

Dignified and meaningful employment for people with disabilities...Quality services for Missouri.

## Missouri Workshops: 50 Years of Service

*Missouri has more than 90 workshops dedicated to serving both people with disabilities as well as the businesses and other customers they serve within the community.*

*In 1966, all of this was a dream with years of hard work coming before as the concepts developed, and more work to come as workshops became a reality across Missouri.*

*With more than half of workshop operational costs funded by business services, workshops have become among the most efficient and effective programs in the state.*



### State Aid For Sheltered Workshop

Sedalia's Sheltered Workshop for handicapped young adults Friday became the first such facility in Missouri to be approved for a new program of state aid.

The workshop, located at 1181 East Fifth, has been unique in its services and accomplishments since its outset two years ago. Established by J. D. Walker, former director of the Children's Therapy Center here, the workshop is designed to be self-sustaining and provides employment for handicapped young adults who might not otherwise be able to hold jobs in regular industry.

Mailing, addressing, letter stuffing and packaging contracts are among the workshop's mainstays and proceeds from this work are shared by the employees, who have been earning about an average of 50 cents an hour. Earnings, however, must also go toward the workshop expenses.

Until recently the workshop operated as a division of the Children's Therapy Center, but recently its board of directors received a pro forma decree of incorporation in Circuit Court and established the workshop's own identity under the corporate name — Sheltered Workshop of Pettis County, Inc.

In Sedalia to officially notify the workshop's personnel and board of directors of the approval for participation in the program for the State Department of Education; and J. D. Walker, assistant director in charge of workshops. Walker resigned his position as director of the program for sheltered workshops.

Under the new program, made available by Senate Bill 52 passed by the last session of the

and new assistant director in charge of sheltered workshops for the State Department of Education; B. W. Shepard, director of sheltered workshops and training programs for the department; Dr. D. H. Robinson, president of the workshop board of directors; and Roger Garlich, director of the Children's Therapy Center. (Democrat-Capitol photo)

able for \$2 per day state aid per handicapped employee. The workshop currently has 18 handicapped young people at work, in addition to therapy center staff.



*Fifty years of history (clockwise from top left) include the early Boone Center shop, celebration of the 1966 passage of Senate Bill 52, consumers at work in the Central Missouri Subcontracting Enterprises Workshop and at the workshop in Sedalia.*

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# Missouri Workshops Have a Long and Proud History

Cooperative Workshop in Sedalia has the honor of being the first workshop in the state under Senate Bill 52. However,

## MASWM

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### Mission

Sheltered Workshops in Missouri share a common mission of providing dignified and meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

If you have questions regarding the Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshop Managers, please contact: Legislative Co-Chairs Randy Hylton at (816) 781-6292 or e-mail rhytton@vsi-serve.org; Jim Guyre, 314-583-1125 or Jim.Guyre@ValleyInd.net; or President Brent Blackwell at (660) 542-1401 or brent.blackwell@att.net.

Project Workshop near St. Louis operated from 1958, when parents applied for a federal grant. Not long after Sedalia began operation, Project Inc. was created from the original grant operation. Boone Center came along as well, in 1966.

By the end of 1966, 13 workshops with 400 employees were operating in the state.

The following are workshop dates of incorporation:

- 1965 to 1968: Cooperative Workshop, Universal Workshop, Springfield Workshop, Manufacturer's Assistance Group, Vocational Services, Specialty Industries, Project Workshop, Sheltered Workshops, Pike County Workshop, Ne Mo Workshop, Chariton County Workshop, Joplin Workshops, Monett Area Workshop, Florissant Valley, Capitol Projects, Valley Industries, Hope Haven Industries, Monroe City Workshop, Blue Valley Industries, Industrial Opportunities.

- 1969-1974: Community Opportunities, JVS Workshop, Rehab Institute, Opportunity Workshop, IBS Industries, WAC Industries (JobOne), Heartland Industries, Innovative Industries, Handi-Shop, Crowder Industries, Cotton Boll Workshop, Central Missouri Enterprises, Lamar Workshop, Rolla Area Workshop, Ozark Industries, Community Sheltered Industries, Unified Services, Industrial Aid, No We Mo, Earthwise Industries, Laclede Industries.

