist at National Industries for the Blind.*

CREATING INDEPENDENCE  
DELIVERING THE AMERICAN DREAM  
2015

NIB/NAEPB  
PUBLIC  
POLICY  
FORUM



▲ "I wasn't sure I would ever find this type of opportunity again," says CMS contract closeout specialist Daniel Stanford, who retired from the San Antonio Public Library due to poor vision.

# CLOSING CONTRACTS, CHANGING LIVES

**NIB launched the Contract Management Support Services Program in 2010 to prepare people who are blind for upwardly mobile careers. Five years later, demand for these skilled professionals continues to grow.**

BY SHARON HARRIGAN

It was a classic win/win scenario.

Department of Defense (DOD) agencies needed to speed the rate of contract closeouts to clear a growing backlog, but were experiencing shortages of contract closeout specialists needed to conduct the research. National Industries for the Blind (NIB) wanted to expand job opportunities to provide career-oriented, upwardly mobile employment in areas beyond the manufacturing sector for people who are blind.

The solution: Create a program that would train and employ people who are blind or have significant disabilities to close out DOD contracts.

A successful nine-month pilot program not only proved people who are blind or have significant disabilities could do an outstanding job, it also paid for itself in recovered de-obligated funds.

The AbilityOne® Contract Management Support Services (CMS) program was born in June 2010, when CMS Services were added to the AbilityOne procurement list and DOD entered into a five-year indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract with NIB.

Fast forward to today, and the program is not only alive and well, but continuing to prove its worth and improve lives.

### The CMS Program by the Numbers

Since 2010, AbilityOne CMS contract closeout specialists have closed out nearly 220,000 of 323,470 contracts received. More than \$830 million of de-obligated funds have been identified and processed through the procurement system, and over 8.3 million images have been scanned. Perhaps most importantly, all of this work has been completed with a superb (99 percent) quality rating. “Everyone in the program takes great pride in the quality of the work they do,” says Keith Baber, head of the CMS program at the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind. “Our people really care. Their attention to detail is incredible.”

The program has not only saved federal agencies money by identifying de-obligated funds, it has improved the lives of people who are blind or have significant disabilities by offering them professional-level jobs with career growth potential. “The CMS program helps the government and provides meaningful employment for people who are blind,” says Zach Anderson, director of the CMS program at The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired. Today, the AbilityOne CMS program employs 134 people, 114 of whom are blind or have significant disabilities, including 32 wounded warriors or service-disabled veterans, according to Karen Burns, NIB service manager for the CMS program. Eight NIB associated agencies across

the country participate in the AbilityOne CMS program, operating either at a secure facility at the nonprofit agency’s location or on-site at the customer’s location.

During the past five years, 29 employees who are blind or have significant disabilities have been hired full-time by the federal government. “We have people poached all the time, and we can’t be happier about it,” says Dr. Janet Szlyk, executive director of The Chicago Lighthouse. Khayyan Wafer, for example, was a contract closeout specialist at The Chicago Lighthouse’s Rock Island location for nearly three years when she was offered – and accepted – a full-time contract specialist position with the U.S. Army at Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis, New Mexico.

Nancy Lipton, director of public relations for the San Antonio Lighthouse, agrees that in this case, poaching employees is good. “One of our goals is to have our employees leave here. That means they are moving onward and upward in the world. There could be no better thank you,” says Lipton, noting that Harry Staley, an employee who participated in the pilot program at the San Antonio Lighthouse, was one of the first CMS program employees hired full-time by the federal government.

### Good Sleuths Needed

AbilityOne contract closeout specialists and clerks review open federal contracts, verify government receipt and acceptance, identify any funds that should be de-obligated, scan and index contract documents, and deliver “ready-to-close” contracts back to federal agencies. To be eligible for the program, contract closeout specialists must be blind or have a significant disability, have a four-year college degree or related experience, possess

good computer skills and be highly proficient in using adaptive technology.

“Our contract closeout specialists must be good team players and have excellent critical thinking skills. They also have to be top-notch sleuths because they need to carefully review all contracts to ensure all required contractual documents are in the file and determine final de-obligation amounts,” explains Burns. Excellent customer service skills are also a must.

The program’s growth has been slow but steady. The skill set required for the contract closeout specialist position and time-consuming security clearance procedures have made staffing sometimes challenging, but the need is there, says Burns. As the number of college-educated people with vision impairments continues to grow, she expects more will be looking for this type of challenging work that is commensurate with their skills and abilities.

*Continued on page 8*



**A** The San Antonio Lighthouse CMS program gives single mom Jamie Lynn Kopplinger the opportunity to lead by example, showing her children that she can “work in a professional environment where there’s room to grow and learn new things” despite her disability.

