ABILITY one

2013–2014
abilityone.org

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AbilityOne PROGRAM

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

AbilityOne Program Magazine

For 75 years, the AbilityOne® Program has met demanding Federal contract requirements for quality products and services at a fair market price. Plus, with AbilityOne, customers get the benefit of contracting multiple products and services from one source.

In addition, nearly 50,000 people who are blind or have significant disabilities are employed through AbilityOne, which enables them to be independent, tax-paying citizens.

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

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Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friend,

Imagine being labeled unemployable!

What would you do?

Today, some mistakenly equate disability with inability. The result? People who are blind or have significant disabilities are too often an untapped talent pool, hardworking, motivated and loyal.

Independence, Self-Esteem, Fulfillment
With so much of our identities tied to work, what does having a job mean to someone who is blind or has a significant disability?

It's about much more than just money. And, as I have come to know, AbilityOne Program employees are quite eloquent on this score. Let's hear from just a few of them.

- Essie Jackson received her first paycheck at the age of 42, thanks to the AbilityOne Program. When asked how she felt, she said: "I cried. That's how good it felt. It meant I can work and support myself."
- Out of work due to his service-related disability, David Kendrick joined the Warrior Salute Program sponsored by CDS Monarch, in Webster, N.Y. As he explained, "The CDS program gave me a second chance…I thought nobody cared about soldiers out there. It was really hard…Without the CDS program I would be out there on the street."
- After being hired as a switchboard operator and later promoted to switchboard supervisor at a Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Catherine White purchased her own home. Upon reflection she noted, "When I tried to seek employment before, I wasn't even given a chance to finish an interview…I just really appreciate the opportunity AbilityOne has given me to show my abilities."

Delivering the Goods
Across the country AbilityOne is broadening the employment playing field, as nearly 50,000 individuals who are blind or have significant disabilities and were once viewed as unemployable now work on AbilityOne contracts. People previously perceived as being unable to perform now deliver the goods—from sewing military uniforms to manufacturing office products. Perhaps most inspiring of all, those who once gave up, now have hope and give hope to others; and many who lacked the vision, now see the possibilities.

It has been a long journey to get where we are today. Yet, there are millions without work.*

Beyond the Ordinary
In this issue of AbilityOne Program Magazine, you'll read how assistive technology and simple workplace accommodations enable AbilityOne employees to close out contracts and save millions of taxpayer dollars (see page 10); or how AbilityOne employees recycle tons of electronic waste, (see page 25); and how they help their fellow citizens in times of natural disaster (see page 28).

You'll also learn about important new lines of business and exciting initiatives in the pipeline, such as total facilities management and Section 508 Assurance testing, as we set the course of AbilityOne for 2014 and beyond (see page 8).

A Pledge and Our Thanks
To all those who are blind or have significant disabilities, we pledge to you that we will continue to create more employment opportunities for you as you work towards your goals and dreams.

To all who help further the AbilityOne cause, we thank you for your continued support!

As we close out AbilityOne's 75th anniversary year, two things are certain:

There is much left to do, and "AbilityOne-It Works!"

Sincerely,

Tina Ballard

Tina Ballard, Executive Director and CEO
U.S. AbilityOne Commission®

**According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Aug. 2013 survey, this is the reality faced by nearly 80 percent of working age Americans with disabilities; a group of millions of Americans who make up the largest untapped source of labor in the United States.*

Cover: AbilityOne employee Gerldean Lipscomb sews flags for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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Leading the Way

J. Anthony Poleo

James M. Kesteloot

Dear Friend,

The need to break down stereotypes and correct misperceptions about what it means to be blind or have a significant disability is as important today as it was 75 years ago when the legislation was passed that led to the creation of the AbilityOne® Program.

Nor has the need diminished over those 75 years to create jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. Despite creating a record number of jobs in recent years, the AbilityOne Program has only scratched the surface of creating jobs for the millions of people with significant disabilities who want to work.

Today, we face the challenges of an uncertain economy, declining Federal budgets, curtailed purchasing programs, military drawdown, the impact of sequestration and potential base realignment.

As stewards of one of the most effective government programs ever created, and the single most successful job creation program for people who are blind or have a significant disability, the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® still looks to the future, not with resignation, but united in optimism, and is planning accordingly.

The Commission will continue its work and foster job growth in the years ahead by:

- Maintaining a compliant program where all nonprofit agencies and their employees meet program participation requirements.
- Identifying and, more importantly, following through on new lines of business.
- Building new relationships with large and small businesses.
- Educating our Federal customers to eliminate "leakage," the purchase of essentially the same items in place of AbilityOne products and services.
- Ensuring that our website is fully Section 508 accessible.
- Pursuing efforts to have AbilityOne agencies purchase products from each other.
- Reviewing and improving program policies and procedures on a regular basis.
- Educating our customers to think AbilityOne first!

FY 2013 has been a challenging year, yet there have been bright spots, including having:

- Created an estimated 1,200-plus Full Time Equivalent positions through Commission-approved Procurement List additions.
- Witnessed dramatic growth in the number of nonprofit agencies adopting the Quality Work Environment initiative, now at nearly 50% of all nonprofits in the AbilityOne network and which represent nearly 80% of the workforce.
- Launched a year-long campaign that increased AbilityOne awareness, commemorated the 75th anniversary of the program's founding, and drew thousands of visitors to our website each month.
- Demonstrated added value and AbilityOne employees' attention to detail with a better than 99 percent accuracy rate in identifying more than $500 million dollars in funds for deobligation through AbilityOne contract closeout services.

When Jim Kesteloot and I were first elected as the Vice Chairperson and Chairperson of the Commission respectively, I stated that ours would be a shared leadership. It has been just as I had committed and envisioned. Jim chairs multiple subcommittees and works closely with Tina Ballard and myself in setting the direction for AbilityOne.

I am happy to report that Jim and I were recently re-elected to our positions for a second term, and look forward to continuing to work with you in providing jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. They want the chance to be a part of the greater community and deserve our absolute best effort to make that a reality.

We hope we can count on your continued interest and participation.

J. Anthony Poleo
Chairperson

James M. Kesteloot
Vice Chairperson

History of

1930s

1938
The Committee publishes the first Procurement List.

1940s

1938
President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs into law the Wagner-O'Day Act (named for Sen. Robert Ferdinand Wagner and Rep. Caroline Love Goodwin O'Day) and appoints founding members of the Committee on Purchases of Blind-Made Products. The new law requires Federal agencies to purchase products made by people who are blind.

National Industries for the Blind (NIB) is incorporated.

1939 - 1945
During World War II, employees who are blind manufacture the mops, brooms, pens and office supplies needed to support American forces.

1950s

1950 - 1953
The Korean War changes government procurement patterns and fosters new market opportunities, which increases demand for hundreds of products and quadruples the products sold to the Federal Government.

1952
NIB launches the SKILCRAFT® brand.

1955
The first military resale products reach commissary store shelves.

1960s

1960s
NIB establishes a rehabilitation services division.

As a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis, NIB provides more than one million sanitation kits for the Federal Fall-Out Shelter Program.

1970s

1971
Under the leadership of Sen. Jacob Javits, Congress amends the Wagner-O'Day Act to include people with significant disabilities and allows the program to also provide services to the Federal Government.

The first Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program service contract begins (grounds maintenance for the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island).

1974
NISH is incorporated and begins operation.

1975
NISH adds its first product (Mechanic's Creeper) to the Procurement List.

AbilityOne – It Works!

By Jay M. Thomas

The past year has been momentous for the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® and the two central nonprofit agencies, National Industries for the Blind and SourceAmerica™ (formerly NISH), which help carry out the AbilityOne® Program. From the program's mid-1930s roots in the blindness community, to subsequent and successful efforts in the 1970s to include people with significant disabilities, the AbilityOne Program has been marked by near-continuous growth in numbers of people employed who are blind or have significant disabilities. Growth of the program has been achieved and characterized in multiple ways including more diverse job types, a Procurement List of more than 3,000 products and services, emphasis on creating career ladder positions leading to supervisory or management positions, and improved awareness of the AbilityOne Program throughout the Federal Government and among the general public. June 25, 2013 marked the 75th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing of the original legislation which brought the program into existence.

Building Awareness and Positive Perceptions

To commemorate the anniversary, the U.S. AbilityOne Commission embarked on a year-long campaign in October 2012, "AbilityOne – It Works!" The campaign goal was to build greater awareness for AbilityOne and the audience it serves by tracing the history of the program decade by decade, highlighting individual success stories, and focusing on the capabilities of the people employed through the program. In this way, we hope to dispel myths about and foster more positive perceptions toward people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

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Continued on Page 7

AbilityOne

1980s

1980s
Nonprofit agencies extend the array of services. Highlights include the first commissary shelf-stocking project and first food service at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas; major expansion of custodial services with the U.S. General Services Administration Public Buildings Service; and first operation of a Postal Service Center for the Air Force, at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana.

1990s

1991
The Committee changes its name to Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program provides millions of dollars in critically needed products to support our troops.

1995
The first military Base Supply Center opens and establishes a new distribution channel for NIB's expanded SKILCRAFT® product line.

2000s

2001 to 2003
The Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program provides "surge support" during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

2002
NIB establishes the Business Leaders Program, providing professional development for people who are blind, preparing them for upwardly mobile careers.

2006
The Committee adopts the AbilityOne® brand to show a unified program with broad capabilities, a clear purpose, and a capable, dependable workforce.

2009
The Committee establishes the Quality Work Environment initiative with its three guiding principles stating that AbilityOne employees should be provided competitive wages, a clear career path and ongoing training.

2010
The Department of the Army awards AbilityOne an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contract for contract management support for the Department of Defense following a successful 2009 pilot program.

2011
Sets a historical program record in creating jobs for more than 50,000 people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

The Committee begins operating as the U.S. AbilityOne Commission®.

2012
The Chicago Lighthouse for People who are Blind or Visually Impaired produces its five millionth clock for Federal customers.

2013
AbilityOne and NIB celebrate their 75th anniversaries.

NISH changes its name to SourceAmerica™.

Reflections

"We thank our Federal and military customers for their long-standing advocacy of the AbilityOne Program. Their collaboration, along with the support of all our business partners, has truly made a difference in the growth and diversification of career opportunities for the people we serve. And we invite every business in America to join us in exploring the untapped potential and capabilities of people who are blind."

Kevin A. Lynch
President and Chief Executive Officer, NIB

"The significance of this milestone 75th anniversary year is not just in the longevity of the AbilityOne Program but its ability to provide stellar products and services to Federal customers throughout this period. As a result, people who are blind or have significant disabilities have been able to showcase their skills, reliability and dedication and enjoy the dignity that comes with having a job. Looking ahead, we will continually seek new opportunities for AbilityOne employees to demonstrate their capabilities and delight our customers."

E. Robert Chamberlin
President and Chief Executive Officer, SourceAmerica

Valuing individual **aspirations** and experiences.

Enhancing professional development.

The desire to excel—combined with the right resources, tools, and support network—leads to success.

Booz Allen Hamilton is proud to support the AbilityOne® Program, which changes lives by working to enable all people who are blind or living with significant disabilities to achieve their maximum employment potential.

We believe unique perspectives contribute to innovative ideas, which drive better results not only for our clients, but also for the world around us. At Booz Allen, diversity is central to who we are and what we do. Our commitment to an inclusive environment means facilitating understanding and awareness, and creating initiatives that improve the quality of work life for staff. To find out more, visit **boozallen.com**

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Continued from Page 4

A survey performed just prior to the campaign launch found that Americans have growing confidence in the work capabilities of people who are blind or have significant disabilities, and they support programs such as AbilityOne even more strongly than results revealed in a similar study conducted in 2009. U.S. AbilityOne Commission Chairperson J. Anthony Poleo said of the survey results, "Awareness and education are fundamental precursors to shifting the employment figures for these highly capable yet chronically underemployed individuals in a positive and meaningful way."

Featuring a jumbo-sized "75," an anniversary logo reflecting the program milestone was created to launch the campaign. The logo was applied to all external communications including advertising, press releases, publications and websites over the course of the year.

AbilityOne Success Stories

To make the most of the internet and social media, a microsite, **abilityone.gov/75** was created to highlight key milestones, advocates, Federal customers, and employees who are blind or have significant disabilities who achieved remarkable successes throughout the program's history. The microsite serves as an engaging portal linked to the Federal agency's official website, from which employees of the Federal Government and the American public can learn more about doing business with AbilityOne as well as its history.

"Through the site we hope to open even more doors for individuals who are blind or have significant disabilities, gain new customers and partners, and inspire others to replicate and help evolve the AbilityOne model," said Poleo.

Social media, especially Facebook, complemented the microsite's ability to raise general awareness about the many dedicated individuals and AbilityOne employees who have made the program what it is now and who have contributed time and energy to ensure its future. Daily posts about the program, including microsite items and videos, enabled AbilityOne to reach hundreds of thousands of people each week who have an interest in the Federal Government, the blindness and disability communities, and wounded warriors or veterans with disabilities. In August, the number of people who identified themselves as fans of AbilityOne on Facebook surpassed the goal of 7,500 set at the start of the campaign.

While the AbilityOne Program has high name recognition among the various agencies of the Federal Government, social media helped reach millions more Americans who were previously unfamiliar with the program. They learned about its mission to provide employment opportunities for people who are blind or have significant disabilities through the manufacture of products and delivery of services to Federal agencies.

Video Clips and Viewer Comments

Shown managing Federal facilities, maintaining fleets of vehicles or staffing call centers, videos of AbilityOne employees at work were posted, viewed and shared thousands of times on the AbilityOne Facebook page. The brief clips were particularly effective in breaking down stereotypes and preconceived notions about the abilities of people who are blind or have significant disabilities. Comments posted by viewers indicate how impressed they were by the performance of AbilityOne employees, such as:

"Thanks for making such a difference."
"Wow! These employees are remarkable!"
"I am amazed at how resilient they are! Other people can learn from their drive and overcoming the odds."

For many people, the AbilityOne Facebook page was their first contact with the program. Each month, people who are blind or have disabilities and seeking employment or job skills training submitted questions about AbilityOne. Social media offered a perfect opportunity to connect individuals with the AbilityOne nonprofit agency locator, through which they could search for job opportunities or other assistance from AbilityOne authorized nonprofit agencies.

