THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON

Memorandum

OCT 6 2004

To: Deputy Secretary
Solicitor
Inspector General
Assistant Secretaries
Bureau and Office Heads

From: Secretary Gale A. Norton

Subject: Celebrate the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program During National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October heralds the beginning of a new fiscal year. It is also National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the perfect time to celebrate the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program. Under the JWOD Program, government purchase card users and acquisition personnel buy supplies and services furnished by nonprofit agencies employing people who are blind or who have other severe disabilities.

The theme of this year's JWOD Program celebration is "JWOD Works for America." The Department of the Interior provides employment and training opportunities for people with severe disabilities through our support of the JWOD Program. Under JWOD, supplies and services purchased by Interior and other Federal agencies currently generate jobs for more than 42,000 Americans who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

With an unemployment rate of 70 percent, people with disabilities continue to represent the Nation's largest unemployed pool of talented, skilled, knowledgeable, and dedicated people. President Bush cites these statistics in his *New Freedom Initiative* for people with disabilities, and he pledges the Administration's commitment to increasing the ability of Americans with disabilities to integrate into the workforce. The major challenges to productive employment of qualified people with disabilities are attitudinal barriers and false assumptions about what people can and cannot do. What people with disabilities can do is be productive. Your efforts to develop awareness and to educate our workforce about this important issue will help ensure Interior makes an important contribution to President Bush's goal of fulfilling America's promise to people with disabilities.

Please learn more about the important role you can play in the JWOD Program at www.jwod.gov and make a special effort to show your support as JWOD celebrates National Disability Employment Awareness Month throughout October 2004. Please contact the Department's JWOD Program Manager, Cindy Maltby, on 202-208-5562, or via email at Cynthia_Maltby@ios.doi.gov for additional information.