# CLOSING CONTRACTS, CHANGING LIVES

Continued from page 7

## Improving Lives

While the program has certainly helped save the federal government money, it has done something far more valuable for program participants: It has helped them find jobs that offer financial security and career growth. “The CMS program offers our employees professional-level work that’s interesting and challenging,” says Szylk. “These jobs offer excellent pay and allow participants to own their own homes and raise families.”

Ahsan Zaidi, a contract closeout specialist for The Chicago Lighthouse CMS program, agrees. Zaidi has a degree in graphic design, but when the economy stumbled a few years ago, he switched job trajectories and found the CMS program at the Lighthouse. He commutes daily by public transportation two hours each way from his home in Aurora, Illinois, for work. Zaidi, a married father of twin girls, says the commute is well worth it. The job not only offers financial security, but he also enjoys it because it is always changing and allows him to learn something new every

day. “Every contract is different and that keeps it interesting,” says Zaidi.

The San Antonio Lighthouse CMS program opened for business during the 2009 pilot program and has been going ever since. It currently employs 10 people; one supervisor, seven contract closeout specialists and two clerks. In addition to improving the quality of life for program employees, Lipton believes the program serves an important purpose in educating the public about the abilities of people who are blind. “Blindness does not mean not capable,” says Lipton. “This program helps build awareness in the community about blind people’s abilities, and we are very proud of that.”

According to Reinhard Mabry, president and CEO of Alphapointe in Kansas City, Missouri, the agency’s CMS employees regularly exceed the program goals of delivering exceptional quality and delighting customers. Six employees work as a team to closeout contracts from the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Marine Corps and the Naval Air Systems Command.

Since the program began in 2011, CMS employees at Alphapointe have closed 7,473 contracts and returned \$471 million in de-obligated funds to the U.S. Treasury – all while maintaining a nearly perfect quality rating.

For Mabry, though, the CMS program is more than the sum of its numbers. “Alphapointe has been around for more than 100 years,” he explained. “For much of that history, employment for people who are blind has focused on entry-level manufacturing and assembly jobs. There were few white collar jobs because they were simply not available. This program gives opportunities for professional-level jobs for people who are blind.”

## “I’m a Contributor to Society Now”

Jude Lucien agrees with Mabry. In March 2011 he landed a job as a contract closeout specialist at VisionCorps in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, after successfully completing training. “It was the second most life altering event in my life,” he says, admitting he didn’t realize it at the time.



▲ Kaleb Tarry, Alphapointe’s 2015 nominee for the Peter J. Salmon Employee of the Year award, joined the CMS program after his graduation from college. The fact that every contract is different, requiring the ability to change and adapt, keeps the job interesting, he said.



▲ Contract closeout specialist Chris Banks recently left VisionCorps for a two-year internship as a contract closeout specialist with Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support in Philadelphia.



◀ Jude Lucien, pictured here at VisionCorps, left the agency in February for a contract specialist position with the U.S. Army. Lucien says the CMS program “opened doors I never could have imagined.”

Lucien had heard of the AbilityOne CMS program while completing his master’s degree in communications and marketing at Florida State. He even took some of the online contract closeout specialist courses offered through the Defense Acquisition University during his last semester and made inquiries about the position, but when graduation rolled around, he had no job lined up. Lucien flew north from Florida to New Jersey in December 2010, the day after he graduated, into a harsh winter and even harsher economy. He spent the next three months pounding the pavement, looking for a job in New York City.

His life took a dramatic change for the better when, in mid-February 2011, Billy Parker, NIB’s CMS Training Program director, called Lucien about a job opening at VisionCorps. Parker arranged for an interview with Shelley Sanders, VisionCorps’ vice president and chief operating officer, who quickly saw Lucien’s potential and hired him as a contract closeout specialist.

Lucien advanced in the program every year, eventually becoming a contract closeout supervisor at the

Defense Logistics Agency in New Cumberland, Pennsylvania – and one of the AbilityOne CMS program’s biggest advocates. “I have seen participants get off disability, become homeowners and start families,” says Lucien. “The program works.” Lucien was able to get off Social Security and now lives independently. “I’m a contributor to society now. I have financial security. The program is a blessing.”

In addition to his steady, upward employment progression, Lucien notes that “the program has opened doors I never could have imagined.” He was selected to participate in the first class of NIB’s Advocates for Leadership and Employment, where he learned how to positively influence public policy and public opinion. As a result, he has testified in front of Pennsylvania state legislators on behalf of the blind community in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and has visited lawmakers on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

Lucien’s shining moment, though, was when he was included in an NIB delegation that presented Rep. Patrick Meehan (R-PA7) with an AbilityOne Champion Award in 2014. “I was floored

that me, an average guy from New Jersey, was among such impressive company,” Lucien recalls.