Future of AbilityOne

As the AbilityOne Program's 75th anniversary campaign draws to a close in October 2013, several conclusions are clear. First, the capabilities of people who are blind or have significant disabilities cannot be underestimated. Each day, nearly 50,000 people demonstrate their talents and ability to succeed in opportunities provided through AbilityOne. Second, as the program continues to grow and evolve, so too will the variety of jobs that will be created. And last, the unique public-private partnership that is the AbilityOne Program remains committed in its mission to unlock new job opportunities for people who are blind or have significant disabilities by identifying and delivering ever-more valuable products and services to its Federal customers.

*To learn more about the growing array of products and services available to Federal customers, or doing business with AbilityOne, turn to page 22 or visit **abilityone.gov**. To visit the 75th anniversary microsite, visit **abilityone.gov/75**.*

Growing Awareness

Social media raises AbilityOne awareness

8,952
Facebook fans as of Sept.17

14,612
Average daily number of people who saw AbilityOne messaging

63.82%
Increase in AbilityOne.gov visitors

26,193
AbilityOne videos played

71.87%
Increase in daily visits to AbilityOne.gov

199,528
Monthly average number of people who saw AbilityOne Facebook posts

730,500%
Increase in daily number of people who viewed AbilityOne social media content

8.95 million
Total AbilityOne Facebook impressions, not including video plays or shares

Evolving Needs, Adding Jobs

As Federal requirements change, AbilityOne works to meet those needs and add jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities

By Jennifer Kuper

Federal budget reductions have resulted in substantial cuts in AbilityOne® Program contracts over the past few years. In response, AbilityOne partners have worked proactively with Federal customers to maintain existing jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. At the same time, the U.S. AbilityOne Commission®, SourceAmerica™ (formerly NISH) and National Industries for the Blind (NIB) continue to develop new contracts with Federal customers, fueling job growth in the years ahead.

To help maintain existing jobs for people with significant disabilities, SourceAmerica staff work with contracting officers to address mandatory budget reductions. This includes collaborating on changes that may be necessary to satisfy budget requirements and minimize jobs lost, and developing "what-if" pricing scenarios to determine the best use of available funds. SourceAmerica also assists its affiliated nonprofit agencies to make necessary changes to accommodate reduced budgets. In addition, the U.S. AbilityOne Commission provides invaluable government-to-government communication support when issues arise.

Memorandums of agreement between NIB and three key defense agencies formalized a commitment to identify and pursue business opportunities that are mutually beneficial to each organization. NIB and Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA), Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) and Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) have historically collaborated in the areas of retail products, services and operational supplies through AbilityOne. Joseph H. Jeu, director and CEO of DeCA, co-signed the DeCA joint vision statement. NEXCOM Chief Executive Officer Robert J. Bianchi and AAFES Director/CEO Tom A. Schull co-signed joint agreements of guiding principles for their organizations.

Kevin Lynch, NIB president and CEO, and Robert J. Bianchi, CEO of Navy Exchange Service Command, sign a memorandum of agreement to pursue business opportunities.

AbilityOne partners are also developing new business with existing customers, expanding existing service and product capabilities to new customers, and developing new lines of business. Recent successes are highlighted below.

Building Up Total Facilities Management (TFM)

AbilityOne nonprofits affiliated with SourceAmerica have provided facilities management services to customers nationwide for more than 15 years. The service currently employs more than 2,000 people who have significant disabilities and that number continues to grow.

"We are looking to advance the TFM line of business and be recognized as a facilities management industry leader that employs people with significant disabilities. With that vision in mind, we will be building up capability and capacity within our nonprofit agencies, and increasing training opportunities for people with significant disabilities," said Heath Rehkop, executive director, SourceAmerica TFM Program Office.

SourceAmerica established the TFM Program Office two years ago to support increasing customer demand for a comprehensive AbilityOne facilities management solution. Since then, notable AbilityOne Program contracts have been awarded in this multidisciplinary offering that provides unique opportunities for people with significant disabilities, including veterans and wounded warriors.

Repository of Golden Job Opportunities

Launching the TFM contract for the Fort Knox Mission and Installation Contracting Command and Directorate of Public Works, for which SourceAmerica is the prime contractor, has been a significant project. The project includes maintenance of buildings,

Cpl. Michael Carro (left) trains with HVAC technician Fran Posey at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, where AbilityOne nonprofit PRIDE Industries provides base operating services. The project currently employs 71 employees with significant disabilities and 28 veterans. Carro was wounded by gunfire while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. Following his medical discharge, Carro found limited career path options due to his injury. In July 2011, with no prior trades experience, Carro enrolled in PRIDE's trade skills program. The program provides employees with significant disabilities with an accredited progressive curriculum of trade skills development. Eight PRIDE employees with disabilities currently carry certificates or licenses for trades, including plumbing, HVAC, heavy equipment operation and water treatment plant operations.

structures, utility systems, dining facility equipment, railroads and grounds, custodial services, and supply and storage.

SourceAmerica and its subcontractors—AbilityOne Network member Lakeview Center of Pensacola, Fla., and the Ginn Group, a service-disabled, veteran-owned business—have placed 23 people with significant disabilities, including veterans and wounded warriors, in technical and trades-related positions. SourceAmerica expects to transition another 11 jobs in the next year. The contract also supports nearly 60 jobs for people with significant disabilities who perform custodial services.

Making a Mark with Top Notch Services

The Mark Center is a state-of-the-art, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold-certified office complex housing approximately 6,400 Department of Defense (DoD) personnel in Alexandria, Va. The Mark Center includes 1.8 million square feet of office space, nearly 3,500 parking spaces, conference centers, retail establishments, a workout and medical facility, and a cafeteria seating approximately 800 people.

David Ratliff works as a custodian at the Mark Center.

ServiceSource of Alexandria, Va., manages the complex in partnership with two other AbilityOne authorized agencies, CW Resources of New Britain, Conn., and Able Forces of Front Royal, Va. ServiceSource's roster of 25 subcontractors also includes 13 small businesses and M.C. Dean of Dulles, Va., a commercial contractor providing operations and technical maintenance services. Together, the three nonprofits and M.C. Dean employ 239 people on the project, including 132 people with significant disabilities. The team hired 44 veterans for this contract, including 32 who have disabilities, and two wounded warriors.

At the Mark Center, ServiceSource and its subcontractors provide operations, maintenance and repair of all electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems; custodial services; conference center and customer service operations; interior carpentry; roads and grounds maintenance; landscaping; mail delivery, and handling of freight and material. Additionally, Virginia Industries for the Blind manages the office supply store.

Double Wins with Contract Management Support (CMS)

Like TFM, contract management support offers significant potential for growth in coming years. AbilityOne employees use assistive technologies and acquire computer skills that place them on a career path with upward mobility. Federal customers benefit by recouping previously obligated funds that remain unspent in completed contracts, helping to offset the impact of recent budget cuts. The

service also enables contracting officers to spend less time on non-inherently governmental closeout functions, focusing instead on more mission-critical functions.

Pilot Program a Great Success

Under the leadership of Dr. Carol E. Lowman, recent member of the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® and former executive director of the Army Contracting Command, the Army established a pilot program for AbilityOne to provide CMS services through an indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract available for all DoD agencies.

Three AbilityOne authorized providers participated in that pilot—Susquehanna Association for the Blind and Vision Impaired in Lancaster, Pa., San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind in Texas, and ServiceSource of Wilmington, Del. These and other agencies, such as Challenge Enterprises of North Florida, continue to create DoD job and career opportunities for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. Some CMS contract closeout specialists, who were trained as AbilityOne employees, have gone on to work for the Federal agencies they served as full-time, permanent employees.

Proof in the Numbers

Since inception of AbilityOne CMS services, through July 2013, AbilityOne contract closeout specialists:

- Identified $538 million to be recouped by Federal agencies.
- Provided 135,547 ready-to-close contracts.
- Achieved an accuracy rate of 99.55 percent.
- Created 135 new positions for people who are blind or have significant disabilities; of those, 27 are wounded warriors or veterans with disabilities.

"These new business services are meeting the demands of our Federal Government customers," says John Qua, NIB's vice president for services. "And at the same time, we're building careers for people who are blind."

DoD Customers Take Note

Vice Admiral Mark Harnitchek, director, Defense Logistics Agency, stresses the importance of the AbilityOne products and services provided for defense customers, ranging from Army combat uniforms, medical litters and computer components, to supply chain and CMS services.

Noting DLA's mandate to cut costs over the next decade, he said, "We need to try new things, come up with new ideas. The country and the taxpayers demand it."

Under the DoD-wide contract, DLA recently added five positions at Land and Maritime in Columbus, Ohio under a task order performed by Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and added three positions at DLA Redistribution, Battle Creek, Mich., under another task order performed by Peckham Industries of Lansing, Mich.

First Civilian CMS Contracts

In addition to more than 30 CMS task orders from DoD, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) signed the first civilian agency contract for NIB's CMS services. Under the contract, AbilityOne

Peter Ash, contract closeout specialist at The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, began working at the AbilityOne nonprofit in 2008 as a volunteer in the low vision clinic. The Chicago Lighthouse just completed its initial FAA pilot contract and extension, and has expanded its CMS services to three military bases across the country. The Chicago Lighthouse closed out nearly 3,000 contracts in the past year.

employees at The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired gather the required data, forms and documentation to present FAA officers with ready-to-close contracts for final disposition. Through the third quarter of FY 2013, four new jobs were created in Chicago for people who are blind. Based on this experience, more civilian agencies are considering CMS services.

Also in FY 2013, ServiceSource launched CMS closeout services for the Architect of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. The Architect of the Capitol is a legislative branch agency responsible for the maintenance, operation, development and preservation of the U.S. Capitol complex. Steve Hoffman, SourceAmerica's 2011 Honor Roll for Veterans with Disabilities award winner, performs closeout services as a contract specialist on this CMS contract.

Section 508 Assurance of Accessibility

Building on their success with CMS, some AbilityOne authorized providers launched a new service to address conformance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The law mandates that all electronic and information technology (IT) systems including websites which are developed, procured, maintained or used by the Federal Government must be accessible to people who are blind or have disabilities.

Some AbilityOne employees were originally trained and employed on CMS and other contracts for Federal customers. These employees then parlayed those skills into direct employment offers with

Terry McManus instructs Tamima Aman on the use of assistive technology at the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind.

commercial software businesses to make systems accessible to people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

That's an aspirational goal of AbilityOne: that individuals receive training, experience and upward mobility through the AbilityOne Program and ultimately "graduate" from the program to competitive employment.

Building on Past Performance for the Future

Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind (CLB) in Washington, D.C., is working on a subcontract with a commercial company to provide Section 508 testing for the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Section 508 Program Office. Specifically, CLB employees who are blind test the VA's accessibility of electronic programs and IT, including websites, web applications, electronic documents and web courses.

CLB is also working with another subcontractor on Section 508 Assurance services for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). While these projects have not yet put Section 508 Assurance on the AbilityOne Procurement List, they provide valuable past performance examples for potential opportunities, which may lead to new AbilityOne business.

Expanding Contact Center Services

AbilityOne contact center service contracts with the Federal Government provided jobs for more than 1,900 people who are blind or have significant disabilities, and generated over $110 million in revenue last year. SourceAmerica agencies provide contact center services from coast to coast, and offer quality standards, customer satisfaction scores and productivity levels that are unparalleled within the industry.

In addition, NIB associated agencies operate onsite at AbilityOne customer locations or at 15 high-performance call centers. Customers include the Environmental Protection Agency, General Services Administration, and the Department of Transportation.

Supporting DoD's Human Resource Activity

A new DoD contact center contract consolidates three contact centers for the Defense Human Resource Activity, Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) into one location at Fort Knox, Ky., and gives job priority to veterans and wounded warriors. DMDC is DoD's human resource information source, serving as the authoritative source of information for more than 42 million people now and previously connected to DoD. DMDC provides secure services and solutions to support DoD's mission, and is recognized as a world leader in identity management.

A SourceAmerica-affiliated agency, InspiriTec of Philadelphia, Pa., successfully transitioned the first contact center, the Personnel Security Assurance Help Desk, to Fort Knox. InspiriTec is partnering with the commercial incumbent of the other two contact centers over 18 months, to assist with technical issues and transition. Due to the highly technical nature of the customer calls, a gradual phase-in was proposed for the consolidation and the incumbent will continue to

Kekera Arnold performs contact center services at the Defense Manpower Data Center at Fort Knox.

Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind, N.C., opened its 18th AbilityOne Base Supply Center at the Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington, D.C., in January.

operate at the current locations in Alexandria, Va., and Seaside, Calif., until the consolidation is complete.

The contract currently employs 38 people with significant disabilities, including one wounded warrior and 36 veterans with disabilities. The project is expected to employ about 200 people with significant disabilities once the transition is complete.

Opening Doors to New Base Supply Centers (BSCs)

Two new BSCs opened in August, bringing NIB's FY 2013 total of new openings to four. Industries for the Blind in Milwaukee opened its newest store at the Barnes Federal Building in Boston, and LC Industries Inc., Durham, N.C., opened a new BSC at Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, Miss. Earlier in the year, Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind, N.C., opened new stores at the Office of Naval Intelligence in Suitland, Md., and at the Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington, D.C.

These openings represent encouraging news for the BSC program in a difficult economic environment, and offer testimony to the value they bring to Federal Government and military customers around the country. By the end of FY 2013, AbilityOne network members operate 150 Base Supply Centers.

Fleet Management Services Take Off

AbilityOne fleet management contracts vary in complexity, size and scope from managing and staffing large-scale turn-key maintenance and repair operations to providing a few additional technical specialists to supplement clients' fulltime staffs. AbilityOne fleet management services include vehicle management, aircraft washing, operations and administrative functions, and transportation services.

Skookum Educational Programs of Bremerton, Wash., reached its one-year milestone providing transportation management services, including vehicle and equipment maintenance and repair, for the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) in Washington, D.C. NRL serves as one of the principal in-house research and development laboratories for the U.S. Navy.

Strong customer service and quality have been Skookum's first-year priorities, and the agency has received positive customer feedback. NRL Quality Assurance Manager Mike Schultz wrote to Skookum, "I hear compliments about you and your staff ALL OF THE TIME. Never had it so good."

Skookum operates and maintains all of NRL's transportation vehicles and equipment inventory. The staff also tracks maintenance and repair costs, mileage and fuel data. Skookum also provides daily shuttle bus services around the laboratory, executive car services throughout Washington, D.C., and logistics transportation support to NRL's employees and operations. The project employs eight people with significant disabilities.