- 1974-1977: Lafayette County Enterprises, MCII, Industrial Services Cont., ClinCounty Industries, Opportunity Enterprises, Foundation Workshop, Southeast Workshop, Pulaski County Workshop, Boone Center, Unique Services, Lafayette Work Center, Quality Industries, Randolph County Workshop, Ste. Genevieve Co., Boonslick Industries, Kingdom Projects, Warren County Work-

shop, Stoddard County Workshop, Scenic Rivers Industries.

- 1977-1987, Doco, Web-County Custom Industries, Worth Industries, Tanton Industries, Three Rivers Industries, River Bluff Industries, Enterprises United, Jeff-County Subcontracting, Ideal Industries, Pemiscot Progressive Industries, Helping Hand, Cass County Area Workshop, ITE, Lake Area Industries, Big Springs, Canterbury Enterprises, Christian County Enterprises, Nocomo Industries, Oregon



*This early photo captured a worker in Missouri's first "official" workshop, Cooperative Workshop in Sedalia.*

County Workshop, Opportunity Industries.

- 1987-2000: Macon County Workshop, Meramec Valley Industries (Empaq), TemCounty, Quality Products, Reynolds County Industries, Current River, 3R Center, Enhancements, Gateway Industries, Perry County S/W.

A recent survey showed Missouri with 90 workshops employing 7,048 people.

## Acknowledgements

Sincere "thank yous" are extended to retired managers Steve Frank and David Hurst, who either provided information or "endured" lengthy interviews to share their recollections of early workshop history in Missouri.

A special thanks goes to Bruce Young who labored for months on a PowerPoint presentation that provides the single best

source of information on Missouri workshops and which served as a foundation for large portions of this publication.

Thanks, too, to all of the managers, staff members, parents and supporters who have worked tirelessly, often without recognition and occasionally with obstacles, to create these successes.

## Grassroots Quest to Fill Gap Brings Huge Bargain for Missouri

The story of Missouri's sheltered workshops began in the 1950s and hit full stride in the 1960s. Seeking options for their children with disabilities, often desperately, parents and guardians began forming workshops to provide employment opportunities for them.

For most of these parents and their children, the only alternatives were sitting at home or in programs that required massive government subsidies. With real vision, these parents realized that gainful employment would bring other advantages as well, including pride and skills. Although much has changed, that foundation remains true for workshops today.

Missouri sheltered workshops remain different from shops in many other states. They depend heavily on contracted work and the revenue from that work to maintain operations. In reality, workshops are small businesses that hire individuals with disabilities. On average, a workshop's contract revenue accounts for 70-80 percent of workshop revenue, government assistance 10-24 percent and the rest from additional grants.

The majority of workshop employees have been diagnosed with developmental

disabilities. Other frequent disabilities include mental illness, head injury, blindness, deafness, seizure disorders and physical disabilities.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation first assesses these Missourians in order to determine whether or not they are capable of working in a competitive environment. If the rehabilitation counselor determines they cannot work competitively, the counselor will certify them for employment in the workshop.

Although workshops compete in an open market, the needs of their employees mean extra supervision and other elements that increase workshop overhead. A major step was taken in 1971 with passage of Missouri Senate Bill 40. SB40 provided important funding support by enabling local counties to create tax levies for workshops and residential facilities. Additional funding today includes a per diem supplement for each workshop employee from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Sheltered Workshop Division.

County and state funding does fill a critical gap from higher overhead for workshop supervision and other services



*Workers enjoying time at Project Inc. in one of the early scenes from one of the first shops to open in the state.*

to people with disabilities. Workshops also rely on quality, flexibility and their large workforce to sell their services, making that supervision critical.

Besides the obvious goal of providing employment for people with disabilities, workshops also put money back into their communities. Payroll, purchase of goods and services and participation in local affairs are some of the ways that workshops contribute to the community. This community "payback" totals hundreds of millions of dollars each year—one more bargain that workshops bring.

## Senate Bill Provided Structure for Missouri Workshops

The history of workshops in Missouri is strongly tied to Missouri Senate Bill 52, which passed in 1965.



