

MASWM

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

New Mandates, Regulations Bring Challenges Across Missouri

by Bruce Young, MASWM President

Missouri's Extended Employment Program currently faces many challenges with the new federal mandates that seek to limit employment options for some of our most challenged citizens.

Choice of employment just does not seem to be a theme with regard to many of these new mandates. The Work Innovative and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law by President Obama in 2014. WIOA went into effect on July 22, 2016. Its primary objective is to "strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help Americans with significant barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers."

Currently in Missouri, the unemployment rate for people with significant intellectual disabilities is approximately 75

percent. Many are participating in nonproductive and very costly day program situations or worse, sitting at home doing nothing.

MASWM's members understand the importance of work. The self-esteem and dignity one gets from working and being productive is extremely important to one's self-worth and well-being. This simply cannot be underestimated.

Although WIOA does have a number of positive attributes, like many other federal mandates, it also has resulted in many unintended consequences. Prior to this year, Missouri's sheltered workshops have worked very closely with their local school districts, providing valuable work experiences to



MASWM President
Bruce Young

those students who were not yet deemed ready for competitive employment.

The special education teachers who worked with the students and their families to develop their Individual Education Plans (IEP's) were instrumental in helping to determine the best postsecondary recommendations for their students. Since WIOA became effective on July 22, 2016, students are prohibited from working in Missouri's Sheltered Workshop Program. They can no longer

benefit from the real work experiences that help them develop the necessary work and social skills required in today's work settings.

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A Team Missouri Hits the Ground Running

A Team Missouri became a reality in 2016, forming a unique organization to help communicate employment and other options for people with developmental disabilities.

The A Team has already created a powerful internet presence, including a website (www.dignityhasavoice.org) and Facebook page. All of these efforts and more are de-



signed to empower people with disabilities and their families to defend and protect the right to choose sheltered

Mike Stroud of A Team Missouri presented information on the new advocacy group to managers during a recent meeting.

employment as a valuable work choice.

Led by Missouri A Team President and workshop manager Mike Stroud, the team is open to any person interested in supporting the mission of A Team Missouri, including people with disabilities, parents, guardians, family members, community members and others interested in this important effort.

A fundamental focus of A Team Missouri is telling the full workshop story and replacing myths about workshops with reality. For more information, visit www.dignityhasavoice.org.

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New Mandates, Regulations Bring Challenges Across Missouri

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Despite these setbacks, the Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshop Managers (MASWM) has been extremely busy during the last several months. On October 7, we launched our nationwide campaign "Dignity has a Voice." This includes a new website, www.dignity-hasavoice.com and Facebook page, <http://bit.ly/2iHfJm6>. Both of these sites provide great information about the importance of work, as well as the right to choose where one works. Both include powerful testimonials from our employees and their families regarding what work means to them.

On Oct. 12, several of our employees and their families participated in the statewide ARC employment summit in Columbia. It was an extremely important event that allowed our employees and their families to tell others around the state just how important their work is to them. "Choice of Employment" was the theme of our presentation. One simply cannot argue with employees and their family members about their own personal choice of employment, which will continue to be a major theme of our movement going forward.

During the last few months, several of our MASWM members have been working together with representatives from DESE, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the University of Missouri Hook Center to develop a new system which will ensure that Missouri's sheltered workshops are in full compliance with the new WIOA regulations. This includes career counseling for all new hires every six months for the first year and then annually thereafter. All 6600+ employees working in Missouri's sheltered workshop program are required to participate in this career counseling at least once a year. Both VR and UMC's Hook Center have agreed to help us with this massive undertaking.

The Hook Center has 35 masters-level special education teachers located all around the state. These teachers are currently working with their local school districts to help them comply with WIOA. They have agreed to help us with this project.

On Nov. 14, VR unveiled this new system with a test pilot at the Moberly workshop, with nearly 60 people participating. This joint effort with VR and the Hook Center was one of the first in the nation to use the group approach to comply with the new WIOA regulations. Once again, Missouri is on the cutting edge and, as such, we have received numerous calls from other states that want to duplicate this very successful system.

Moving forward, MASWM's Board and its members are fully committed to making Missouri's program a model for the nation, which will continue to focus on providing job training and meaningful work experiences to those who might otherwise never have the opportunity to

work and be productive citizens within their communities.

Finally, I would like to thank former Legislative Co-Chairs Randy Hylton and Jim Guyre for their service, following their retirements from years of volunteer services to MASWM. Their contributions to this organization and around the state are tremendous. Randy also served as MASWM president and has done so much "above and beyond" for the organizations and workshops that it is literally beyond calculation.