Like other CMS program participants before him, though, it is time for Lucien to move onward and upward. He is leaving the AbilityOne CMS program for a contract specialist position with the U.S. Army, where he will be on a career track to become a GS-9. He will make Salt Lake City his home for the next year for the position, but the Army will eventually relocate him to the Southeast to be closer to family. Lucien calls his pending move bittersweet; he has loved his time at VisionCorps, but knows this is a wonderful opportunity for him personally and professionally.

It’s bittersweet for Sanders as well. “We are so proud of Jude and we know he will do a great job for the Army, but he will be missed,” she said. “He epitomizes what the CMS program is all about. It enables people who are blind to build meaningful careers to support themselves and their families in the ‘real’ world.” And for that, as Lipton says, there is no better thank you. ◻

*Sharon Horrigan is a freelance writer based in Asheville, North Carolina.*

# CELEBRATING THE PAST, EMBRACING THE FUTURE

**After 100 years and tens of thousands of clients, Bosma Enterprises is poised to meet the challenges of its next century.**

BY ROSEMARIE LALLY

As its 100th anniversary approaches, Bosma Enterprises has much to celebrate.

The NIB associated nonprofit agency located in Indianapolis, Indiana, has spent a century providing employment and rehabilitation programs, helping people who are blind or visually impaired show what they're capable of and how they can enrich a workplace.

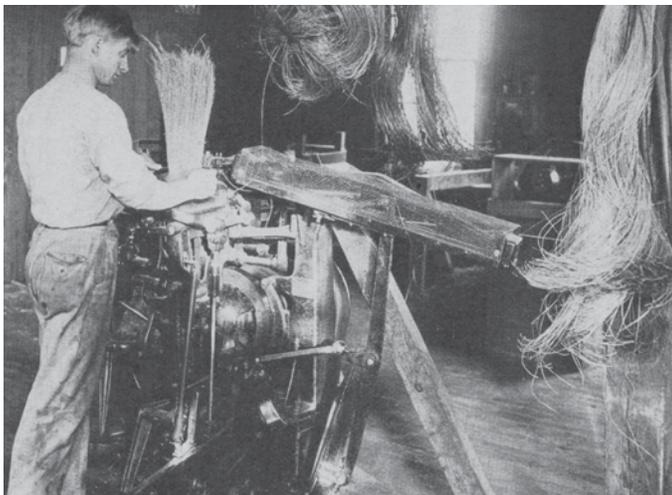
Although the unemployment rate nationwide for people who are blind or visually impaired is 70 percent, nearly 60 percent of Bosma's overall workforce – and 90 percent of its production staff – is made up of people who are blind or visually impaired. "Our company is proof that employing people who are blind or visually impaired works," Bosma's 2014 Annual Report proclaims. The organization is Indiana's largest employer of people who are blind or visually impaired.

At a time when many nonprofit agencies are feeling the negative effects of federal budget cuts, Bosma continues to thrive and grow at a rapid pace. After 100 years of creating opportunities for people who are blind and helping thousands navigate a path to independence, Bosma is going stronger than ever, expanding the number of people employed and served every year. Its growth has been particularly noticeable since 1988, when it was converted from a state-run program to a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) agency.

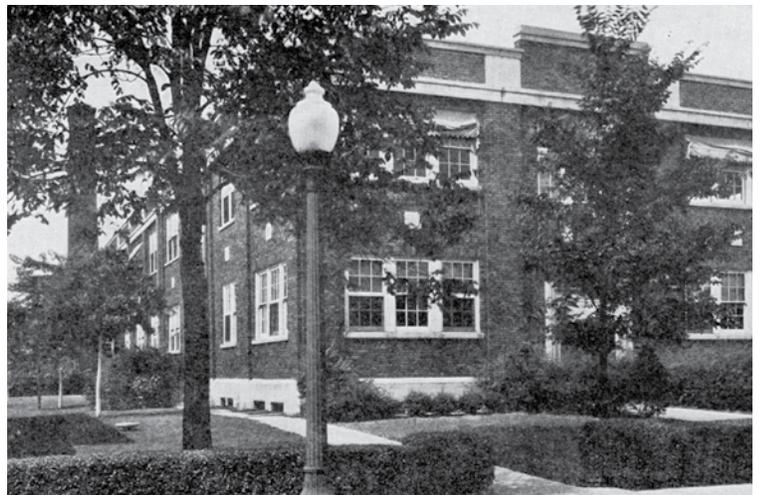
In addition to expanding its rehabilitation and employment programs, Bosma has continued to grow its business operations. Its lines of business currently include a contact center, digital printing operation, warehousing and contract packaging operations, and an Independent

Living Retail Store. Among the diverse items Bosma employees package, warehouse and ship are medical supplies, including operating room, emergency room and ambulance kits; dry foods; hearing aids; exam, surgical, industrial and food service gloves; and ice melt. Bosma Enterprises also prepares bedding, linen, clothing and bath items for hospitals throughout the state of Indiana.