*John works on one of the unique projects handled every day by workshops like Vocational Services, Inc.*

Like so much that involves workshops, the bill developed from grassroots networking by parents and concerned organizations to establish and fund workshop programs in Missouri.

The effort can also trace its origins to the 1958 Special Demonstration Grant 274. Conducted by The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the workshop "trials" also came about when parents of adult children with developmental disabilities joined to-

gether. This group of parents applied for a federal research and demonstration grant based on a prototype program of a New York vocational rehabilitation facility with the purpose of training their own children to work.

The grant projects were carefully outlined in terms of who was served and how they would be served. A major purpose of the grant was to demonstrate that special workshop training could vocationally rehabilitate young adults for whom employment had been determined impossible and who, permanently or temporarily, were unable to work in a traditional competitive environment. By working in the "sheltered workshops," the employees would become better workshop employees or, in some instances, candidates for community placements.

By 1966, there were 12 workshops in Missouri and the state was on its way to nearly 100 workshops serving more than 7,000 people.

# Missouri Sheltered Workshops: The Basics

## *What is a sheltered workshop?*

Missouri sheltered workshops are different from shops in many other states because they depend heavily on contracted work and the revenue from that work to maintain operations.

They are actually small businesses that hire individuals with disabilities. On the average, workshop contract revenue accounts for 70-80 percent of workshop revenue, government assistance 10-24 percent and the balance from other grants.

Because of the dependency on contract revenue, Missouri workshops readily respond to customer needs relating to quality and turnaround time. Jobs performed include packaging (bagging, shrink-wrapping, blister packaging, skin packaging, boxing), assembly (simple to complex), marketing and public relations services (collating, stuffing, and sorting mailings) and products (pallets, wire spools, first aid kits, poultry watering systems, office products, furniture items, etc.).

Services are also provided by workshops including janitorial work, grounds maintenance, commercial laundry operations and microfilming, to name a few. In addition, workshops provide crews that work in customer facilities.

## *How are workshops run?*

Each workshop is a not-for-profit corporation overseen by a volunteer board of directors. Board members include local business people, educators, lawyers, accountants and family members of employees. The board outlines the general course for a given shop and hires an operational manager for the day-to-day operations.

## *How are employees paid?*

Each workshop has a special certificate from the Department of Labor that allows it to pay subminimum wages. Workshop employees are paid based on their ability to perform in relation to the performance of a person without a disability. If an employee produces 50 percent of what a nondisabled person produces, then he/she receives 50 percent of what that person is paid (i.e., if the prevailing wage for that job is \$7 per hour, the employee receives \$3.50 per hour). These procedures are checked frequently by the Department of Labor.

## *Because workshops pay less, can they do work for less?*

No, not necessarily because workshops do not receive the same production per

hour as a business hiring nondisabled workers would receive. For example, in the comparison above, a person who works at the 50 percent level takes two hours to produce what a nondisabled person would produce in one hour, so the cost for the same amount of work is still \$6, no matter who is doing the work.

In addition, overhead costs are often

## *employees have?*

The majority of workshop employees have a developmental disability. Other common disabilities include mental illness, head injury, blindness, deafness, seizure disorders and physical disabilities. Prior to being hired for employment in the workshop, people must be assessed by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



*Workshops have developed into modern facilities that serve both the business community and people with disabilities. This is Web-Co's facility.*

higher for workshops than normal businesses because of the increased supervision needed. Workshops must depend on quality, flexibility and a large workforce to sell their services. What workshops can offer for their customers is a dependable workforce without the headaches of personnel management.

## *How do workshops obtain business?*

Some workshops have their own sales representative who calls on local businesses to make them aware of the services the workshop can provide. Other workshops have joined together in cooperative arrangements to share salespeople, and still others depend on the manager to do the sales work. Much of a workshop's business is repeat business or word of mouth from satisfied customers.

## *How many people with disabilities are employed in workshops?*

There are 91 workshop corporations located around the state of Missouri. These shops provide employment for approximately 7500 people with disabilities and approximately 560 nondisabled staff.