Legislative Co-Chair Randy Hylton is one of several MASWM leaders who are retiring after years of service with the association. Former MASWM president, Randy has given countless hours to workshops, including numerous trips to Jefferson City and Washington, D.C., at his own expense. He continues as executive director of Vocational Services in Liberty.

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 President Bruce Young at (573) 442-6935 or cmsebruce@aol.com; or Legislative Chair JW Gibbs Phone: (417) 350-2700 or E-mail: jgibbs@swiindustrial.com.

New MASWM Board Members Step Up

The MASWM Board this year approved new members who stepped up to fill vacancies.

The first was the appointment of Linda Kimrey as the new Director for Area VIII. Linda is the manager of Laclede Industries in Lebanon Missouri.

The MASWM Board also approved the appointment of Susan Wallis as the new Director for Area X. Susan is the manager of VIP Industries in Cape Girardeau.



Gail Ellis at Earthwise Industries in Troy was recently featured in the Lincoln County Journal, as she spread holiday joy before Christmas. (photo courtesy of Lincoln County Journal).

Workshop Updates

Melonie G. Nevels, executive director of 2 Rivers Industries, Inc. in Hannibal has a new email address: mnevels@2riversind.org.

The correct email address for Current River Sheltered Workshop in Doniphan is crswinc@yahoo.com.

Mr. Travis Wike has been appointed the manager at Lafayette County Enterprises in Higginsville. His email contact is: twike@ctcis.net

Ken Becket is the new manager at Warren County Workshop in Warrenton. His email is wcswoffice@centurytel.net.

Kingdom Projects, Inc. announced a new executive director, Connie Snell-Hale. Connie has 27 years of experience working with sheltered workshop management. The workshop email address is OFFICE@kingdomprojects.org.

The new manager at Rolla Area Sheltered Workshop is Joan Nadolski. Her email address is jnadolski@rollaareashelteredworkshop.com.

Natalie Couch is the new executive director of Lake Area Industries in Camdenton. Her email is director@lakeareaindustries.org.

Lacie Karr is the interim general manager at Pulaski County Sheltered Workshop. Her email address is pcsw2@outlook.com.

Casco Celebrates Anniversary, Earns Accreditation

Casco Area Workshop in Harrisonville recently celebrated its 41st birthday. On Dec. 1, 1975, Casco officially became the 55th certified sheltered workshop in Missouri.

In September 2016, Casco participated in the CARF survey. After three days of two CARF surveyors reviewing books and talking with vendors, caseworkers, individuals, stakeholders and employees,

Casco successfully received another three-year accreditation. The workshop has demonstrated a substantial conformance to the CARF standards. They recently remodeled the cafeteria area and added some furniture to give it a "coffee shop" feel.

In addition, Casco has also been participating in the volunteer safety inspection program through the Missouri Department

of Labor. This has helped to identify strengths and weaknesses of the workshop, helping to reduce workers' compensation claims by 43 percent from 2015 to 2016.

Casco recently received a new allocation from the government for 1,350 fire blankets. They also received a new contract for a handle-valve job from a local company.



Everyone at Casco Area Workshop in Harrisonville recently celebrated the shop's 41st anniversary. A gathering (left) involved memories and celebration, but the work continued at this busy facility.



New Director Sees Challenges, Opportunities for Workshops

Missouri's new director of the Extended Employment Sheltered Workshops Division for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is no stranger to many Missouri workshop managers.

Dan Gier has been a field technician in southern Missouri for five years, covering everything south of Highway 50, except for the major metro areas. He is very aware of the challenges faced by workshops today.

"It's very interesting," he said. "There's a lot going on."

He noted that new representatives are especially numerous in the new legislative session this spring, for example. Both the Missouri Legislature and U.S. Congress will have many new members who may not be familiar with 14(c) regulations and issues or other legislation. "We've got to get a feel for what their feelings are on 14(c), on disabilities and a whole host of things. With all of the 'outsiders' that are being brought in, it's a whole new world."

Gier said it appears likely that there will be significant changes at DESE and in workshops. "The state budget is going



Dan Gier is the new director of the Extended Employment Sheltered Workshops Division for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

to be very interesting," he said. "There's a whole new leadership taking place. Apparently, they're in agreement that there will be some major restructuring."

One issue involves funding, and one estimate is that some \$100 million also needs to be found for state finances. "It makes it hard and, as we know, workshops are strictly general revenue and that pie is only so big. And, that pie is what's

shrinking."

Gier, who has nearly two decades in logistics and supply, also notes that workshops face challenges in the business world as well. "We're in an ever-changing business environment," he noted. "We haven't stopped the bleeding of manufacturing and the loss of the type of manufacturing that has traditionally helped workshops."