New Products for New Markets

As with AbilityOne services, nonprofit agencies that make products are encountering reduced spending on current contracts, reduced demand for new projects (especially war-related items), and pressure to cut prices on current and new contracts.

In response, SourceAmerica established an initiative encouraging nonprofits to work collaboratively to identify line of business challenges and to develop new AbilityOne and commercial opportunities. Business development growth strategies being employed include identifying new channels for existing projects, and encouraging prime contractors to subcontract with AbilityOne agencies.

Canh Le assembles combat knives for DePaul Industries on a contract with Defense Logistics Agency.

Restoring and Repairing Clothing and Equipment

A new contract with the Army's National Level Organizational Clothing Individual Equipment (OCIE) Repair and Warehousing Program combines supply chain management, laundry operations and apparel manufacturing expertise into one contract for the Army Contracting Command, Clothing and Heraldry Office based in Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. The contract is designed to clean and repair unserviceable, but economically repairable OCIE, consolidate inventory in regional warehouses and save the Army significant sustainment dollars. Peckham of Lansing, Mich., employs 97 people with significant disabilities who launder, restore and repair clothing and equipment, and provide supply chain management.

Sharpening Skills

One example of a recent AbilityOne commercial partnership is a project to deliver combat knives for the Defense Logistics Agency. For this project, AbilityOne Network member DePaul Industries of Portland, Ore., partnered with Gerber Legendary Blades to provide two types of combat knives for the military. Gerber provides DePaul with all of the parts, which DePaul's AbilityOne employees with disabilities assemble, package and ship. Gerber also provided training in assembly and safety for DePaul's staff. To date, DePaul has assembled and shipped nearly 10,000 knives to three distribution warehouses for the military. The contract created jobs for 12 people with significant disabilities.

Repatriating Jobs

LC Industries (LCI) of Durham, N.C., also recently co-branded with a commercial business. LCI now produces the solid case padlocks preferred by U.S. Armed Forces, the first AbilityOne co-branded

product line with Master Lock. The production of American Lock brass and steel padlocks brings jobs back to America. The project is expected to provide a significant amount of jobs for Americans who are blind.

Protecting Documents

LCI also began manufacturing document protectors that feature a new technology that allows clear plastic products to be made using post-consumer recycled materials. These are the first document protectors to enter the market with that technology. In the past, recycled materials clouded and discolored the plastic, a problem because document protectors must give a clear view of the document inside for presentation purposes.

Durable, Attractive and Secure

West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind in San Angelo is making lanyards with various configurations and fasteners. Unlike most that are made in China, these lanyards will be sewn by Americans who are blind. The lanyards are more durable and attractive than most of their commercial counterparts. Additionally, they added an RFID-shielded Smart Card holder, which blocks the scanning of RFID information, holding up to two Smart Cards. ■

Fighting for the WARFIGHTER

By D. Douglas Graham

AbilityOne® nonprofit agencies support active duty military by making products used overseas and at home, and by performing support services stateside. When our wounded warriors come home, the AbilityOne network of nearly 600 nonprofits are there to provide training and employment that help service members reintegrate into the working world and civilian society. These local nonprofits are supported in their efforts by two central nonprofit agencies, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and Source America™.

A wounded soldier faces obstacles most of us never worry about. How to get up a flight of stairs in a wheelchair? How to shop in a store designed for people with no mobility issues? How to try on clothing? How to remain self-sufficient following service-connected disabilities?

"A year ago we had no facilities for veterans with disabilities," recalls Deniz Barcala, manager, Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) Military Clothing Store, Kleber Kaserne Military Base, Kaiserslautern, Germany. "Soldiers evacuated from a combat zone to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center were bussed to the Kleber Exchange to shop. We had to help them through the warehouse, which they found very hard to navigate with a shopping cart filled with 30 or more items. AAFES decided we could do better."

The Wounded Heroes Service Center is one of a kind—a clothing outlet designed specifically for injured service members, with enhancements ranging from automatic doors to wheelchair-access ramps and accessible shelving. Its mission: to streamline the process of uniform item replacement for soldiers medically evacuated from combat zones. Soldiers who are medically evacuated from a combat zone frequently become separated from their equipment. They often need to acquire new items to wear while they are undergoing medical treatment, are awaiting travel back to the U.S., or headed back to the combat zone.

"The center offers…a quicker, easier and less stressful experience," explains Sgt. Brett Boman, a wounded soldier from 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team in Schweinfurt, Germany. "It's user-friendly, and that helps a lot."

The center enables wounded warriors to re-equip in comfort and privacy, assisted by a team of associates who cart items for them, and pack them for the bus ride back to the hospital. Inventory runs the gamut from full military uniforms to gloves, headgear and duffel bags—items produced by AbilityOne® Program employees here at home.

Products for War and Peace

AbilityOne nonprofits are deeply invested in America's military heroes. Many of these agencies support service members through the manufacture of everything from coats and trousers for men and women to bathroom tissue, produced by employees who are blind or have significant disabilities.

"We make military items for combat and peaceful use," explains Goodwill Industries of South Florida Vice President, Sherri Scyphers Hungate. "One of our biggest product categories is the Army Combat Uniform or ACU, in universal camouflage. Currently we produce about 300,000 ACU trousers and 84,000 coats. We also manufacture dress items such as Army and Navy garrison caps, and Air Force dress pants for women."

Employees with significant disabilities at Goodwill South Florida also manufacture products designed to protect soldiers, including Army combat pants in multi-cam camouflage, and flame-retardant combat vehicle crewman hoods, which protect the head and neck in areas where the risk of encountering a homemade explosive device is very high. These same AbilityOne employees also make interment flags for military funerals.

Peckham, an AbilityOne authorized provider based in Lansing, Mich., makes military apparel and accessories. Employees with significant disabilities, including veterans, staff the company's manufacturing centers, and perform work on service contracts through the AbilityOne Program.

Sgt. Brett Boman, a medically evacuated soldier, holds a uniform replacement made by AbilityOne nonprofits.
Credit: SSG Warren Wright, 21st TSC

Josh Scarborough rapidly advanced after his hiring at Outlook Nebraska.

Former service members also work at Outlook Nebraska, a nonprofit that provides employment and other opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired. Outlook Nebraska makes paper products for Federal and military use: bathroom tissue, towels and other materials deployed to U.S. base supply centers and installations overseas. Wounded veterans often make Outlook a permanent home for work, as it offers good wages and upward mobility.

"I started as a third shift production employee," recalls Joshua Scarborough, an 11-year Army veteran who lost most of his vision through an improvised explosive device. "In less than a year, I was promoted to quality control, and safety facilitator. The company provides the tools I need to work around my disability. I work with a high-powered software program that magnifies everything on a computer screen, and makes it easier for me to perform my job."

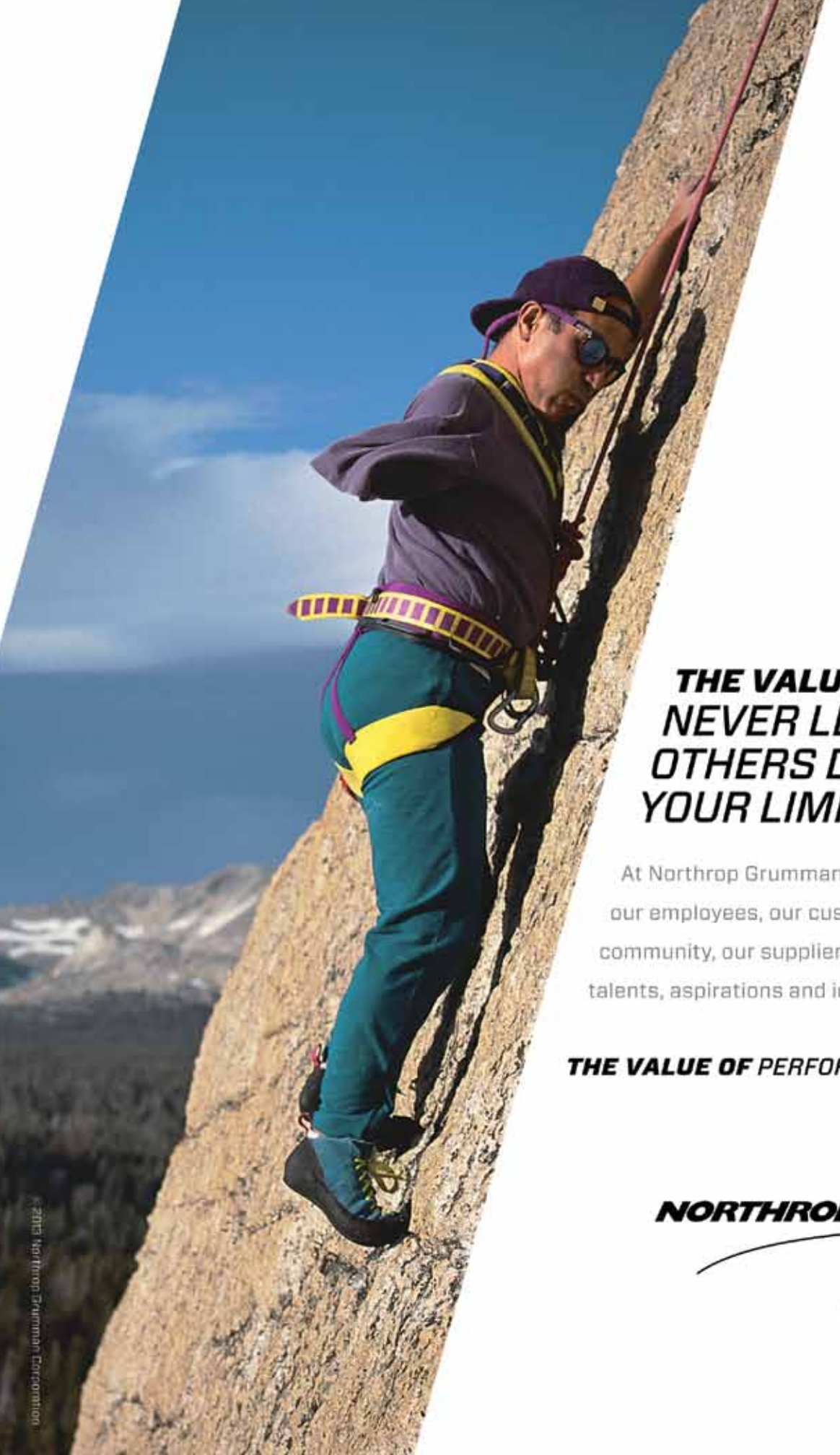
Linden Resources, an Arlington, Virginia-based provider of services to adults with significant disabilities, operates a number of AbilityOne contracts including a fulfillment warehouse, a secure document destruction site, and a printing and copying facility. Last year the nonprofit hired 14 veterans, a mission milestone for an organization fixed on providing needed services to Federal, corporate and military customers, and stable employment opportunities for veterans with disabilities.

Help for the Wounded Warrior

John Boulanger of San Diego, Calif., is a wounded warrior whose future is once again promising. The U.S. Army veteran served as a U.N. military adviser in Israel, Jordan and the Golan Heights. An injury received in airborne training left his vertebra fused, and led to disc degeneration over time. Boulanger left the military just as the economy was crashing. Five months of searching the civilian job market got him nowhere. Then he came to Project HIRED, an AbilityOne nonprofit agency in San Jose, Calif., whose mission is to help people with disabilities find and sustain employment.

"I was Project HIRED's first guinea pig," Boulanger remembers. "I'd applied for hundreds of jobs by then, but the economy was frozen solid. HIRED landed me a position at the Defense Department Data Center in Monterey."

Project HIRED works with employers through the Wounded Warrior Workforce Program, which helps veterans with disabilities achieve civilian job success using their military training and experience. HIRED screens and matches veterans to positions for which they qualify, and once on the job, performs regular audits to help keep them there.



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CDS Monarch employees Jon Stanley, a U.S. Navy veteran, and Shawn McIntyre, a U.S. Army veteran, inspect and label spice containers that are shipped to military customers all over the world.

"We check on clients on a 30-60-90-day basis," says Project HIRED Executive Director, Gwen Ford. "Should issues arise relating to their disability, we can help our clients manage those problems far more effectively than the employer because we are specialists in this area, and have done so more than a dozen times for corporations large and small. Some of our clients have landed very good positions at major corporations."

Project HIRED also provides training for veterans with disabilities to secure jobs of their choosing. Training can be skills based, or include cultural reorientation, the process of helping veterans understand and navigate the transition between military and civilian environments.

Nonprofits employing wounded warriors see cultural reorientation as a major component of their mission. CDS Monarch of Rochester, N.Y., is an AbilityOne nonprofit that traditionally works with people with developmental disabilities. A recent CDS Monarch launch, "Warrior Salute," assists veterans with disabilities via a program comprised of fitness and vocational training, and cultural reconnection to the world beyond the military. CDS Monarch provides food, shelter, transportation, and work that builds resumes. The company packages spices which are deployed to military bases around the world. Clients who have disabilities work in the plant an average of three hours a day, and receive regular counseling while on board.

"Some of our clients come to us in a shut down state," says CDS Monarch President and CEO Sankar Sewnauth. "They're scared of everything, and have to be coaxed back to life. We work with them on an individual basis. We also charge a small fee for their maintenance, not because we need the money, but because veterans are not the kind of people who want something for nothing. Paying even a small amount preserves their self-respect, and that's an important part of the healing process."

Jonathan Hurley is a former lance corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps who was medically retired after being badly wounded in Iraq. As part of its commitment to supporting wounded warriors, Industries for the Blind-Milwaukee in West Allis, Wisc., recently hired Hurley as its Wounded Warrior Supply Program coordinator.

CJ Lange, senior vice president of sales and marketing for the AbilityOne authorized nonprofit says, "We are just getting started, and hiring Jon has helped us to launch this opportunity. We now employ 21 military veterans, but are looking to hire more to meet the needs of our ever-growing customer base."

"This is an amazing opportunity," says Hurley. "My main priority is to find returning service men and women like me out there who need jobs, to find people with skills this company can employ. That's my goal."

The AbilityOne network of nearly 600 agencies like Outlook Nebraska, CDS Monarch, Project HIRED and IB-Milwaukee are enabling Veterans with disabilities to retake their place in the workforce. Through training and support, meaningful work, and continued service to their country by supporting their colleagues still in uniform, AbilityOne helps these veterans heal and fulfill their potential. ■

Denise Carter of Challenge Unlimited poses a question during a panel discussion on doing business with prime contractors.