## *What kind of disabilities do workshop*

to determine whether or not they are capable of working in a competitive environment at this time. If the

Rehabilitation counselor determines they cannot work competitively at this time, he/she will certify them for employment in the workshop.

## *What role does the state play in the operation of the workshops?*

Other than the fact that the state (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) provides some funding, regulations and guidelines for the establishment and operation of sheltered workshops and some technical assistance when requested, its role is minor in the day-to-day operation of the shops.

## *What do the workshops do for the community?*

Besides the obvious of providing employment, especially for people with disabilities, workshops also put money back into the community. Payroll, purchase of goods and services and participation in community affairs are just a few of the ways that workshops contribute to the community.

## The People Behind Missouri's Workshops: An Amazing Group Providing Years of Hard Work

Although hundreds of parents and other supporters of people with disabilities were behind the formation of early workshops in Missouri, some are especially notable for their hard work.

Two include Frank Ackerman and Russell Armentrout, who from 1953 to 1966 worked with other concerned parents, family and community members. Also involved was the Cerebral Palsy Association and the Children's Therapy Center. Ackerman was especially tireless in his efforts, traveling throughout Missouri to promote the creation of workshops, as well as state enabling and funding legislation that became Senate bill 52 and later led to Senate Bill 40.

Missouri's workshop timeline:

1953-1966—Parents and supporters work to provide options for young adults with developmental disabilities.

1958-1961—Project No. 274 creates "project" workshops through the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and with support from a federal grant.

1965—Drafted by Frank Ackerman and Russell Armentrout, SB 52 passes, enabling the formation of workshops in Missouri.

1966—Thirteen workshops with 400 employees have formed by the end of Fiscal Year 1966. The first included Sedalia, Boone Center and Project Inc.

*Frank Ackerman (right) was one of the key founders and organizers of the Missouri workshop program.*



## Business Services Provided by Workshops Fill Important Roles

Services provided by Missouri workshops meet multiple business needs including outsourcing, custom projects and other programs, all designed to provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

### **Business Services:**

Nearly every workshop in Missouri provides packaging, mailing, assembly and similar services related to fulfillment and delivery. These are usually delivered in an extremely flexible manner to meet individual business needs.

Workshops also operate a number of on-demand efforts, including award-winning maintenance of state facilities such as high-traffic, highway rest areas. Like these work teams, individuals in supported work programs are often in the community.

### **Recycling**

Workshops provide "green" services with recycling and other programs. Many workshops also produce their own, original products, ranging from first aid kits for pets or people, to industrial wooden skids.

All of these programs provide employ-

ment opportunities for Missourians with developmental disabilities, provide outstanding services to Missouri communities and provide businesses statewide.

### **Important Basics**

Nearly every workshop in the state provides packaging, mailing, assembly and other services related to fulfillment and delivery. Workshops offer these services with a maximum of flexibility for their client businesses, often working with individual businesses to create custom programs. I

Companies that utilize workshop services in effect have an on-demand expansion of their own capabilities. People with disabilities, employed by Missouri workshops, produce goods and services for Fortune 500 companies, as well as smaller, local businesses.

A partial list of contracts includes work opportunities in electro-mechanical and manual assembly, custom, high speed packaging, automated and computerized inspection and quality control, custom mailing, commercial laundry and janitorial work, data entry, machine operation, wood, metal and plastics fabrication, doc-

ument preservation and entrepreneurial enterprises.

Along with such traditional outsourcing efforts, workshops also operate a number of on-site services. These include maintenance of state facilities such as high-traffic, highway rest areas. Workshops have also successfully joined—and in many areas lead—the "green" revolution with recycling and other programs.

### **Original Products**

Many workshops also produce their own original products. These range from first aid kits for pets or people to industrial wooden skids and other items. Such original products are often developed after extensive market research, frequently in cooperation with information provided by Missouri's higher education and extension services.

All of these programs provide ever-increasing employment opportunities for Missourians with developmental disabilities. They also provide outstanding services to Missouri communities and the state as a whole.

# Missouri Workshop History: A Look Back

By Steve Frank

To do the history of the sheltered workshop program in Missouri justice, one needs to go back to the years prior to the enactment of SB-52. There needs to be a look at the monumental effort that it took to create the legislation.