One indicator of the agency's success is the fact that Bosma itself has grown "from about 40 employees in 2001 to about 250 today," Lou Moneymaker, president and CEO said, and generated more than \$50 million in revenues in 2014. In recent years the operation has expanded from a single building to two large buildings – one measuring 110,000 square feet and the other 65,000 square feet – to accommodate its production and warehousing



▲ This photo from the 1920s shows an employee in the broom shop at the State of Indiana Board of Industrial Aid for the Blind.



▲ The agency occupied this building from the 1920s to the late 1980s.

▼ In 1983, this mobile home was set up on the grounds of the agency to aid in home management skills training.



▼ In 1984, the agency was renamed the Charles E. Bosma Industries for the Blind in honor of the state Assemblyman, who was an advocate for people who are blind.



▲ In 1992, Bosma secured a contract to package and distribute exam gloves to Veterans Affairs hospitals.

operations, offices, classrooms, training rooms and rehabilitation services.

Moneymaker attributed the organization's progress to a three-part strategy that focuses on developing its products and services; strengthening its community outreach, training and employment programs; and growing the Bosma Visionary Opportunities Foundation. "The foundation, a Type-1 supporting organization established in 2011 to generate wealth for use in underwriting our community outreach programs, is outperforming our expectations," he explained. He also credited the organization's

financial accomplishments to "our executive leadership team, which has some phenomenally bright, industrious and committed individuals" and to a vibrant social media strategy implemented by Heather Quigley-Allen, vice president of marketing and resource development. "Through our social media efforts, including our website, we've created a brand and an awareness of our mission in the community, which has really expanded our reach. I think this has had a measurable impact on the larger employment community," he said, pointing to Bosma's growing placement rate. For evidence of the critical role employees who are blind play in

Bosma's success, one need look no farther than Brian Petraits, senior manager of industries.

Petraits, who is legally blind and uses a guide dog, first heard of Bosma as a freshman at Purdue University, when he attended a presentation by a former CEO of National Industries for the Blind. The discussion of Bosma piqued his interest and Petraits applied for a summer internship with the organization soon afterward. Petraits enjoyed his internship experience and, upon graduation, was hired for a full-time job at Bosma. Now, seven years later, the married father of a four-month-old

*Continued on page 12*

## TRAINING FOR AN INDEPENDENT LIFE

In 2006, Bosma Enterprises partnered with the state of Indiana to become the provider of vision rehabilitation services and since that time, the largest provider of comprehensive programs to teach critical daily living and employment skills to people who are blind. In 2014, Bosma's rehabilitation programs team provided services to 1,569 people, with nearly every client reporting increased confidence and self-acceptance, according to president and CEO Lou Moneymaker.

The agency is committed to helping people who are blind or visually impaired prepare

for, secure and retain employment, offering services and training to aid in vocational assessment, identification of career goals and development of interpersonal skills. Employment specialists coach job seekers on job search techniques, resume writing, interviewing skills and networking with positive results.

"In 2014 our programs placed 35 people who are blind or vision impaired with 29 different companies in Indiana," Moneymaker said, adding that the agency hired an additional six for its own operations.



▲ Connie Michaels (right), an itinerant rehabilitation teacher, talks with rehabilitation center volunteer Emily Featherstone about different assistive aids used in Bosma's senior program.

# AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 11



▲ Instructor Bill Knoll (right) with Bosma client Tina Bralley. In 2006, the agency took over rehabilitation services from the State of Indiana, changing its name to Bosma Enterprises to better reflect the comprehensive services offered to people who are blind.



▲ Today, Brian Petraits (right), senior manager of industries, assists Jonathan Blair (left) in the glove packaging area at Bosma Enterprises.

son is still finding new challenges and opportunities at Bosma. In his current role as senior manager of industries, Petraits manages 70 employees, assists the director of industries, and is responsible for the smooth day-to-day operation of the production business.

“Bosma has given me a great opportunity,” Petraits said. “It’s a wonderful place to work, with a supportive environment and an outstanding leadership team.” Bosma is supportive of employee growth, he stressed, a commitment demonstrated in the way it encourages employees to expand their job roles and serve on corporate committees. The agency also has a tuition reimbursement plan to encourage employees to continue their education.

Although he didn’t participate in any of Bosma’s rehabilitation or employment programs, Petraits said he’s seen firsthand how they benefit others. A number of people he works with or supervises received training through the programs and were subsequently hired at Bosma.

Petraits said Bosma offers opportunities that can be difficult to find in other organizations. “Bosma is cognizant of perceived notions of blindness and looks past those to the person, which not all employers do,” he explained. “We understand that the person first may need training or adaptive equipment and those are provided; then we expect you to do your job.”