Making the Connection

Education and Outreach Critical to Program Success

By Jay M. Thomas

As the AbilityOne® Program has grown and evolved, so too have efforts to better connect the program's mission—providing employment opportunities for people who are blind or have severe disabilities in the manufacture and delivery of products and services to the Federal Government—with Federal customers, private industry partners, legislators and affiliated nonprofit agencies.

Several efforts were launched or intensified this year to improve program support and understanding; to educate people about the capabilities of those employed; and to increase opportunities to do business with AbilityOne nonprofit agencies. These efforts have added importance as Federal budget cuts are expected to continue to affect AbilityOne employees and agencies.

New Brand Launch

On July 1, in a highly visible change, NISH, one of two Federally-designated national nonprofits that help administer the AbilityOne Program, launched its new brand, SourceAmerica™ in order to better connect the organization with the mission. The organization's mission to create employment opportunities for people with significant disabilities remains unchanged, and SourceAmerica will continue to execute that mission in the Federal, defense contractor and commercial sectors. (For more information on the brand launch, see page 41.)

Lunch and Learn

In the past year, the U.S. AbilityOne Commission®, the Federal agency which oversees the AbilityOne Program, introduced a "Lunch and Learn" training series. The concept was to bring leaders from the nearly 600 AbilityOne nonprofit agencies together with business executives to share best practices. Nearly 400 participants took part in the first five interactive events.

Gloria Pualani, corporate director of Northrop Grumman called for "spirited collaboration" between attendees at the first event, held at Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Va. Subsequent events were held in Chicago; Arlington, Va., Redondo Beach, Calif., and San Antonio at the SourceAmerica National Conference.

The events enabled nonprofit and business leaders to meet and establish new business relationships in a two-way mentoring process. Designed

Rep. Ron Barber (AZ-D), at left, meets with Carol Carr, executive director of ACHIEVE Human Services, self-advocate Holly Anderson, and Fernando Cornejo of the AbilityOne nonprofit.

Pictured left to right: Jack Sisson, legislative assistant for Sen. John Boozman (R-AR), with Toni Fraser, advocate for leadership and employment, Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind, and Bill Johnson, CEO, Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind.

to meet the challenge of Federal budget reductions and increased competition, the sessions offered a diverse group of speakers and presentations aimed at networking and business process improvement.

Sessions included panel presentations from corporate executives on doing business with prime contractors; best value and best practices for nonprofits wanting to collaborate on future contract opportunities; EEO compliance and the Service Contract Act.

In addition to developing industry relationships, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and SourceAmerica increased their own efforts to give voice to people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

Public Policy Forum

Under the theme "Opening Doors to Opportunity Through Employment," May's NIB Public Policy Forum brought leaders and employees from nonprofit agencies serving people who are blind to Washington, D.C., to meet with elected officials and their staffs, who heard firsthand about the importance of continued support for the AbilityOne Program. Nonprofit agency employees who are blind shared their stories of personal success through employment opportunity in more than 125 meetings on Capitol Hill.

At the same time, nonprofit agency executives briefed legislators from 22 states on challenges facing their agencies as a result of Federal budget tightening. They also stressed the importance of all branches of government using AbilityOne affiliated nonprofits as a mandatory source of supply.

Grassroots Advocacy

At NIB's second annual Grassroots Forum in August, nonprofit agencies invited elected leaders to visit while on recess in their home districts. The forum offered another opportunity for agency leaders and employees who are blind to speak directly to their representatives. The first event in 2012 took place at nearly 40 locations across the country.

In June, SourceAmerica held its largest Grassroots Advocacy Conference to date, when nearly 50 self-advocates from 37 nonprofit agencies serving people with significant disabilities made almost 200 visits to lawmakers in Washington, D.C.

Self-advocates told lawmakers how their jobs made it possible to provide for themselves, and expressed their concern about Federal budget actions resulting in job losses among people with disabilities, where nearly 80% do not have jobs. More than 1,400 AbilityOne Program jobs have been lost since March 1.

"I am going to the Hill tomorrow to say to our legislators we need programs like AbilityOne because, without them, people with significant disabilities would not have a shot at being who they are today," said Nathan Burtch, a Peckham employee at the National Passport Information Center, an AbilityOne contract in Lansing, Mich.

In closing his keynote speech at SourceAmerica's Grassroots Advocacy Conference, Joe Jordan, Administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy offered supportive comments on the AbilityOne Program's collective efforts to better connect its mission to customers and partners, saying, "We are all very aware of the budget constraints that we're under, but I think it is imperative for all of us to find the opportunities within the challenges that we face. I stand ready to continue working with all of you, to partner with AbilityOne and to increase opportunities for the individuals you [nonprofit agencies] are representing." ■

ON THE

Presidential appointees to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission offer candid thoughts on the importance of the AbilityOne Program and their work on the Commission.

Robert T. Kelly, Jr. - **Private Citizen and Expert on Obstacles to Employment of Persons with Significant Disabilities.** Appointed by President George W. Bush to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® in July 2003, Kelly previously served on a number of disability-related boards and councils including two terms on the U.S. Access Board, where he worked on drafting rules for the Americans with Disabilities Act. Kelly is also a participant in the Commission's Speakers Bureau which helps spread the word about the AbilityOne Program.

On The Record: *"It is a privilege for me to support the efforts of the AbilityOne Program in improving the lives of those who are blind or have significant disabilities by creating job opportunities not normally available to them."*

Paul M. Laird - **Regional Director, North Central Region, Federal Prison Industries, Department of Justice.** Appointed to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission by President George W. Bush in June 2007, Laird began his career with the Federal Bureau of Prisons as a Correctional Officer at the Federal Correctional Institution, Phoenix. In April 2007, he was appointed Assistant Director of the Industries, Education, and Vocational Training Division - Federal Bureau of Prisons, and Chief Operating Officer of Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR).

On The Record: *"One of the most remarkable experiences in my career in public service has been the opportunity to proudly serve as a member of the AbilityOne Commission. The AbilityOne Program, without question, makes a positive difference in the lives of those for whom it was meant to serve."*

Lisa M. Wilusz – **Director of the Office of Procurement and Property Management, Department of Agriculture.** Wilusz was appointed to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission by President Barack Obama in 2011. She is responsible for providing leadership, oversight and policy in the areas of procurement, property management, environmental stewardship, and employee safety. She returned to the USDA in 2002 following a number of Federal positions, and has managed two enterprise systems, one in procurement and one for the Office of Civil Rights.

On the Record: *"USDA is big on green initiatives, and those initiatives in turn create jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. It's a win-win situation for all concerned."*

Karen J. McCulloh – **Private Citizen Representing Nonprofit Agency Employees with Significant Disabilities.** McCulloh was appointed by President Barack Obama to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission in October 2011. She served as the Project Director for the National Disability Institute LEAD Center and now consults on LEAD Center Special Projects. Ms. McCulloh co-founded the National Organization of Nurses with Disabilities and was the founding executive director of disabilityWorks, a project to reduce barriers to the employment of people with disabilities. She served on the National Job Corps Advisory Committee as Chairperson of the Subcommittee on Disability. McCulloh also served on President-elect Obama and Biden's Transition Team in 2008, where she reviewed the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

On the Record: *"I look forward to the time when people with disabilities are identified by their abilities, not by their disability."*

Anil Lewis – **Private Citizen Representing Nonprofit Agency Employees Who Are Blind.** Lewis was appointed to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® by President Barack Obama in May 2012. Lewis is currently the Director of Advocacy and Policy for the National Federation of the Blind in Baltimore. Blind since 1989, Lewis earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration in Computer Information Systems and a master's degree in Public Administration in Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation from Georgia State University. Lewis served as President of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of Georgia, was elected to the NFB Board of Directors. He was also the founding chairman of the board of directors of the Disability Law and Policy Center of Georgia. The governor of Georgia appointed Lewis as president of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Georgia.

On the Record: *"I believe in the employment potential of all individuals with disabilities and strive to make the AbilityOne Program the premier employer of people who are blind or have significant disabilities."*

RECORD

Kathleen Martinez – **Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy, Department of Labor (DOL).** Martinez was appointed to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission by President Barack Obama in July 2010, and was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to be the third U.S. DOL Assistant Secretary for the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) on June 25, 2009. Martinez advises the Secretary of Labor and works with all DOL agencies to lead a comprehensive and coordinated national policy regarding the employment of people with disabilities. Blind since birth, Martinez comes to ODEP with a background as an internationally recognized disability rights leader.

On the Record: *"Put simply, work is fundamental to identity. It means much more than a paycheck; it offers purpose and the opportunity to lead a more independent, self-directed life for all people—including America's millions of people with disabilities."*

Rear Admiral Mark F. Heinrich – **Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) and 46th Chief of Supply Corps, Department of the Navy.** President Barack Obama appointed Heinrich to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission in May 2012. Heinrich served as commander, NAVSUP Global Logistics Support, as well as Director of Logistics Operations and Readiness for the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), and Commander of Defense Supply Center Richmond, Va. Heinrich was commissioned in the Navy Supply Corps following graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy with a bachelor's degree in Engineering. He also holds master's degrees in Business Administration and Petroleum Management from the University of Kansas.

On the Record: *"I have personally visited quite a few of the AbilityOne operations, and it reminds me of why we serve. The Navy believes in the AbilityOne mission, and there is a great deal of opportunity to partner in the future and increase employment for the Patriots who make up the AbilityOne team."*

William Sisk – **Deputy Commissioner, Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).** Sisk was appointed to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission by President Barack Obama in August 2011. He leads GSA's acquisition of a wide range of commodities and services used by Federal agencies. Having started his career as a GSA intern, he recently served as the Assistant Commissioner for the Office of General Supplies and Services (QS), the FAS Southeast Sunbelt Region Commissioner, and the Acting PBS Southeast Sunbelt Region Commissioner, giving him the diverse experience and customer understanding critical to helping FAS build on its past success.

On the Record: *"Almost 50 percent of GSA's revenue from green products comes from the AbilityOne Program. Our partnership is greening the federal government."*

Dr. P. Edward Anthony - **Deputy Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Department of Education.** Anthony was appointed to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission by President George W. Bush in May 2006, and in June 2006 he was appointed Deputy Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). RSA's mission is to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve employment, independence, and integration into the workplace and the community. He served for 30 years in the U.S. Army Reserves, achieving the rank of Colonel, and is a graduate of Florida State University with a bachelor's degree in International Affairs, and master's and doctorate degrees in Education Administration.

On the Record: *"The employment of individuals with disabilities in the general workforce is way too low. We can and must do more to promote the meaningful employment and independence of individuals with disabilities through increased inclusion, equity, and opportunity."*

Jan R. Frye – **Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Logistics, Department of Veterans Affairs.** Frye was appointed to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission by President Barack Obama in October 2011. Frye is a retired U.S. Army Colonel, having served on active duty for 30 years. He served in senior acquisition command and staff positions in the United Kingdom, Republic of Korea, Hungary, and the U.S. Frye currently serves on the Board of Directors for the National Contract Management Association. He holds master's degrees in National Resource Strategy from National Defense University and in Contracting and Acquisition Management from Florida Institute of Technology.

On the Record: *"For 75 years AbilityOne has coordinated participation among nonprofit agencies to provide jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. With a very modest budget, they coordinate employment for nearly 50,000 people, including 3,000 veterans. The return on investment is immeasurable, as it allows those who would probably otherwise not be employed, to become productive citizens. The VA is proud to be a part of this great program."*

For Federal Agencies:

Getting Started with AbilityOne

1 IDENTIFY

your need for a product or service...AbilityOne® provides thousands of product and service options

2 CONTACT

AbilityOne...We have technical experts and a network of nearly 600 experienced contractors nationwide

3 REVIEW

"no-obligation" price proposal from NIB or SourceAmerica™

4 NEGOTIATE

terms, conditions and a fair market price with NIB or SourceAmerica

5 SourceAmerica or NIB

sends request to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® for Procurement List addition

6 COMMISSION

determines if product or service is suitable for addition to the PL and validates the price represents a Fair Market Price

7 COMMISSION

approves Procurement List addition; issues notice to the Contracting Officer; contract begins

About AbilityOne Partners

- Contracting agencies procure products and services for the Federal Government.
- The U.S. AbilityOne Commission administers the AbilityOne Program.
- The central nonprofit agencies, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and SourceAmerica, assist and support AbilityOne-participating nonprofit agencies in contracting with the government through the AbilityOne Program.
- AbilityOne-participating nonprofit agencies are community-based organizations dedicated to training and employing people who are blind or have significant disabilities; they also deliver quality products and services to Federal customers.

AbilityOne® PROGRAM

www.AbilityOne.org
800-999-5963

AbilityOne by the Numbers

In the U.S., where nearly 80 percent of people who are blind or have significant disabilities do not have jobs, analysis of AbilityOne® Program data for FY 2012 shows:

- Nearly 50,000 Americans are employed through AbilityOne, 3,000 of whom are veterans
- Nonprofit agency members of the AbilityOne Network operate at nearly 1,000 locations representing 40 government agencies nationally, including operation of 150 base supply centers
- The program is facilitated through a network of almost 600 community-based nonprofit agencies
- AbilityOne nonprofit agencies deliver nearly $3 billion of products and services purchased by the Federal Government

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Procurement List? The list of products and services which Federal agencies must purchase at prices established by the U.S. AbilityOne Commission under FAR 8.002, Subpart 8.7. It is found at **abilityone.gov/procurement_list**.

How are prices set? Federal agencies and NIB or SourceAmerica negotiate in good faith and agree upon a price that is evaluated by U.S. AbilityOne Commission staff to determine if it is "fair and reasonable" in relation to the marketplace. A formal vote by the U.S. AbilityOne Commission establishes the initial fair market price at the time a product or service is added to the Procurement List. Learn more at **abilityone.gov/laws,_regulations_and_policy/policy_memos_pricing.html**.

How to become an AbilityOne employee? Visit **abilityone.org/work_with_us/people.html** to find participating nonprofits near you. If you apply and are hired, you will need to provide medical documentation and undergo a preadmission evaluation.

Does AbilityOne support Small Business? Yes. A recent survey found that out of nearly half of the program's largest agencies, 25% of subcontract dollars ($217M) was awarded to small businesses. Additionally, almost 500 small businesses are part of AbilityOne's commercial distribution network.

How to become an AbilityOne authorized distributor? Review the authorization criteria and submit the completed application. Following a review, vendors will be notified in writing when their authorization is final. The Commission charges no fee for authorization. Learn more at **abilityone.gov/distributors/potential.html**.