Any attempt to review the implementation of SB-52 always leads back to the man who is commonly recognized as the father of the workshop program in Missouri. His name was Frank Ackerman. Frank was born in 1884 and passed away in 1974.

During his lifetime, his efforts on behalf of the retarded (as they were known at that time) were unparalleled. Frank and his wife, Viola, were the parents of three daughters and two sons. His son, Roland, was developmentally disabled and became the impetus that drove Frank to become the staunch advocate that he was.

Ackerman began his work as president of the Egan-Tudor PTA in 1954. He led the PTA's drive to establish a special education program for mentally retarded chil-

dren who were deemed trainable. Ackerman's research and advocacy at this time was just the beginning. The efforts he began with the PTA would continue over the next 16 years and encompass the entire state of Missouri.

It was during this period of time that his efforts, along with many others, would lead to the formation of Project Inc., which was started well before SB-52 provided the funding from Missouri for the per diem. It was initially funded under a grant by the office of Vocational Rehabilitation, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. It was known as Special Demonstrations Project #274.

The shop was modeled after a workshop in New York City after a team of parents traveled there to observe and study the methodology utilized by the New York City ARC Sheltered Workshop. Their journey would lead them to stops in Ohio and Indiana for further study before returning to St. Louis. After a lot of thought and study, they began their efforts to start a shop in St. Louis at 401 S. Edwin Street,

in a building leased from General Dynamics. Their success would eventually prove that it could be done. It is generally accepted that their work provided the prototype for the SB-52 workshops of today.

Then began the efforts by Ackerman and others to sell the concept to the legislators in the State of Missouri. After years of well-documented monumental efforts, SB-52 was finally passed in 1965. This provided the thrust for shops across the state.

The first three shops authorized in Missouri under SB-52 were the Cooperative Workshops in Sedalia, Project Inc. in St. Louis and Boone Center in St. Charles. The legislation provided the impetus for shops across the state. A gradual escalation has led to the current roster of 89 shops, which employ 6708 workers with disabilities.

No one could have ever imagined early on that shops employing over 200 employees in buildings specifically designed for production would become a reality.

## Behind the Scenes: Managers Are Always There

*A big part of the success for Missouri's workshops and their programs is due to workshop managers themselves, and the solid support they have received from the community, including Missouri legislators. These scenes of managers meetings in 1999 and 2003 tell part of the story. The 2003 meeting was the annual legislative session in Jefferson City in which managers hold important dialog with their representatives and senators. The annual meetings in April include training and dialog.*



## Despite Many Changes, the Need for Workshops Continues

David Hurst remembers well the early days of workshops in Missouri.

As the manager at Project Inc. not long after it was first formed in 1966, he recalls more than anything other early leaders, parents and volunteers who helped create an option for people with developmental disabilities after they graduated from high school.

“The parents realized that after graduation, many of these young adults were not finding work,” he recalled. “There just aren’t enough community jobs, and many need care that you’re not going to have in a competitive job. In my opinion, the shops were just as viable in the early years as they are today.”

There are challenges. Moving jobs to foreign countries and increased computerization and automation are perennial challenges. Hurst noted a new issue involves those who seek to eliminate workshops. “Making demons out of the workshops is wrong,” he noted. “Most of the parents today still understand that. We all want options for our workers, but workshops have to be part of that. Otherwise, there are a lot of people with disabilities who will lose their main option for employment.”

That challenge was true in the 1950s and 60s when workshops were first considered. “We could find work for the most capable workers,” he recalled. “But we could not find work for those who were lower functioning. The opportunities of any sort were not available then.”

One thing that remains the same today is parental support. “Parents started the program, and parents along the way have helped,” Hurst recalled. “Parents had a

huge need for the workshops, and they are still the backbone of our support. The reasons behind creating the workshops are still there. It’s just as strong today.”

### Recycling Among Many Changes for Workshops

Boonslick Industries is one of many workshops that have adopted recycling services. These scenes are from 2007-08.