In spite of all the organization has accomplished in the past 100 years, Moneymaker said there’s still plenty of work to be done, within Bosma itself and in the external business community. Looking ahead to business challenges in 2015, he said Bosma is working toward both expanding and developing contracts with private-sector firms, and building greater internal efficiencies, such as shifting from a software-based system to Cloud computing and cutting-edge applications that can run both business operations and employment and rehabilitation programs.

“The biggest challenge still faces us: battling pre-conceived notions on the part of the public and employers

regarding the abilities of people who are blind,” Moneymaker said. “Our mission remains important and relevant: more growth in employment and independence for people who are blind. If the overall unemployment rate in the U.S. is 4.5 percent, then it should also be 4.5 percent for those who are blind, not 70 percent as it currently is.”

“We are not about entitlement, we’re about providing opportunities,” Moneymaker said, referencing Bosma’s mission statement. “We educate people who come to us, help them to build personal plans, and then work with them to implement the plans. Basically, we provide information, then work hand-in-hand with them on implementation. I feel we’ve had a positive impact on the quality of life of people who are blind in Indiana.”

Petraits wholeheartedly agrees. “Bosma gives solid opportunities to the individual,” he said. “Then it’s up to them to put their own skin in the game and make the most of those opportunities.” □

*Rosemarie Lally is a freelance writer and editor based in Washington, D.C.*

## NIB EXPANDS OUTREACH WITH NEW VIDEO, SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

New tools tell story of the mission and capabilities of NIB and its associated agencies.

BY KELLY JAMIESON

The newest addition to NIB's video library, "We're Ready!" is a concise storytelling tool that explains NIB's mission and purpose, from manufacturing thousands of products and delivering a variety of services, to fulfilling its mission of creating, sustaining and improving employment for people who are blind.

The video introduces employees from the Lighthouse for the Blind in Seattle and Spokane, Washington, and Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind in North Carolina, who explain how NIB's mission has transformed their lives. Viewers are transported to both the manufacturing floor and the offices of service delivery professionals, witnessing the types of hands-on, high-level work performed by employees who are blind at NIB's 94 associated nonprofit agencies throughout the United States.

### Social Media Initiative

In addition to the video, NIB has launched a new social media campaign, **#NIBTogetherWe**. The hashtag builds on the 2014 NIB/NAEPB National Conference and Expo theme "Together, we..." and the FY2014 Annual Report theme, "Together, we can!"

NIB is asking people to use the hashtag **#NIBTogetherWe** when posting to social media, complete the open-ended statement and provide an example, anecdote, quote or photo to show how they are working to advance our mission of fostering independence by creating employment opportunities for people who are blind.

Share your photos with the **#NIBTogetherWe** hashtag and they may be included in an upcoming issue of Opportunity. 

*Kelly Jamieson is a communications specialist at National Industries for the Blind.*



▲ The Honorable William D. Euille, Mayor of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, attended the debut of the video at NIB's bi-monthly employee social. Noting that job creation is a top priority for his administration, Euille praised the video, saying he is proud that NIB, whose mission is also to create employment, is headquartered in Alexandria.



▲ The new video is available at [www.nib.org/videos](http://www.nib.org/videos)

## THANKS FOR POSTING!



**North Central Sight Services, Inc.**

Congratulations North Central Sight Services, Inc.! Today marks day number 365 for days worked without a lost time accident! Thank you, everyone, for making safety a priority every day. **#NIBTogetherWe**



Tag your photos

# #NIBTOGETHERWE

And they might get featured in our next issue of Opportunity magazine!



▶ NIB national account manager Jim Davis (left) and Paul Diamonti, director of services development, were accompanied in South Korea by Terrie Jeon, from the Washington, D.C., office of the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency.

# NIB HEADS EAST TO CREATE NEW JOBS

**Representatives from NIB are pursuing exciting opportunities for partnerships in South Korea.**

BY JENNIFER CLICK

As the economic recovery takes hold in earnest, NIB is expanding its horizons in its mission to create jobs for people who are blind. Some might say the services team is reaching beyond the horizon as it explores new opportunities in South Korea.

NIB national account manager Jim Davis and Paul Diamonti, director of services development, traveled to Korea in December 2014 at the invitation of the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), to meet with representatives of industries interested in working with people who are blind or visually impaired. At KOTRA headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Diamonti presented an overview of the AbilityOne® Program and Davis explained NIB and its capabilities to a group of more than 30 representatives of interested companies.

Following the presentation, Diamonti and Davis had an opportunity to meet one-on-one with the attending manufacturers, who presented their products and ideas. The next day Diamonti and Davis toured several manufacturing facilities. As a result of the meetings and tours, NIB is now pursuing three exciting opportunities that could create new jobs in the U.S. for people who are blind.