How to put AbilityOne to work for my Federal agency? To learn how AbilityOne can support your requirements, request a briefing at **abilityone.org/contact/briefing.asp**.

AbilityOne's Bright Job-Creation Horizon

By Gwen Moran

An Ideas to Work Fund grant helped Hope Services expand its electronic recycling business into Monterey, Calif., creating jobs for people with significant disabilities.

Since the height of the recession, job creation has dominated news headlines. Historically, the AbilityOne® Program has been at the forefront of that effort. Since its inception in legislation enacted in 1938, the program has grown to include nearly 600 nonprofit agencies creating jobs for almost 50,000 people, making it the nation's largest source of employment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

To counter the impact of the 2008 economic downturn, AbilityOne nonprofits have set in place various creative partnerships and innovative business approaches to expand their lines of products and services, and to generate new and diverse job opportunities with career paths. These lines of business account for more than $2.3 billion in products and services provided to the Federal Government and private organizations, and led to the development of the Quality Work Environment (QWE) initiative, established by the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® in 2009.

QWE is designed to improve AbilityOne employee job satisfaction, improve wages, and enhance overall quality of life in addition to creating more jobs. More than 50 percent of AbilityOne nonprofit agencies now take part in the initiative. The goal is to have 95 percent of authorized AbilityOne agencies participate by 2014 and 100 percent by the end of the following year.

"QWE supports values on three different levels. First, at an individual level, where it improves an individual's productivity and wages, with the development of a career plan or help with advancement within or outside the agency. On an agency level, it supports the bottom line by improving productivity and service delivery, and helps the agency demonstrate leadership as a model employer. On a national level, the self-assessment and strategic action plan demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement for people with disabilities and the disability community at large," says Larissa Timmerberg, SourceAmerica™ QWE director.

AbilityOne jobs are highly diverse, ranging from traditional facilities operations and food service to more highly skilled jobs in management, IT, finance, engineering, and more. In addition to QWE, other initiatives focus on career choice and exploration, better wages, and new occupations for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. The program incorporates and promotes the use of assistive technology as a path to overcome barriers to employment.

Innovative job-creation programs and other plans are also under development by NIB and SourceAmerica, the two authorized enterprises which support the U.S.

Brian Hurley, who is blind, leads NIB's QWE efforts and says, "The sky's the limit for people who are blind."

AbilityOne Commission, the Federal agency that administers the program.

Ideas to Work Fund (IWF) Grant Program: The IWF program helps nonprofits begin or expand successful programs that currently provide employment for people with significant disabilities. This matching grant program, developed by SourceAmerica, encourages innovative thinking to develop new lines of business with strong potential to create jobs, and helps fund those ideas. The goal is to have each funded initiative return a minimum of 10 new jobs to AbilityOne.

In FY 2012, the agencies involved created 516 jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities, and an additional 300 jobs in FY 2013 as their programs grew. To date, the nonprofits report more than 800 new jobs have been created for people with significant disabilities in new lines of business that include a franchise opportunity, metal grinding, electronic recycling, elder and health care food service, contact center, an internship program for information technology (IT) jobs, peer care coordination, and a hydroponics (gardening) program. Specific jobs created include customer service representatives, information technology help desk technicians, and electronic waste collection event coordinators, just to name a few.

One promising idea is the Electronic Waste to Wages program operated by Hope Services of San Jose, Calif. In September 2011, the agency, which provides services and job training to more than 2,500 people with developmental disabilities, received an IWF $100,000 grant to expand their electronics recycling program to four area counties.

Veterans Workforce Initiative: AbilityOne and its partner agencies are committed to employing veterans with disabilities. As part of the SourceAmerica Institute for Economic Empowerment, this initiative matches Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans who have significant disabilities with jobs that match their career goals and employment interests. The initiative partners with the National Organization on Disability to research and test short- and long-term employment opportunities for veterans who have sustained traumatic brain injury or have post-traumatic stress disorder. Areas of particular interest include health care, information technology, and total facilities management, all of which offer jobs paying competitive wages while providing true advancement opportunities.

Quality Work Environment initiatives flourish at Midwest Enterprises for the Blind, where William Drain was promoted to business development coordinator.

"It's important that we have jobs that suit these veterans, who have the education and experience to take on these responsibilities and give them opportunities to grow," says Denise Perka, research manager, SourceAmerica Institute for Economic Empowerment.

NAVSEA Staffing: SourceAmerica is working with the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) to employ more individuals with targeted disabilities as defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Opportunities exist in mechanical, electrical and chemical engineering, financial management, naval architecture, and logistics management. In September 2013, SourceAmerica delivered to NAVSEA the first six of 10 resumes as required by its contract, including four resumes for a financial management position and two for a logistics management specialist position. These positions pay competitive wages and provide real career paths.

Pathways to Careers: Pathways, as it is called, expands and improves employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who receive Social Security benefits in Davis County, Utah. The program uses an in-depth learning and evaluation process to match employees with community-based, integrated employment options that are the best fit for their strengths, interests, concerns and abilities.

Therese Fimian, a research manager at SourceAmerica's Institute for Economic Empowerment says that helping people find long-term employment keeps them engaged. In addition, taxpayers save more than $7,000 per person annually when an employee receives a salary instead of collecting Social Security. This program includes funding for 70 employees.

Contract Management Support (CMS) Training Program: This initiative led by NIB trains people who are blind to gather data, forms, and other necessary documentation required for final disposition of government contracts, and allows the procurement employees to focus on their core responsibilities. CMS services have led to the return of $538 million of unused contract funds to the government since the program began.

Business Leaders Program (BLP): NIB targets the development of business leaders within the blindness community. The BLP has five tracks, ranging from a paid fellowship that combines work experiences with professional development, to assisting with the hiring of individuals into career-track managerial positions that offer the possibility of promotions and wage increases.

James Newman interns with the Davis School District in Utah as a facilities maintenance assistant through the Pathways to Careers Project.

NIB also holds ten-month "Effective Supervision" programs, which teach students who are blind or vision-impaired how to develop their supervisory skills. Thirty four employees graduated from the program in FY 2013.

One graduate, Sandy Werner, is vice president of inside sales at Milwaukee's Industries for the Blind, where she and her staff, all of whom are blind, manage more than 4,000 online accounts for military and Federal Government employees.

These programs dramatically improve the employment outlook for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. By vigorously seeking out new opportunities, studying best practices, and giving employees the resources and training they need, AbilityOne is broadening its array of jobs and clearly demonstrates the potential of this underutilized talent pool. ■

It's Sunny in Philadelphia

Susquehanna Association for the Blind and Vision Impaired (SABVI) in Pennsylvania grew from participating in the CMS pilot to performing CMS at three Department of Defense customer sites in Pennsylvania. One location, Defense Contract Management Agency in Philadelphia, began with an initial task order for three specialists and recently modified the order to add three more.

Seventeen employees who are blind currently work on SABVI's CMS government contracts. Three CMS specialists who are blind have secured career-oriented employment with Federal Government agencies, and four more contract closeout specialists have been promoted from within SABVI to supervisory positions.

Shelley Sanders, vice president of operations at SABVI, focuses on "the high caliber of business-ready talent." She explains, "One contract closeout specialist was recently promoted internally to plant manager. Another was given a promotion and expansion assignment to head up our public policy and government relations."

Promoting Solutions and Tracking Results

In addition to working directly with partners to create and fund initiatives that improve employment, other activities drive job creation for people with disabilities. The Employee Research System (ERS) is a SourceAmerica™ Institute for Economic Empowerment initiative that tracks employment of people with significant disabilities over time.

Understanding these trends and opportunities fulfills the Institute's objectives of increasing employer demand for workers with significant disabilities as well as the options for people who are willing and able to work. The research examines, tests and validates models, strategies and policies that achieve one or both of those objectives, including support of a stronger employment infrastructure for people with disabilities.

The AbilityOne® Design Challenge strengthens this infrastructure by offering cash prizes to students who develop assistive technologies that empower people with disabilities to become more productive on the job. The 2013 grand prize winner was the EZ Squeeze, developed by five engineering students from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

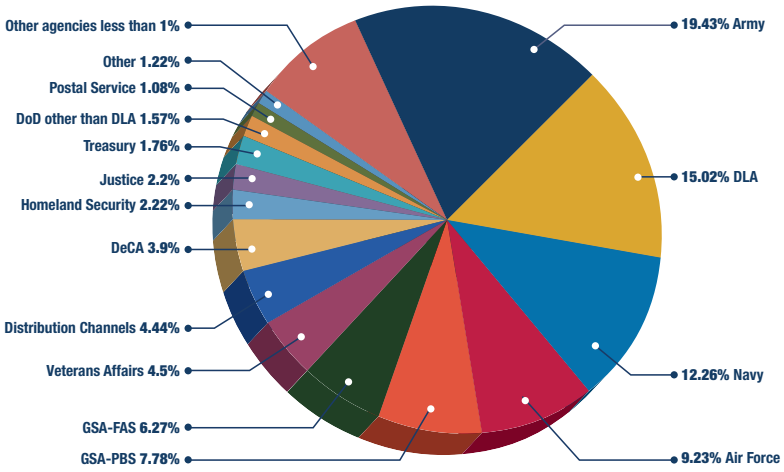
According to the university's website, "Team EZ Squeeze developed a machine for client SW Resources that uses compressed air to force polishing fluid from bulky storage bottles into 1-oz. sample-size bottles. Their goal was to reduce the physical exertion and waste associated with transferring the fluid by hand, allowing more employees with disabilities to complete the task and to do so more efficiently."

Students from other high schools and universities were also awarded prizes for their innovative entries. By seeking to better understand and address trends that affect employment, and eliminating employment barriers through innovation, these initiatives are important contributors to achieving AbilityOne's mission of creating employment opportunities for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

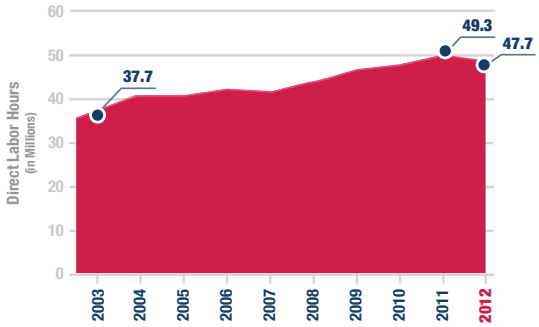
Program Summary Numbers

Latest information available as of Sept. 13, 2013

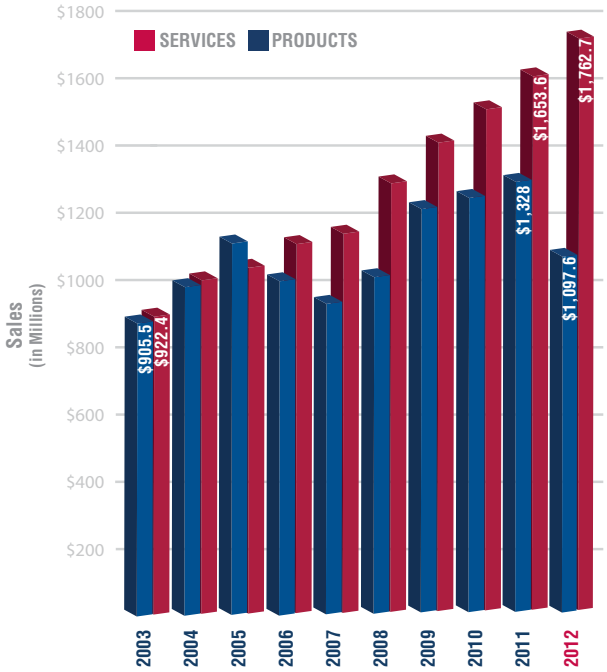
TOP GOVERNMENT AGENCY SALES



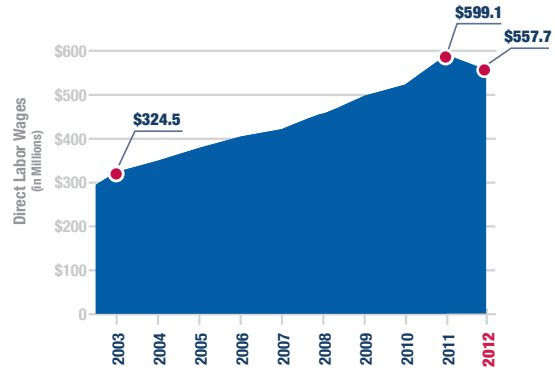
DIRECT LABOR HOURS



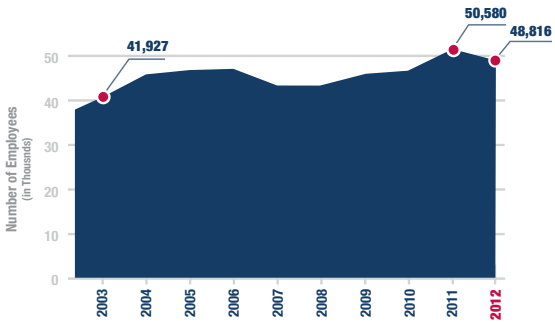
AbilityOne SALES OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES



DIRECT LABOR WAGES



EMPLOYEES



One America:

AbilityOne Unites to Help Americans When Tragedy Strikes

By Christine McLaughlin

Throughout its 75 years of history, AbilityOne® has made a difference by helping others during crises and disasters, and especially so this past year. AbilityOne employees have been here for the American public and our Federal Government customers in the best and worst of times. We are happy and ready to help any time America needs us.

Most Americans from the mid-Atlantic and northeastern United States had never seen anything like it. Thrashing winds, flooding, widespread power outages and downed phone lines, idle transportation systems, completely blocked roadways, closed highways, and even devastating fires in some areas. Hurricane Sandy tore through the area in late October 2012.

Sandy cost an estimated $5 billion in damages, making it the second most devastating hurricane since Hurricane Katrina. Millions felt the storm's impact. Several hundred AbilityOne employees in nonprofits serving people who are blind or have significant disabilities stepped up to help.

Weathering a Super Storm

As patients evacuated lower Manhattan's Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) New York Harbor Health System due to intense flooding, Corporate Source employees purposefully stayed behind. Throughout the storm, employees of the AbilityOne authorized provider maintained continuous switchboard operations.