## Strategic Planning for the New Half Century

Strategic Planning for the Next Half Century

To prepare for the second 50 years of Missouri workshops, MASWM has been actively engaged in strategic planning through several committees comprised of managers volunteering their time to help workshops throughout Missouri.

Beginning in 2011, the association began to develop a strategic plan to address change, challenges and opportunities.

The areas of focus include financial stability, membership services, legislative advocacy, public awareness, organizational

structure and agency and department relations.

In the area of financial stability, MASWM is to examine funding streams to ensure the long-term financial security of MASWM with the goal of offering more to the membership. Membership services include training and programs that will enhance the mission of workshops, thus enhancing the lives of employees.

With legislative advocacy, the association is seeking to develop better relationships with legislative and political leaders at local, state and federal levels to advocate

for the financial needs of members and those who are served. Public awareness will cultivate and develop these relationships, along with community and business support.

MASWM is also examining organizational structure to address how meetings run and the best way to accomplish the mission of MASWM. With agency and department relations we hope to build key partnerships that will utilize the resources of all parties and maximize employment opportunities.

## Managers Association Formed to Provide Education

Soon after their founding, managers of Missouri's new workshops soon realized that some type of organization was needed to help share their knowledge in order to operate successfully.

With workshops formally operating in 1966, the Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshop Managers (MASWM) was formally founded four years later, in October of 1970.

The association's articles of incorporation was signed by many of those who had been active in creating workshops and who went on to play important roles statewide.

The corporation was formed solely for educational purposes, to hold seminars

and training sessions for managers and members of the boards of directors of sheltered workshops and to acquaint the public with the functions of such sheltered workshops.

Formed as a not-for-profit, the original goal is still important today: educating managers and the community on workshop programs and how to best operate them.

The original signers and first board of directors included Roger Garlich, then at Bothwell Hospital, Sedalia; D. J. Wasserstrom, North Kansas City; L. H. Niebling, St. Louis; and Juanita Alexander, Hannibal.



*Workshop managers have worked and sometimes struggled to maintain quality services for people with disabilities. Staying abreast of changing regulations, technology and markets is a key.*

## What Employees and Families Say About Missouri's Workshops

Over the years, there have been many positive comments, especially from our workers with disabilities, their parents and supporters. Here is a small sample:

"We appreciate the success of the workshop in providing the types and variety of job contracts that are available for individuals to function at their level of ability. Cindy likes to know that she is doing a good job and is treated with respect in the work environment. As you know, she has had the experience of community employment for nine months and her performance was satisfactory on that assignment. She chose to return to work at the workshop. She prefers working in the environment which allows her to see her friends daily and to socialize during break times.

We also want to recognize the level of job performance maintained by employees. Employees are trained to give attention to their work and to develop good employee work skills. This contributes to the development of the individual and the success of the workshop" —Cindy's mother

"The workshop provides an excellent facility for our daughter and other handicapped people to work and realize a sense of pride and accomplishment. The staff of the workshop do a great job in making all of this possible and are very caring people. We believe this type of facility and program is very important for a person such as our daughter. It provides her with a certain amount of dignity, in that she is

doing something productive and earning some of her resources. The interaction with other persons in the workplace is also important to us and to our daughter." — Janet's father

"Our daughter, Norma, has benefited in many ways from her work at the workshop. Norma has learned good work habits which have given her a deep sense of responsibility and reliability. Her self-esteem has been enhanced and deepened because she feels her work is significant. She has great dedication to her job and she takes much pride in her successes and accomplishments; not only does she love her work, Norma also has a genuine sense of camaraderie with her fellow workers and her staff who have always treated her with dignity and respect. We, her parents, are appreciative and grateful for the opportunities provided Norma and for the growth she has realized in taking advantage of those work experiences." — Norma's parents



*Workshops provide a wide range of services, but none is more important than services to people with disabilities. By providing a wide range of employment options, workshops serve communities across the state. And by doing this with a majority of funds derived business contracts, workshops ensure these options are delivered in a sustainable way.*

"It's what he looks forward to, Monday through Friday, and when he's off on vacation, even though he likes to be off, he worries about things not getting done when he's not there." —Timothy's mother

"The job's very important to me because of the job I do each day." —Timothy