The first opportunity is with the Amosense division of Amotech, an automotive parts company branching out into LED lighting products. Amosense has been instrumental in establishing a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility with the Siloam Center for the Visually Handicapped in Seoul, where LED lighting products are manufactured by individuals who are blind. The Siloam Center has

both learning and vocational centers that train people who are blind for occupations in its cafes, as masseurs (a 1963 law in South Korea limits the profession to people who are blind or visually impaired) and in packaging centers, as well as at the LED lighting assembly and packaging operation. The Center's director, Jae Hoon Yoon, hopes to establish a partnership with NIB to co-manufacture the LED products. "The U.S. is behind the rest of the world in embracing LED lighting," Davis explained. "We see this as a perfect time to enter a market that has amazing growth potential."

Diamonti and Davis also met with representatives of KORSOA, a company that has developed a waterless shampoo using all natural, FDA-approved ingredients. Davis is enthusiastic about the product, which he

says has “potential uses ranging from hospital and long term care facilities to disaster relief and the military, as well as some commercial applications.”

A third product NIB is looking into is the Nosk personal air filter. Developed and designed by ear, nose and throat specialists, the Nosk filter consists of two soft nasal filters that slip into the nostrils to help block substances that irritate and aggravate nasal passages. While regular Nosk filters provide relief to allergy and asthma sufferers, reducing inhalation of pollutants and allergens by 80 percent, the company has also developed two specialized products for industrial and medical use. “We believe this product has several applications that will be useful to a variety of NIB customers,” Davis said.

Although Davis and Diamonti were in South Korea for only about three days, follow-up meetings with representatives from the three businesses are planned. Jim credits a strong team effort from many individuals and departments at NIB who helped make the trip a success, in particular Sung-ok Kwak, a billing specialist in the NIB accounting department who translated written materials and presentation slides for the trip. “His help was an integral part of the success of our presentation” Davis said.

Following on the heels of the KOTRA visit, NIB hosted several representatives of the South Korean government in February. Yoonok Park and Dong Ic Choi, members of the National Assembly, accompanied Sookyoung Lim, from the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and Yong Chan Byun, Woongseon Choi, Yong Jun Moon and Dong-gyun Shin, all from the Korea Disabled People’s Development Institute, for a discussion on creating and sustaining employment in Korea for people who are blind. Included in the meeting was discussion of the Quality Work Environment initiative and other workplace issues. The representatives also met with SourceAmerica and the



▲ Representatives of more than 30 companies interested in learning about NIB and the AbilityOne Program attended the presentation at KOTRA headquarters.



▲ NIB is exploring the possibility of a partnership with Amosense, manufacturer of this LED parking lot light.

United States Access Board to learn more about approaches to expanding employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other disabilities.

As technology continues to advance, bringing people from all over the world together, NIB will continue working with international partners to help people who are blind compete in the global marketplace. □

*Jennifer Click is a communications consultant and editor of Opportunity magazine.*



▲ Paul Diamonti, NIB director of services development, gave a presentation explaining capabilities and products produced by NIB and its associated nonprofit agencies.

# READY TO LAUNCH

**These new products produced by NIB associated agencies are now available to federal government customers through the AbilityOne® Program.**

NIB and its associated nonprofit agencies continue to launch new products to meet federal customers' needs, including a variety of SKILCRAFT® office products and cleaning supplies produced by people who are blind.

### COMPUTER SECURITY

Alphapointe in Kansas City, Missouri, produces these cable and lock kits with carbon strengthened steel cables for greater cut resistance and the Kensington ClickSafe® feature for effortless protection of computers and important business data.

**1. SKILCRAFT® Combination Laptop Lock – Master Coded** attaches to laptops via the Kensington Security Slot found in 99% of computers and accepts 10,000 possible combination codes, allowing users to select their own unique and memorable code. Includes ComboGenie® for secure combination recovery by authorized administrators. Set includes 20 locks and one master unlock device.

**2. SKILCRAFT® Keyed Laptop Lock – Master Keyed** attaches to hardware in a single step. The tamper-proof, disc-style lock attaches to the thinnest computers and delivers the strongest security available in a cable lock. Set includes 10 locks and one master key.

### PAPER SHREDDERS

LC Industries of Durham, North Carolina, produces these shredders that have hardened steel cutters to ensure a lasting, precise cut, and motors thermally protected against overheating, even under prolonged use.

**3. SKILCRAFT® Level 3 Personal Size Paper Shredder** features an 8 ¾" wide top-feed entry for shredding up to 10 sheets of paper, CDs, DVDs and credit cards. Recommended for 1 - 2 users, this cross-cut shredder includes a 5.5 gallon capacity waste container.

**4. SKILCRAFT® Level 6 High Security Paper Shredder** features a 10" wide top-feed to destroy up to seven sheets of sensitive paper documents per pass. Recommended for 5 - 7 users, it includes a 15 gallon capacity waste container.

### FLASHLIGHTS

Produced by Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Utica, New York, SKILCRAFT® 5.11 Tactical Flashlights are made of corrosion-resistant aerospace grade aluminum. These impact- and water-resistant lights, tested to ANSI FL1 standards, are sold individually.