Viewed as essential personnel by hospital officials, the switchboard staff were required to be onsite to field calls helping families locate loved ones, as well as calls to and from emergency workers. Many switchboard workers stayed at the hospital and slept on the floor or on cots for days at a time. As public transportation was shut down and roads were packed with cars, others drove several hours to go home to care for their own families, and not long afterwards, turned around to come back to work.

"We never heard anyone complaining. It was just something they knew they had to do to help," says Michael Kramer, vice president of employment initiatives at The Corporate Source, based in New York City. "It was almost seamless how well they performed…and they rose to the occasion with commitment and dedication."

Fedcap Rehabilitation Services, also based in Manhattan, was on the receiving end of the

An F5 tornado on May 20, 2013 swept through the suburbs of Oklahoma City, leaving a path of destruction in its wake.

storm, yet heard and responded to the call to action. Although one of its administration buildings in the Battery Park section of Manhattan was completely underwater, Fedcap staff kept working at full tilt to be able to communicate with its stakeholders.

The AbilityOne nonprofit also ramped up its janitorial staffing efforts at Fort Hamilton, an Army base in Brooklyn, for three months. Similarly, at its Coast Guard dining hall facility on Staten Island, a surge in meals had to be served for several months due to the increased numbers of Coast Guard personnel.

Fedcap also handles maintenance and support services at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) facility in Atlantic City, N.J., where Sandy came ashore and mass flooding ensued. "We were there to ensure that the FAA was not shut down or affected in any way by keeping the generators going… and the lights on," adds Steven Coons, vice president of facilities management at Fedcap.

Unfortunately, the most affected service area for Fedcap was Ellis Island—the museum and Statue of Liberty were completely flooded, so custodial employees had to help with flood mitigation and extreme cleanup.

"About a month after we started cleanup, it became apparent that [both facilities] weren't going to reopen for a long time. And reality set in," says Coons, adding that they had to lay off 20 workers at that time. Thankfully, a few months later when the Statue reopened on July 4, Fedcap was able to rehire all the employees. Ellis Island is still closed.

Coming to One Another's Aid

New York City lost power, and had no public transportation for days. Banks were closed, ATMs did not work and gas lines in the surrounding area were several hours long. National Industries for the Blind (NIB) sent out a call to sister agencies to help out. In response, Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth, Texas, assembled and shipped 5,000 hygiene kits to New York City Industries for the Blind, Inc. (NYCIB).

"We were very excited to be able to help out and [it] was a great opportunity for us," says Nancy Fisher, director of community development at Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth. She added that their experience in assembling similar kits for victims of the Haiti earthquake in 2010 made it a smooth process for them. Included in the kits were washcloths, soap, and toothpaste, among other items.

In addition, Envision, based in Wichita, Kan., an agency that specializes in producing plastic bags for government and private contracts, sent $25,000 worth of bags to NYCIB. "We're all in this together. This gives us an opportunity to provide a hand up for people who need it," says Heather Hogan, vice president of corporate development and strategy at Envision.

From Binghamton, N.Y., the Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment (A.V.R.E.) donated $10,000 worth of batteries and cleaning supplies to help people in the New York City area. In 2011, Binghamton experienced its own massive flood and received overwhelming support from fellow agencies. "Paying it forward, that's really what it is," says Jennifer Cubic Small, director of development and communications at A.V.R.E. At the receiving end was NYCIB. It gathered the donated supplies, loaded trucks, and brought donations to a central collection location hosted by one of the local radio stations. Doing this involved significant staffing over several days. Employees who are blind loaded trucks with 11 pallets of donated batteries, detergent, hand sanitizer, plastic bags, mops, brooms, blankets, and buckets.

When kindness by others is demonstrated, Robin Friedlander, business development administrative assistant at NYCIB says, "you don't feel so alone. People got the things that weren't readily available to get, since the surrounding stores had entire inventories destroyed. So these items were much needed."

Making Boston Proud

Months after the scourge of Sandy, tragedy struck again at the Boston Marathon when two pressure cooker bombs exploded, killing three people and injuring 264 others, at about 2:50 p.m. on April 15, 2013. While the world was consumed with the news of how this could happen, minutes later, a fire broke out at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, in nearby Dorchester.

Initial reports questioned whether or not the two incidents were related. But as the facts unraveled, it was two AbilityOne employees of WORK Inc., Robert Patterson and Ray Garcia, who discovered the fire and contained it until the fire department arrived. Luckily, no one was hurt. Police later determined that careless disposal of smoking materials was the culprit.

"I'm most proud of their ability to perform well under pressure. Obviously, they knew the marathon bombing had happened, so it must have been terribly confusing when this fire happened," says Jimmy Cawley, community relations manager of WORK Inc., which performs facilities management for the library. "They rose to the occasion just as they were trained to do."

Unfortunately, significant water and fire damage occurred to the building, but the damage to the library's treasured collection was minimal. "They saved the library from fairly extensive damage," Cawley adds.

While the quick-thinking actions of the two men prevented a bigger disaster from

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Through the sale of more than 3,500 products and services, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and its network of associated nonprofit agencies are the nation's largest employer of people who are blind.

Pictured left to right: Envision executives Mike Simunic, Garry Gregg and David Wells with pallets of materials the agency donated for Hurricane Sandy relief.

occurring, sometimes helping victims after a crisis can be equally challenging. For instance, employees from the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI) in Utica, N.Y., helped collate, package and ship T-shirts that raised $10,000 for the victims of the Boston Marathon.

The idea began with Libby Lemire, the merchandising manager for the Boilermaker 15K road race that takes place in Utica every July. She wished to sell T-shirts (saying "Boilermaker 2013" on the front, and "Run for Boston" on the back) to help aid the victims of the bombing—with 100 percent of the profits going to help them. It had to be done fast, so she turned to CABVI to see if its AbilityOne employees could help.

CABVI answered with a resounding "Yes!" "We decided to eat the cost of labor and figured if we could do it for free, it would be that much more revenue that could go to the bombing victims," explains Dennis Webster, vice president of manufacturing and business services at CABVI. "The employees who are blind and visually impaired were extremely excited, and worked really hard to get the T-shirts out within a couple of days."

Empowering Oklahoma

Much like the CABVI employees who are blind, during times of crisis and tragedy, our hearts break for others, so we feel compelled to help. The aftermath of the devastating F5 tornado that ripped through Oklahoma City and its suburbs on May 20, 2013 was no different. With a record-breaking width of 2.6 miles and winds that reached an excess of 200 mph, destroying thousands of homes, AbilityOne employees were there to support those in need.

While some AbilityOne employees and their families lost everything, others were spared damage but still concerned for their neighbors. Professional Contract Services Inc. (PCSI), which provides vehicle maintenance, transportation and operations at Tinker Air Force Base, just missed being hit by the tornado. But its employees were on the scene to help.

PCSI employees with significant disabilities transported soldiers to and from the area to rescue, help clean up debris, and look for people who were missing. They also delivered giant lighting systems for night rescue. "We had employees who came in the day of the tornado and then came right back after work …for three solid days," says Vicki Hoppes, contract manager for PCSI.

"One tire repairman, Mike Kittel, came to me and said, 'I know every tire on all of the first responder's equipment; let me know how I can be of service,'" adds Hoppes.

Four employees' homes were completely destroyed, while others experienced damage to homes and cars. "It looked like a war zone," says Hoppes. "I had to pick up a friend who could not make it out of his neighborhood. The tornado just happened a half-hour before, and hundreds of people were walking out of those neighborhoods to get somewhere safe. In some neighborhoods for a full mile square, all the homes were just sticks."

Similarly, at Dale Rogers Training Center (DRTC) in Oklahoma City, the homes of six AbilityOne employees were damaged or completely destroyed. They were working on projects for the General Services Administration (GSA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Tinker Air Force Base. One child of a DRTC manager was injured while sheltering in place at his junior high school. Fortunately, he made it out alive.

Nearby at NewView in Oklahoma City, many employees were affected by the tornado's devastation. To answer the call for help, the agency set up a fund to help its employees by using the savings from a long-planned employee picnic to put towards the disaster relief effort instead.

Envision, based two hours away in Wichita, Kan., asked to serve as a donation center for NewView, and donated $3,500 worth of plastic bags. Items donated from across the country included cleaning supplies, towels, sheets, eyeglasses, magnifiers, special assistive technologies, bottled water, first aid supplies and a shipment of mattresses. Envision then transported the donations to NewView.

"It's hard to express how much we appreciate everyone stepping up and helping us in Oklahoma. It's heartwarming to see people across the country…help our employees and our clients get back on their feet," says Thomas Larson, director of communications at NewView.

The feeling is mutual. "Helping others get back on their feet and achieve their mission actually helps us accomplish ours," says Heather Hogan at Envision. "We're all here for the same reason." ■

2012-2013 AbilityOne Employee Award Winners

Each year, SourceAmerica and NIB celebrate AbilityOne employee success stories

William M. Usdane Award

DAVID JORDAN

Southeastern Kentucky Rehabilitation Industries, Corbin, Kentucky

David Jordan leads by example every day at his job as a machine operator for Southeastern Kentucky Rehabilitation Industries (SEKRI), in Paris, Ky. Jordan presses heat seal labels on U.S. Marine Corps hoods, and despite significant mobility and motor skill impairments, his productivity is good and continues to improve.

When Jordan aspired to become a machine operator, an assistive technology project was launched to create the needed workplace modifications. The process required trial and error until the workstation design was perfected, and Jordan displayed remarkable patience throughout.

"David was our pioneer, willing to try new things," says Cheryl Sanders, SEKRI director of rehabilitation services. "He now proudly shows others what can be done and is helping our team break down the walls of misconception about what a person with a disability can accomplish when given the right support and tools."

Jordan works hard to provide a quality product to the Federal Government customer. According to Sanders, he simply needed someone to look past his mobility challenges and "put this completely capable young man to work."

The William M. Usdane Award is presented each year to an individual with a significant disability who has exhibited outstanding achievement at a SourceAmerica™ producing nonprofit agency in the AbilityOne® Program.

Milton J. Samuelson Career Achievement Award, FY 2013

CHRISTIAN GORSHING

NewView Oklahoma
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Christian Gorshing wanted to be an accountant ever since she was in high school. She graduated from Southwestern Oklahoma State University in 2001 with a bachelor's degree in accounting and struggled to find work due to her visual impairment until she heard of NewView Oklahoma. She landed a job at the agency as a warehouse clerk at Tinker Air Force Base in 2005, then moved up to accounts payable as payroll clerk, then purchasing specialist. When NewView Oklahoma reorganized its accounting department last year, Gorshing was promoted to accounting supervisor. Her goal is to become the chief financial officer of NewView.

Gorshing says, "If I hit doors that I think are closed, but they keep opening, it makes me wonder: 'If I can do this, what else can I do?"

The Milton J. Samuelson Career Achievement Award is given to individuals who demonstrate career advancement at an NIB associated agency or in the private sector. Samuelson championed upward mobility and placement programs for people who are blind.

Honor Roll for Veterans Award

EDWARD JOHNSON

Brevard Achievement Center
Rockledge, Florida

Edward "Ed" Johnson's immediate struggle was to survive a sniper's shot to the head during the Iraq War. The longer term challenge, one he is winning, has been to succeed as a productive employee. Johnson's path to success has not been easy. The sniper's bullet left Johnson with severe memory loss, headaches and nightmares. It also undermined his attempts to become employed after his discharge from the military. However, Johnson's determination, combined with a job opportunity through the AbilityOne Program, led to his current success as a custodian employed by Brevard Achievement Center at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida.

As a result of his memory loss, Johnson was initially given only a small area to clean in one building. Several months into the job, he continued to forget certain tasks and his productivity was low. With intensive coaching though, Johnson's ability to remember his daily cleaning routine and his performance greatly improved. Now, Johnson can complete all his assigned tasks and cleans several buildings independently.

"Edward's leadership and determination have helped him to become a productive member of the team," says Wayne Wells, vice president of operations at Brevard Achievement Center, adding, "His leadership skills and 'never quit' attitude inspire all of us who work around him."

The AbilityOne® Honor Roll for Veterans Award was established by SourceAmerica™ to recognize a veteran with a significant disability who has exhibited outstanding achievement in his or her work life and celebrate the successes of wounded warriors in the AbilityOne Program.

Evelyne Villines Award

RICHARD VALLIERE

SKILS'KIN, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Richard joined SKILS'KIN in 2005 and proved to be a meticulous and dedicated grounds worker who took great pride in his work. Although faced with an ongoing, life-threatening health condition, Richard continues to take pride in his accomplishments and always goes the extra mile to ensure a job well done. Time and again, Richard has demonstrated an exemplary commitment to his job, the Federal customer and SKILS'KIN.

When the nonprofit agency needed a back-up grounds maintenance worker, Valliere was willing to complete the required training so he could fill in. When SKILS'KIN needed Valliere to lead the maintenance crew, he was able to quickly train and understand all the employees on the team and their individual disabilities.

Valliere has mentored employees and guided them to successful performance improvement. "Despite his own personal challenges, Richard is distinguished for how he works with and supports other employees," says Ed Mattia, SKILS'KIN project manager. "He has a talent for helping people improve, and the patience to help them understand that they can achieve their goals and become a valued citizen in the community, if they are willing to do so."

The Evelyne Villines Award is presented each year to an individual with a significant disability who has advanced from work on an AbilityOne® contract at a SourceAmerica™ producing nonprofit agency into private or government sector employment or management within the agency.

Peter J. Salmon Employee of the Year Award, FY 2013

GERALD JONES

Lions Volunteer Blind Industries
Morristown, Tennessee

Progressive macular degeneration made it difficult for Gerald Jones to continue his career as an electrician. Since joining Lions Volunteer Blind Industries (LVBI) four years ago as a packer, Jones soon became the leader of the mattress department. Today, Jones is the lead person in the paper towels department. He maintains all production records, from order to shipment, and oversees daily timesheet records. His goal is to become a department supervisor at LVBI.

"I never expected to be the national winner," Jones says. "I have become one of those people who learned to do things that I never thought I would be doing."

The Peter J. Salmon Employee of the Year Award honors employees who excel in their positions at NIB associated agencies. Dr. Salmon was instrumental in the passage of the Wagner-O'Day Act in 1938 and the formation of NIB.

Federal *Award* Winners

The U.S. AbilityOne Commission® recognized the following individuals and organizations for their exemplary support of creating employment opportunities for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

U.S. AbilityOne Commission Vice Chairperson James M. Kesteloot presents the FDR Award to recipient James H. Omvig. Also present are Executive Director and CEO Tina Ballard and his spouse Sharon Omvig.

