COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM
PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED

August 20, 2007

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Dear Colleague:

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is the independent federal agency which administers the AbilityOne Program. The Committee has developed this information kit to help you share our message within your department or agency.

As President Bush has noted, "All of our citizens should have the opportunity to live and work with dignity and freedom. Every October, we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month to recognize the talents, skills and dedication of people with disabilities who are a vital part of our work force." National Disability Employment Awareness Month is an exceptional time to celebrate the successes of the AbilityOne Program, and there are numerous other opportunities throughout the year to plan and conduct AbilityOne events. New contract awards, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, anniversaries and other milestones, visits by prominent individuals and awards presentations all offer the chance to reach local, state and national leaders as well as local businesses and the media.

The AbilityOne Program creates employment opportunities that enable people who are blind or have other severe disabilities to fulfill their potential while providing a wide array of business solutions at a fair market price to federal customers. Because of the AbilityOne Program, nearly 48,000 people are employed in a national network comprised of more than 600 community-based nonprofit agencies. Employment opportunities made possible through the AbilityOne Program have equipped tens of thousands of people who are blind or have other severe disabilities with the job skills and training necessary to earn equitable wages, benefits and greater independence.

Although we celebrate these successes, there remains a critical need for the program. Census statistics show only 38 percent of the overall population of people with disabilities is employed.

We hope that you will take advantage of October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month observance to recognize the achievements of the AbilityOne Program and the nearly 48,000 people it employs in support of you, our federal customers.

Sincerely,

Patrick Rowe
Acting Executive Director
and Chief Executive Officer