**5. SKILCRAFT® 5.11 Tactical Lithium-Ion Rechargeable Flashlights** utilize power-smart Cree® LED technology to cast brilliant 357 ANSI FL1 lumens of light in a bright tactical beam, with intelligent mode cycling technology that allows for quick and quiet toggling between three light modes – high, low and strobe.

**6. SKILCRAFT® 5.11 Tactical Penlight LED Flashlights** provide full-sized tactical lighting in a palm-sized package. Powered by two AA batteries (included), they produce a brilliant 40 meter light cone at 90 lumens and offer 4 hours of runtime on a single charge.

**7. SKILCRAFT® 5.11 Tactical AA LED Flashlights** provide 220 lumens of light for 1.5 hours on high mode, 2.5 hours on strobe mode, and 57 hours on low mode. Includes a stamped metal pocket clip and break-away lanyard.



## FOAM HANDWASHES AND SANITIZERS

Produced by Travis Association for the Blind in Austin, Texas, these USDA-certified, biobased products are tough on germs but gentle on skin. Hand sanitizers are available in 1200 ml refill bottles and washes are available in 1250 ml refill bottles – all with patented controlled collapse technology to maintain shape longer.

**8. GOJO®-SKILCRAFT® Citrus Ginger Foam Hand & Showerwash** is an all-in-one body wash, shampoo and hand soap, enriched with natural moisturizers and conditioners for skin and hair, with a refreshing blend of citrus extracts and ginger to enhance the shower experience.

**9. GOJO®-SKILCRAFT® Antibacterial Plum Foam Handwash** is a high-performance, antibacterial hand soap enriched with a moisturizer, natural extract and skin conditioner that offers luxurious lather and an appealing plum fragrance.

**10. PURELL®- SKILCRAFT® Advanced Green Certified Instant Hand Sanitizer Foam**, with ingredients made from natural renewable resources, kills more than 99.99% of most common germs. The scientifically advanced, patent-pending formula outperforms other hand sanitizers with a nourishing blend of four skin conditioners clinically proven to help maintain skin health.

**11. PURELL®- SKILCRAFT® Advanced Skin Nourishing Instant Hand Sanitizer Foam** is a fragrance free, dye free, readily biodegradable non-aerosol foam that provides broad-spectrum antimicrobial efficacy. With six moisturizers for optimal skin conditioning, it's clinically proven to improve skin condition in 14 days and is compatible with latex, nitrile and vinyl gloves, and CHG.

## BIOBASED CLEANING PRODUCTS

Produced by the Lighthouse for the Blind, St. Louis, these USDA certified biobased cleaners are available in 1 gallon bottles. Power Green Cleaner/Degreaser is also available in a 22 ounce spray bottle.

**12. SKILCRAFT® Liquid Hand Soap** is a clear, mildly scented liquid soap for use in bathroom dispensers. Made using 98 percent bio-based content, including 15 percent coconut oil, this soap requires no dilution and won't clog or drip.

**13. SKILCRAFT® Power Green Cleaner/Degreaser** is a heavy-duty, multi-surface liquid cleaner/degreaser that's environmentally friendly. Removes carbon and greasy residues from walls, floors, appliances, machinery or any washable surface. Use as a spray and wipe cleaner, for damp mopping, automatic scrubbing, hand scrubbing and in high pressure washers and steam cleaners.

## RECHARGEABLE WORK LAMPS

Produced by Industries for the Blind, Milwaukee, these lamps come with UL® listed wall chargers, automobile chargers and Li-Ion rechargeable batteries.

**14. SKILCRAFT® 2 in 1 Extendable Torch Style Rechargeable Work Lamp** is a compact yet powerful multi-purpose, rechargeable 22 LED work lamp that produces 100 lumens and lasts three hours when fully charged under normal conditions. Made of rugged hard plastic with an anti-slip, rubber grip and rotating magnetic base that attaches to any metal surface, this light includes a telescoping feature which contains 21 LED lights and a single light in the end.

**15. SKILCRAFT® Baton Style Rechargeable Work Lamp** uses 42 LED lights to produce 200 lumens lasting two hours when fully charged. Features an anti-slip, rubberized grip with rotating hooks on top and bottom for horizontal hanging.

**16. SKILCRAFT® Aluminum Frame Rechargeable Floor Work Lamp** uses 10 watt Chips on Board (COB) LED packaging technology to deliver up to 600 lumens of superior quality light while saving money. Features a padded grip handle, non-skid feet and weatherproof switch.



These and thousands of other products are available for purchase at AbilityOne.com, GSAAAdvantage.com, your local Base Supply Center or through AbilityOne authorized distributors. For more information about how to purchase SKILCRAFT and other products produced by people who are blind, visit [www.nib.org/products](http://www.nib.org/products).