FDR Award for Leadership and Service

JAMES H. OMVIG

U.S. AbilityOne Commission Member, 2003-2012

James H. Omvig, appointed to the Commission in 2003, completed his term of service in July 2012. In his capacity as a private citizen, he represented nonprofit agency employees who are blind. While serving as a member of the Commission, and for five years as Vice Chairperson, he excelled at balancing the needs and perspectives of people who are blind or have significant disabilities with those of Federal customers and other stakeholders in achieving organizational results. As a member of the AbilityOne® Program's Subcommittee on Communications and Customer Satisfaction, he took an active role in developing the major principles of the Quality Work Environment initiative. These principles serve as a framework for the growth of best practice standards for the nearly 600 nonprofits agencies in the AbilityOne Program. Through his personal conduct, unequivocal commitment, and results-oriented leadership, he earned and sustained an unparalleled degree of public confidence and trust during his nine-year tenure on the Commission.

The FDR Award honors an outstanding leader who consistently demonstrates strength, integrity, industry and a relentless commitment to public service. The award is presented sparingly to a current or former appointed member of the Commission or a current or former member of the staff.

U.S. AbilityOne Commission Vice Chairperson James M. Kesteloot presents the Alley Award to recipient Col. Roger H. Westermeyer as Executive Director and CEO Tina Ballard looks on.

E.R. "Dick" Alley Career Achievement Award

COL. ROGER H. WESTERMEYER

Deputy Director, Air Force Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Department of the Air Force

Col. Roger Westermeyer received this award by a unanimous vote of the U.S. AbilityOne Commission's presidential appointees, and is the first Air Force recipient of this award. After more than a decade of support to the AbilityOne Program, Col. Westermeyer was instrumental in directing basewide maintenance and custodial contracts to the program in his first major assignment as head of contracting at Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington. That advocacy continued in his next assignment at Nebraska's Offutt Air Force Base. Those efforts resulted in nearly $10 million worth of AbilityOne contracts and over 150 jobs. He was also instrumental in minimizing the impact of total mandated budget cuts, preventing estimated annual loss of almost $400,000 in revenue and preserving upwards of 15 jobs. Westermeyer continues to support the program. He coordinated an Air Force National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month memo distributed throughout the Air Force Material Command. He has also educated base personnel about AbilityOne by supporting AbilityOne training to government purchase cardholders and placing AbilityOne training material in the new Air Force Contracting Learning Center.

The Alley Award is bestowed on one Federal employee whose sustained dedication and support of the AbilityOne Program are exemplary, and worthy of the agency's highest recognition. The award is named for the late E.R. "Dick" Alley, who gave 25 years of dedicated service to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission as its deputy executive director.

Federal Award Winners

More than 100 AbilityOne employee jobs resulted from Dennis Hass' efforts on behalf of people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

Outstanding Contributions Award

DENNIS A. HASS

Director of Business Operations, Operational Contracting Division, Los Angeles Air Force Base

Dennis Hass recognized the potential of AbilityOne contractors and convinced base leadership that a change in direction was absolutely necessary, and AbilityOne was the solution. From the beginning, Hass focused on correcting misguided perceptions of people who are blind or have significant disabilities by organizing formal training for key leadership personnel, creating an enduring ripple effect to change the attitudes of 6,000 base employees. Acting upon Hass' recommendation, the installation committee added facilities and grounds maintenance, janitorial and custodial services to the Procurement List, employing more than 100 AbilityOne employees.

This award recognizes Federal employees for their efforts in creating employment opportunities on Federal contracts for people who are blind or have significant disabilities under the AbilityOne Program.

U.S. AbilityOne Commission Vice Chairperson James M. Kesteloot presents the Chairperson's Award to recipient Dennis Steiner with applause from Executive Director and CEO Tina Ballard.

Chairperson's Award for Leadership

DENNIS STEINER

President and CEO, Susquehanna Association for the Blind and Vision Impaired

Dennis Steiner has created employment opportunities for nearly 30 years at Susquehanna Association for the Blind and Vision Impaired (SABVI). He mastered the contracting and strict quality requirements of demanding government customers. He worked with National Industries for the Blind (NIB) to create more career opportunities for people who are blind with the addition of surgical masks, headbands, advanced combat helmet pads, and janitorial and bio-based cleaning products to the Procurement List. In 2010, SABVI was one of two NIB associated agencies that participated in the contract management support pilot program. SABVI's project with the Bureau of Prisons enabled the standardization of cleaning products across the agency, reduced costs, and supported the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Bio-Preferred initiative to procure bio-based products. With his leadership, SABVI has embraced the Commission's Quality Work Environment initiative, completing its self assessment, developed its strategic action plan and is implementing employment best practices. In addition to his position at SABVI, he is an active member of the NIB board of directors, and serves as vice president of services for the National Association for the Employment of People Who Are Blind.

This award recognizes leaders who consistently meet or surpass the Commission's statutory and regulatory environments, fulfill its guiding principles for a Quality Work Environment, and exhibit business acumen that leads to increased employment opportunities for the AbilityOne constituency.

Federal *Award* Winners

U.S. AbilityOne Commission® Executive Director and CEO Tina Ballard presents the Office of the Executive Director's Enduring Leadership Award to John Miller.

Office of the Executive Director's Enduring Leadership Award

JOHN MILLER

CEO, Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin (Goodwill SEW)

John Miller has devoted more than 30 years to vocational rehabilitation and advocacy for people with significant disabilities. Miller's tireless commitment as Chair of the Quality Work Environment (QWE) Steering Group and his active participation contributed significantly to QWE's highly collaborative and successful development of best practices and nationwide implementation. Miller and the AbilityOne nonprofit agency he leads, Goodwill SEW, embody many of QWE's guiding principles. Goodwill SEW's policy is to pay all service employees 100% of the Service Contract Act wage. The agency's vocational training incorporates a range of choices including employee services, adult training services, administrative food service, custodial service and forklift training. Goodwill SEW has become one of the largest employers within AbilityOne, and maintains compliance with all AbilityOne requirements. The nonprofit is also diversified in terms of its other AbilityOne work, operating laundry, document destruction, administrative and custodial services contracts. Miller has also served on the SourceAmerica board of directors and actively participates in SourceAmerica and National Council of SourceAmerica Employers conferences.

This new award recognizes superlative leadership that has and will continue to produce enduring benefits to the AbilityOne Program.

Ballard and U.S. AbilityOne Commission Chairperson J. Anthony Poleo present the Office of the Executive Director's Enduring Leadership Award to Dr. Carol E. Lowman.

Office of the Executive Director's Enduring Leadership Award

DR. CAROL E. LOWMAN

Deputy to the Commanding General, Department of the Army Contracting Command, Army Materiel Command, U.S. Department of the Army

As a result of Dr. Lowman's leadership, contract management services (CMS) was added to the Procurement List and has become a well-established line of business for the AbilityOne Program. From 2010 to the present, 135 employees who are blind or have significant disabilities, including 27 veterans and wounded warriors, have found employment in this line of business. To date, these employees have delivered 135,547 contracts to contracting officers for signature, achieved a greater than 99% quality rate, and identified $538 million in recovered funding. As the principal assistant responsible for contracting and acting director of the Military Installation and Contracting Command, Lowman and the command demonstrated extraordinary commitment to AbilityOne by being the first to act on the Department of Defense/AbilityOne Commitment Card initiative. Results are already being achieved. There were no AbilityOne services at Fort Rucker four years ago; today laundry, document management, and hazardous materials management services are now under development. Support from Lowman also fostered a greater emphasis within the Army to work with AbilityOne on other contracting opportunities, such as Department of Public Works total facilities management projects.

This new award recognizes superlative leadership that has and will continue to produce enduring benefits to the AbilityOne Program.

National Industries for the Blind Federal Awards

Pictured left to right: Kevin Lynch, president and CEO of NIB, presents the "Spirit of Independence" award to Shay Assad, director of defense pricing, Department of Defense.

Spirit of Independence Award

SHAY ASSAD

Shay Assad, director of defense pricing, Department of Defense (DoD), received the first Spirit of Independence Award from Kevin Lynch, NIB president and CEO, for his unyielding advocacy. Assad said he was optimistic about the future of the AbilityOne® Program and pledged his support for creating and expanding employment opportunities for people who are blind. Vowing to be an advocate of the program, he said, "I will be relentless on your behalf."

Pictured left to right: Captain Mark R. Pimpo, SC, USN, accepting NIB's first officer's sword on behalf of Rear Admiral Mark Heinrich, commander, NAVSUP, and chief of Supply Corps, from Kevin Lynch, president and CEO of NIB.

Navy Supply Corps Sword

CAPTAIN MARK R. PIMPO

Kevin Lynch, NIB president and CEO, presented an officer's sword to Captain Mark R. Pimpo, accepting on behalf of Rear Admiral Mark Heinrich, commander, Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP), and chief of Supply Corps, during the NIB/NAEPB National Conference and Expo in October, 2012. To recognize NIB's ongoing relationship with the Navy Supply Corps, NIB created this enduring gift of an officer's sword to be presented to the valedictorian at each Basic Supply Corps School graduation.

Captain Pimpo, commanding officer, Navy Supply Corps School, recalled his visit to Susquehanna Association for the Blind and Vision Impaired in Lancaster, Pa. He said the opportunity to meet the employees and "see the pride they took in doing their jobs and serving their country was something I'll never forget. You play a huge part in winning wars and preserving the peace."

Pictured left to right: Paul Diamonti, director, textiles and niche product development, NIB, and Gary Shute, director, supply operations, Directorate of Clothing and Textiles, DLA Troop Support.

Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support

GARY SHUTE

Gary Shute, director, supply operations, Directorate of Clothing and Textiles, Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support, was recognized by NIB for his outstanding support to NIB's textile program. He was presented a plaque this spring at a Textile Apparel Group (TAG) meeting held at Susquehanna Association for the Blind and Vision Impaired in Lancaster, Pa.

SourceAmerica Federal Awards

Government Award for Products

U.S. ARMY CONTRACTING COMMAND
Natick, Massachusetts

AbiityOne® Program contracts assigned to ReadyOne Industries of El Paso, Texas, currently employ some 723 people with disabilities. Contracting officer Kevin Parker has affirmed his faith in the high quality of work performed by people with disabilities by working with ReadyOne Industries to develop projects for the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps. Parker was instrumental in ReadyOne Industries securing an AbilityOne contract for the manufacture of Protective Combat Uniforms level 9 for special operation warfighters, providing jobs to 121 people with disabilities. He also assigned to the AbilityOne Program the development and manufacture of a revolutionary cold weather sleep system for the Marine Corps creating jobs for 56 people with disabilities at ReadyOne Industries.

This award recognizes a military or other Federal agency that has provided outstanding support to the AbilityOne Program for Products.

Government Award for Services (Civilian)

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOMES
Washington, D.C.

Under the leadership of chief operating officer Steve McManus, the Armed Forces Retirement Homes (AFRH) have been hugely supportive of the employment of persons with significant disabilities via AbilityOne Program contracts with Gulf Coast Enterprises and AbilityWorks. Today, a total of 148 people with disabilities from both nonprofit agencies provide either food or custodial services at AFRH facilities in Gulfport, Miss., and Washington, D.C.

This award recognizes a civilian Federal agency that has provided outstanding support to the AbilityOne Program for Services.

Government Award for Services (Military)

NOSTRA LENS LAB AT YORKTOWN NAVAL WEAPONS STATION
Yorktown, Virginia

Twelve AbilityOne Program employees work alongside enlisted and civilian personnel at the NOSTRA Lens Lab at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Va., which manufactures 40,000 eyeglasses a month for members of the military, veterans and dignitaries around the world. The strong support expressed by each new Commanding Officer for the AbilityOne Program never waivers. A monthly "Contractor of the Quarter" award was created to highlight AbilityOne employees by selecting one individual to receive an official commendation from the military. NOSTRA leaders also encourage military contracting officers to become involved with the program and work to ensure employees with disabilities are fully integrated into the workplace. As a result of excellent training and success on the job, the lab also hired nine AbilityOne employees as civil servants.

This award recognizes a local military installation that has provided outstanding support, technical or other assistance to an AbilityOne-producing nonprofit agency that is providing a service under the AbilityOne Program.

Significant disabilities can't keep her from solving IT problems.

But misperceptions can.

AbilityOne PROGRAM CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

At SourceAmerica™, we're proud to put the AbilityOne® Program into action by connecting Federal procurement needs with quality products and services. Proud because people with significant disabilities form an incredible workforce, whose loyalty is as fierce as their work ethic. Because they inspire coworkers with their can-do attitude. And because they do essential work and do the job brilliantly by any standard. Visit SourceAmerica.org.

SourceAmerica™
An AbilityOne authorized enterprise.

NISH is now SourceAmerica

SourceAmerica

On July 1, NISH, one of two Federally-designated national nonprofit agencies that help administer the AbilityOne® Program, launched its new SourceAmerica™ brand. Confusion over the long-standing former name underscored the need for a stronger brand identity that would position the agency as the premier advocate and largest source of employment for people with significant disabilities.

SourceAmerica works with a network of more than 1,000 community nonprofit agencies to identify, train and place people in jobs where they can excel.

According to SourceAmerica President and CEO Bob Chamberlin, "For some time we had been exploring alternatives to NISH so that we can better convey both our role in connecting the wide array of people and organizations that enable quality employment opportunities for people with significant disabilities nationwide, and make it clear that our brand is more than simply the name of an organization, but also a process that involves many participants throughout this country to make it happen."

"Our new identity will place us at the forefront of job creation," said Paula Scanlon, assistant vice president, marketing and corporate communications for SourceAmerica.

For Federal customers, SourceAmerica works in association with the AbilityOne Program, but is not one and the same. SourceAmerica helps put the AbilityOne Program into action, by connecting Federal procurement needs with quality products and services.

Why SourceAmerica?

"With the new brand, we renew our commitment to dispel myths about this exceptional workforce and remove barriers to employment. We believe that when people with disabilities have the opportunity to live the American dream—support a family, reach their professional potential or just take their rightful place in society—the entire country benefits. SourceAmerica continues to work through the AbilityOne Program to provide our Federal customers with quality performance at a competitive price," said Scanlon.

FAQs

What does this mean for nonprofit agencies and customers that work with SourceAmerica?

There is no change. SourceAmerica remains a trusted partner for connecting customers with the right nonprofit to meet their service and product needs.

Where does AbilityOne fit?