He sees development of original products and services by workshops as one answer. "I look for a lot of entrepreneurial efforts, especially in the rural and small urban areas," he said. "Our problem is that managers are wearing so many hats now. They're forklift drivers, truck drivers, managers, everything—they don't have time to think out of the box. For years, they worked with that factory across town, but now that factory has been bought out, and they're pulling out. What does the workshop do now?"

One answer is thinking outside the box, something Gier does in his personal life. For 25 years, he's also been involved in professional wrestling, speaking and announcing.

Business Leader Joins JobOne Board

Jay Bell, Chief Executive Officer and Majority Shareholder at MAST Technology, Inc. has joined the JobOne Board of Directors. MAST Technology is a large defense contractor based in Independence, Missouri at Lake City Army Ammunition Facility. Mr. Bell will bring his strategic leadership expertise to the table to help guide JobOne's business develop-

ment and community outreach efforts in the region.

"We're thrilled to have Jay's insight as we continue development of our long-term organizational plans," states JobOne's President and CEO, Aaron Martin. "His experience leading a successful 25-year old business and background in government contracts will be a

valuable asset to our already strong board."

JobOne is a nonprofit organization that delivers business services for companies while providing employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. Current clients include contracts with the federal government, as well as privately-owned businesses across the region.

SWI Now Part of Congressional Record

SWI Industrial Solutions was recognized recently for its 50 years of providing a quality workforce to area industries, while supporting individuals with developmental disabilities.

Representative Billy Long took to the US House of Representatives floor on Nov. 30 saying, "SWI Industrial Solu-

tions has directly impacted the local economy in a positive way and has given countless individuals the confidence and training on how to be good employees and how to succeed in their jobs."

Before yielding the floor, Rep. Long concluded, "...for 50 years, SWI Industrial Solutions has made Southwest Mis-

souri a better place to live. "

Earlier this fall, SWI received the Missouri Association of Manufacturers Founders Award, recognizing SWI's service to the community and providing meaningful and dignified work to individuals with disabilities.

MASWM Leaders and Members Speak at State Meeting

MASWM leaders were among the speakers at two important state events on employment this fall in Columbia.

Managers Association members addressed Arc of Missouri's "Employment: The Landscape Has Changed" held Oct. 12.

MASWM President Bruce Young, Legislative Co-Chair Randy Hylton and two workshop workers and their parents were among the speakers. The group also presented several videos from the Dignity Has a Voice campaign.

The conference featured multiple discussions regarding how Missouri employment programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have been affected by recent changes in federal regulations and guidelines.

The keynote speaker was Victoria Thomas, trial attorney, Disability Rights Section, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice. She noted

that Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires placement of people with disabilities in the most integrated setting that is appropriate, and they should be enabled to interact with people without disabilities to the fullest extent possible.

Thomas also cited court cases upheld by the Supreme Court prohibiting unjustified segregation and the establishment of two evident judgments regarding institutional segregation.

The daylong event was held in the Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center, Columbia.

MASWM members also attended the Nov. 3 conference held by the Missouri Association of County Developmental Disabilities Services, (MACDDS). The meeting was held to review and discuss recent developments related to competitive integrated employment for people with developmental disabilities and fea-



Department of Justice attorney Victoria Thomas was the keynote speaker for the October Arc employment summit.

tured David Michael Mank, Ph.D., as keynote speaker. Topics included Medicare, Medicaid and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Joplin Employment Effort Earns Newspaper Endorsement

Joplin Workshops Inc. was part of a recent Joplin Inclusion Forum with regional employers discussing employment of people with disabilities.

Featured in an article by Koby Levin of the Joplin Globe, the meeting focused on a historically untapped hiring pool: people with disabilities.

The forum was the first disability-specific event to be organized after the implementation of a federal law designed to help coordinate the efforts of local work-

force development agencies. The article noted it was an important step toward addressing the employment challenges faced by people with disabilities.

The article also noted that people with disabilities in the U.S. are employed at much lower rates than people without, according to a 2014 report published by the Office of Disability Employment Policy. About a third were employed nationwide between 2010 and 2012, compared with more than two-thirds of people

without disabilities.

Other participants in the forum included representatives from hospitals and private corporations such as Tyson Foods and Leggett & Platt Flex-o-lators.

The Joplin Globe followed the article with a strong editorial endorsing the need for more work and displaying significant insight into the challenges facing workshops.



Bates County Industries was very blessed this past holiday season. The famous McBee's Brauts' owner visited the shop and served lunch. One of the organization's group homes catered the Thanksgiving dinner, and Missouri State Representative Patricia Pike has visited the shop several times and brought donuts.

Best Practices Document Available Online For Managers

The MASWM Board of Directors this fall published its initial "Best Practices" document for workshops.

These best practices were developed through a collaborative effort of workshops that mirror the demographics of the 89 workshops in the state of Missouri.