### APPLICATIONS FOR ROEDER SCHOLARSHIP NOW AVAILABLE

Applications for the Joseph Roeder Assistive Technology Scholarship are now available on the NIB website. The scholarship provides a one-time award of \$2,500 for an individual who is blind to pursue education in computer science, information systems or a related field leading to a career in access technology.

The scholarship is named for Joe Roeder, senior accessible technology specialist at NIB from 1997 until his death in 2010. Roeder was instrumental in the development of the Section 508 electronic and information technology accessibility standards of the Rehabilitation Act, which require all federal government agencies to provide accessible data and information for employees with disabilities.

Applications and supporting documents must be submitted online no later than Friday, May 16, 2015. The winner will be announced in June 2015. The scholarship application is available at: [nib.org/content/roeder-scholarship-application](http://nib.org/content/roeder-scholarship-application). □



▲ Joseph Roeder, who worked at NIB for more than 10 years, was instrumental in development of the electronic and information technology accessibility standards of the Rehabilitation Act.

### DLA NAMES NIB A SUPERIOR SUPPLIER

The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) named NIB a Superior Supplier for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. The recognition is part of the Defense Department's Superior Supplier Incentive Program, which is "designed to incentivize contractor performance by identifying suppliers with the highest rankings in areas such as cost, schedule, performance, quality and business relations."

NIB is one of only 40 contractors selected by DLA after the agency reviewed the performance of 153 parts and commodity suppliers it did business with on the largest contracts over the past two years. Collectively the companies account for nearly \$5 billion in DLA contract expenditures annually. □



### BOEING SIGNS THREE-YEAR AGREEMENT SUPPORTING NIB AND ABILITYONE

NIB and SourceAmerica have entered into a three-year agreement with the Boeing Company designed to increase "opportunities for AbilityOne authorized nonprofit organizations to support their workforce of people who are blind or have other severe disabilities" while continuing support for the Department of Defense.

Under the Memorandum of Agreement, effective for fiscal years 2015 – 2017, Boeing and AbilityOne® "will work together to support both product/service and employment capabilities from non-profits (sic) affiliated with NIB/SourceAmerica." The objective of all of the organizations signing the agreement is to "develop strategies and define goals and objectives to engage in focused initiatives to increase subcontract awards to AbilityOne agencies." □

### NIB EXPLORES NEW AVENUE FOR PROFESSIONAL CAREERS

NIB has launched a pilot program to determine if Information Assurance (IA) is a suitable additional line of business for NIB services. IA is a career field that can provide employment for people who are blind or visually impaired at the professional level.

The Department of Defense defines IA as "measures that protect and defend information and information systems by ensuring their availability, integrity, authentication, confidentiality, and non-repudiation." As a result of increases in systems vulnerability,

IA is becoming a focus and priority across both business and government, especially the Department of Defense. Federal and commercial requirements for IA services are expected to grow as information systems become more susceptible to outside attack. □



▲ Pictured left to right: Anne Marie Wallace, NIB Military Resale Program director; Pete Murphy, S&K National Sales manager; Rogers Campbell, executive director, Sales Marketing and Policy Group; Stuart M. Allison, CMSgt, USAF - senior enlisted advisor; Kevin Lynch, NIB president and CEO; Joseph H. Jeu, DeCA director and CEO; James R Taylor, supervisory category manager, Pets and Household; Tracie L. Russ, director of Sales; Mary Ann Finlon, S&K NIB account manager.

## NIB RECOGNIZES DeCA FOR PRODUCT LIST ADDITIONS

NIB president and CEO Kevin Lynch presented the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) with the NIB Outstanding Performance Award for its efforts supporting the AbilityOne® Program. The award, presented at DeCA Headquarters in Fort Lee, Virginia, recognizes exceptional efforts by DeCA

personnel in promoting SKILCRAFT® and other AbilityOne products and services during FY 2014. Their efforts led to 39 new product additions to the AbilityOne Procurement List. Joseph Jeu, DeCA director and CEO, accepted the award on behalf of DeCA staff. □

## DEFENSE ACQUISITION UNIVERSITY TEAMS UP WITH ABILITYONE

The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) and the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® have signed a five-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) aimed at promoting “awareness, understanding of, and preference for federal purchases of products and services provided by nonprofit agencies employing people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.” DAU is one of the most recognized corporate training organizations in the nation.

Among the provisions of the MOA are commitments from DAU to include AbilityOne information in its training courses; produce and post webinars about the AbilityOne®



Program; link to websites managed by the Commission, NIB and SourceAmerica from its websites; work with the Commission, NIB and SourceAmerica to make basic contracting courses available and accessible to people who are blind or have significant disabilities; and encourage the use of AbilityOne products and services in its own contracts. □



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PREVIOUS PAGE

FIRST PAGE