SourceAmerica is an AbilityOne authorized enterprise and assists the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® in administering the AbilityOne Program. The SourceAmerica brand is created to work in all environments and it crosses over to commercial companies too. It is a consistent, unified brand that stands for a commitment to creating more jobs for an exceptional workforce. ■

Nonprofit Awards and Recognition

Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind (WSIFB) was named by AARP as a "2013 Best Employer for Workers Over 50!" WSIFB joins a list of 50 honorees across the United States; only one other company from North Carolina received the award. The Best Employer designation highlights excellent policies toward employees age 50 and older. This is the second year WSIFB has earned this award; 50% of WSIFB employees are 50 or older.

Pictured left to right: David Horton, WSIFB executive director, and Doug Dickerson, AARP North Carolina state director.

The Centers for Habilitation (TCH) celebrated 20 years of association with the AbilityOne® Program with the Jan. 18, 2013 reopening of the Desert Inn, an award-winning, full service dining facility located at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Ariz. The facility had been closed for renovations for a year. When TCH first began performing food service at the Desert Inn in 1993, it represented the agency's first AbilityOne contract. In its 20-year history at the Desert Inn, TCH has helped the facility twice win the Air Force Hennessy Award, given to the installation with the best food service program in the Air Force.

In her first job, Jovania Martin's duties include clearing and cleaning tables.

Rick Bednar and the staff of the Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) Base Supply Center operated by **The Lighthouse for the Blind** in Seattle were applauded as the "Apex of Customer Service" by Robert M. Barros, staff sergeant, U.S. Air Force, Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC), 62nd Medical Squadron at JBLM in Washington. SSgt Barros called them a strong pillar to the proliferation and success of the 62nd Medical Squadron.

Pictured from left to right: Rick Bednar, BSC manager; Donna Schloemer, associate; Michael Walker, associate, and Robert Hoye-Logan, receiving clerk.

Gregory Klima, a **Melwood** custodian employed at the U.S. Naval Academy, was declared an honorary member of the academy's Class of 2012. He received a standing ovation from the crowd of 25,000 and a Navy football jersey signed by all the Navy sports captains. Second Lieutenant and President of the Class of 2012 Ian Cameron said Klima "represents a larger community at the Naval Academy that has made Bancroft Hall, where we have lived for the last four years, a home." Melwood has performed custodial services at the Naval Academy since 2005.

Melwood employee Gregory Klima, being recognized in front of 25,000 people attending the 2012 U.S. Naval Academy graduation, May 29, Navy-Marine Corps stadium, Annapolis, Md.

Contract Manager **Vicki Hoppes** of **Professional Contract Services Inc. (PCSI)** was given a certificate of appreciation by the White House Communications Agency "for the outstanding manner in which [she] provided support to the President of the United States during his visit to Oklahoma City" following the May 20 tornado that ravaged parts of the city and barely missed Tinker Air Force Base. Base leadership quickly mobilized for the recovery effort, and Hoppes arranged for PCSI vehicles, drivers and other equipment necessary to support the Secret Service during President Obama's visit and news media events. Read more on page 28.

White House Communications Agency

Certificate of Appreciation

Presented To

VICKI HOPPES

26 May 2013

April 2013 was proclaimed **"ARC Imperial Valley Month"** by El Centro, Ca., Mayor Benjamin J. Solomon III in honor of the AbilityOne agency's 40th anniversary. Founded in 1973, ARC Imperial Valley provides adult development, employment, independent living skills and other services to individuals with significant disabilities in the southeastern deserts of California. The agency won its first AbilityOne contract in 1988. Other contracts followed, and the nonprofit is now the largest employer of people with disabilities in the Imperial Valley.

Claudia "Scottie" Knott, chief operating officer of **NIB** was inducted into the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Hall of Fame on

July 30, 2013, at DLA headquarters in Fort Belvoir, Va. The DLA Hall of Fame was established to recognize and honor former members of the DLA community who have made significant and enduring contributions to the agency. After being selected for the DLA intern program in 1981, Knott held various leadership positions within DLA and was selected for Senior Executive Service in 1998. She retired from DLA in 2009, when she came to work for NIB, and retired from National Industries for the Blind at the end of FY 2013.

Scottie Knott, retiring COO, NIB, is inducted into Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Hall of Fame by Vice Admiral Mark Harnitchek, DLA director.

AbilityOne authorized providers won three out of four awards for land-based food service operations in the U.S. Navy's 2013 Captain Edward F. Ney Memorial Food Service Awards. **Chesapeake Service Systems (CSS)** of Chesapeake, Va., and **Skookum Educational Programs** of Bremerton, Wa., won first prize, respectively, in the *Large General Mess* and *Small General Mess* categories, while **GINFL Services** of Jacksonville, Fla., was named runner up in the *Large General Mess* category for its work at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. CSS operates the galley at Naval Air Station Oceana, Va., and Skookum operates the galley at Naval Base Kitsap, Wash. The Ney Awards, co-sponsored by the International Food Service Executives Association encourage excellence in Navy food service programs with the objective of improving the quality of life for Navy personnel.

CSS employee Ronald Johnson tends to his post in the galley at Naval Air Station Oceana.

Alfred Gordon, an assembly associate at **Blind Industries and Services of Maryland (BISM),** along with fellow employees and BISM staff, celebrated his 55th anniversary with the agency. Serving people who are blind since 1908, this nonprofit organization provides excellent craftsmanship in sewn products for military uniforms, and offers many office and cleaning supplies through its e-commerce site and AbilityOne Base Supply Centers. Like Gordon, Fred Puente, BISM president and CEO, attributes BISM's growth to its employees and the AbilityOne Program. "The program has given BISM the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to quality products and services at competitive prices, and BISM associates have exceeded the customers' expectations in all areas."

In 2012 Alfred Gordon, assembly associate, celebrated his 55th anniversary with BISM.

OE Enterprises was selected by the South Carolina Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities as the state winner of the Medium Employer of the Year Award. The award recognizes a business that employs 26 to 250 people and is exemplary in its hiring practices and leadership in utilizing the abilities that people with disabilities have to offer.

John King, Shamekia Simmons and James Flowers of OE Enterprises accept the 2013 Medium Employer of the Year Award. (Courtesy: VR^3, published by the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department)

Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth in Texas received the Outstanding AbilityOne Program Vendor Award from the **Defense Logistics Agency (DLA)**. DLA Aviation nominated the Lighthouse for its extraordinary efforts to rapidly and consistently supply Energy Dissipating Pads, manufactured by people who are blind. The Lighthouse has been the sole source manufacturer and supplier of this critical product for the U.S. Army Air Command since 1998. The 3x6-foot pads are used in air drops around the world for humanitarian aid and delivery of life-saving supplies. The agency was also awarded the Business of the Year 2013 Certificate of Recognition from the State of Texas, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

Oscar Olvera, assembly line employee, box department, Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth, Texas.

Northwest Center of Seattle was named the 2013 Non-Profit Manufacturer of the Year in *Seattle Business* magazine's Washington State Manufacturing awards. The award was given on behalf of Northwest Center's Electronetics and Assembly & Packaging businesses. Electronetics specializes in custom magnetic component designs for aerospace, medical, defense, and telecommunications industries. Assembly & Packaging provides packaging, warehousing, shipping, and distribution services. Northwest Center also holds AbilityOne contracts to perform document destruction, grounds maintenance, total facility management, laundry and mail services.

Pictured left to right: Nicholas Patterson, Assembly & Packaging Manager; Mike Quinn, VP of Manufacturing, Production & Assembly; Scott Patterson, Electronetics Plant Manager; Don Nguyen, Electronetics Senior Engineer; and Teresa Mee, Electronetics Materials Manager.

Dr. James A. Kutsch was honored by National Industries for the Blind (NIB) as the winner of the 2013 R.B. Irwin Award, which recognizes volunteers and professionals who make outstanding contributions to creating employment for people who are blind. Kutsch's doctoral studies in computer science at the University of Illinois involved searching for solutions for a blind person to access a computer independently. That research led to the development of the first computer terminal with computer generated speech. Kutsch went on to become involved as an executive and board member of several organizations advocating for people who are blind. Kutsch served on many NIB board committees, was elected as its chairperson, and served on the NIB board until his retirement in 2011.

Dr. Kutsch and his guide dog, Vegas.

National Industries for the Blind (NIB) earned four honors this past year for being a "best employer." *Nonprofit Times* ranked NIB number 15 of "Best Nonprofits to Work For," and number seven among medium-sized organizations. Kevin Lynch, NIB president and CEO said, "It's particularly special to earn this recognition during our 75th anniversary year. This award reflects not only our workplace environment and culture, but also the passion and dedication NIB employees have in fulfilling our mission to create employment opportunities for people who are blind."

Also for the second year in a row, NIB was named one of the "Best Places to Work in Virginia" by *Virginia Business* magazine. Additionally, U.S. Business Leadership Network honored NIB for its support of "Disability at Work." Finally, NIB was named to the "Training Top 125" list by *Training* magazine, for excellence in employer-sponsored training and development programs globally.

San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind (SALB) is opening a new 53,000 square foot building in October, which will double its manufacturing space. Employees who are blind and make a variety of products will occupy the location, four blocks away from the nonprofit's headquarters. SALB President and CEO Mike Gilliam anticipates adding 100 new employees, most of whom will be blind or visually impaired, over the next few years. The AbilityOne authorized nonprofit operates 14 base supply stores and provides other manufacturing services. The new construction is driven by new contracts with non-governmental employers.

San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind (SALB) is opening a new 53,000 square foot building in October.

Stephen Martin and James Dietz, employees of **Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind (CLB)** in Washington D.C., were honored with the Customer Service Excellence Award at the 2013 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Office of Operations Honor Awards Ceremony on July 2. Stephen and James, both of whom are blind, staff the FDA's Tier 1 User Fee Help Desk under a contact center services contract. NIB and CLB have supported the User Fee Help Desk contract as a subcontractor since November 2010.

Left to right: CLB employees Stephen Martin and James Dietz, who won an FDA Honors Award.

Job Options of San Diego, Calif., recently achieved the Cleaning Industry Management Standard–Green Building certification for two of its operating divisions, Hospital Environmental Services and Facilities Maintenance. CIMS certification is seen as a matter of strategy by the nonprofit. The Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) is making CIMS certification a requirement on their contracts. Of the 45 Army MEDCOM hospitals across the United States, six are currently operated by AbilityOne contractors. Job Options is prime contractor for 16 custodial naval facilities, San Ysidro Land Port of Entry, and performs hospital environmental services on two other AbilityOne contract locations in San Diego and Fort Benning, Ga.

Left to right: JOI's Leland Bonaparte, Nazar Masry, and Rodney Graham display the HES department's new CIMS Green Building certification plaque.

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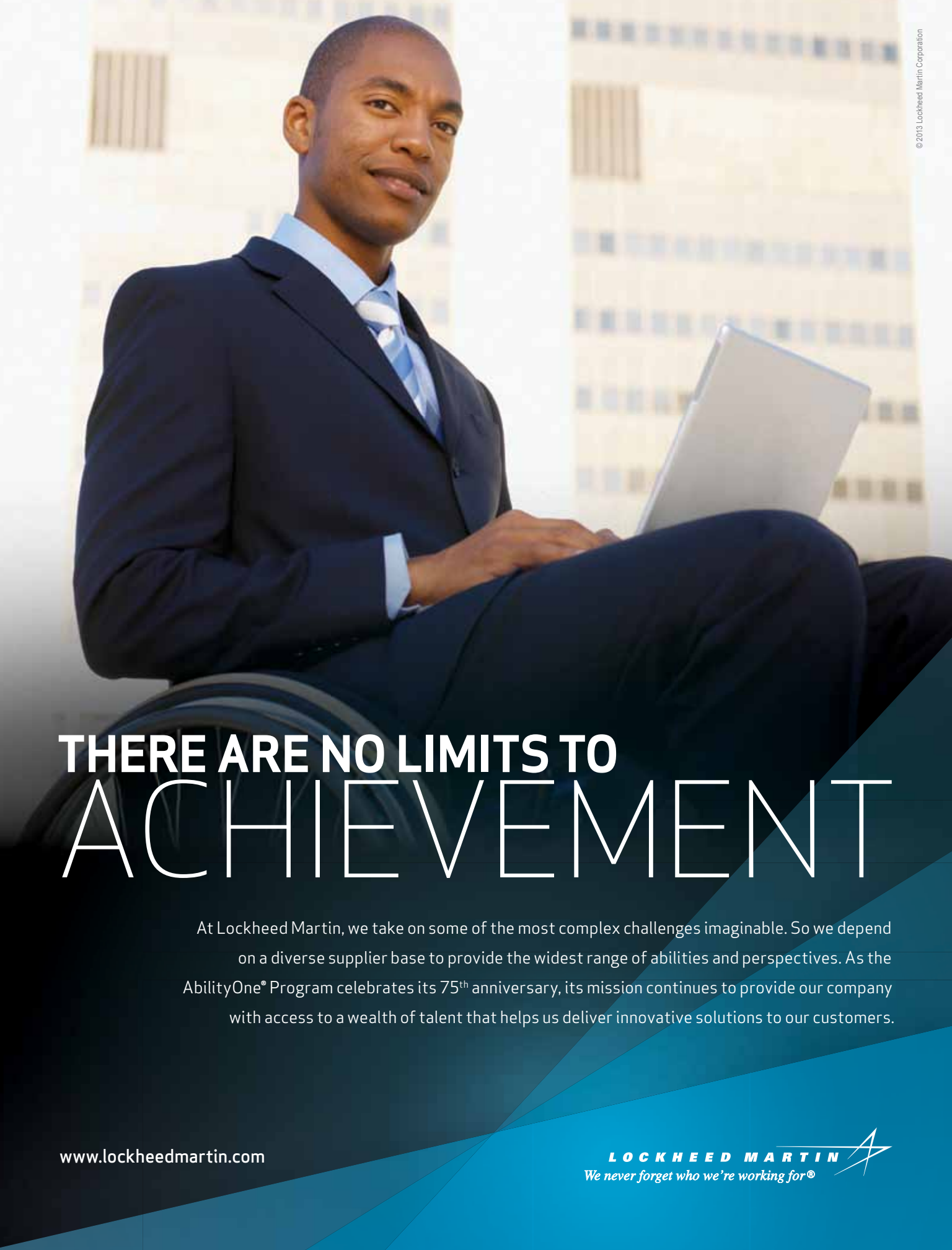
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