This is a working document that will be revised on a regular basis to reflect chang-

ing aspects within the extended employment program. The standards by which all Missouri workshops are expected to operate will be developed from the best practices document.

The work recommendations are directed at MASWM member workshops, as well as boards of directors, managers and administrators, staff members and

programs.

The best practices include a comprehensive range of areas, from board organization to financial responsibility and workforce regulations.

The latest copy of the best practices document is available on the MASWM website: www.moworkshops.org/news-Folder/Best_Practices.html.

Gateway Joins Restaurant in Celebrating Partnership

Gateway Industries and Burgers' Smokehouse, California, Mo., came together at the Gateway Industries Headquarters in Eldon to give thanks and show appreciation for a great partnership.

Gateway Industries ties over 500,000 strings per year, used for hanging hams during the curing process at Burgers' Smokehouse. Lunch was served to approximately 60 Gateway Industries employees and guests in honor of the Thanksgiving season.

To learn more about either company, please visit them on their websites at www.gatewayeldon.com and www.smokehouse.com.



Gateway Industries has partnered with area restaurant Burgers' Smokehouse to create jobs and some good food! Among those involved in a recent project (top photo, from left) Dianna Aguero, Pauline Summey, Philip Burger, Keith Fletcher, Christina McMillian (Burgers' Smokehouse) and Rebecca Hedrick (Gateway Industries).



Warren County Busy on Several Fronts

Warren County Sheltered Workshop in Warrenton has been active in a number of areas.

Joey Pierson was promoted to production manager. Joey has been on staff since 2012.

Flooring and lighting replacement projects were among the largest. Thanks to the Boeing Corporation and the Warren County SB40 Board, flooring was replaced with a long-lasting laminate in several rooms. In the warehouse, all overhead lighting was replaced with energy-efficient LED lighting. This project will have an energy consumption reduction up to 70

percent and increase visibility for safety.

Also thanks to the SB40 Board, the workshop created an Employee Training and Resource Center with three individual stations that allow employees to access training and resource information from a number of different sources and formats, both as a group and individually. It also allows the workshop to develop job-specific training material and implement them as needed. This provides employees access to information and resources available to them via the web that they normally might not have.

The SB40 Board funded a motorized

industrial scrubber to provide the much-needed housekeeping required of 15,000 square feet of floor area. By using this machine throughout the day, it produces professional cleaning results utilizing our capable certified employees. From a safety perspective, it greatly reduces the potential of slips and falls and is a safe and effective tool to be used as part of our bodily fluid cleanup process.

For security, the workshop is installing a high-definition camera system to monitor the exterior and interior of the warehouse and grounds.

VR Test Run Leads to Workshop Success

Several members from Missouri's Vocational Rehabilitation office tested their new group approach to help Missouri's sheltered workshops comply with Section 511 of WIOA in early November.

The test run was held at the Moberly workshop, Randolph County Sheltered Industries, where about 40 employees participated. Each group session with about 20 or so employees took about 30 minutes, which included time for questions and answers. The staff at VR believe that they can do the same thing around the state with groups of 30 or more.

MASWM President Bruce Young was extremely pleased to say that this new group system was a complete success. Special thanks went to Kim Gee and Tim Gaines from VR, along with Bob Simpson from UMC's Hook Center. Workshop Manager Kit Brewer and his staff were also outstanding.

According to VR, this was one of the first group sessions in the nation set up to comply with Section 511. Also instrumental in the effort were several other managers who helped VR/Hook Center with the final edit of the video and script

for this new system.

VR is contacting shops around the state within the next few weeks to set up appointments for employees hired after July 22, 2016. Employees who were already working or hired before July 22 will be met with in May/June 2017.

Missouri is on its way to being one of the first states in the nation to fully comply with Section 511 of WIOA.

Former legislative chair Randy Hylton was among those helping to make the program a reality. Others included Mike Stroud and Eric Giebler.

Workshop Efforts Are Two-Way Street

Workshop managers and leaders of MASWM recently collected important information for Missouri's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The effort involved critical planning by VR for new training needed to help workshops meet new federal regulations..

Last summer, VR faced a big hurdle in determining how it could best help Missouri workshops meet new regulations that are part of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

As part of those efforts, VR needed to conduct training activities throughout the state. A major hurdle quickly became apparent: where trainers and workshop staff could hold training for both small and large groups. And, which of these locations have adequate resources for the training, including internet connections and other requirements? How many would be in attendance? When would these facilities be available?

These and other questions would need

answers quickly in order to proceed with the training, which by law needs to be under way—yesterday! In order to meet WIOA requirements, there was no time to lose.

Within a three-day period in August, MASWM conducted and delivered a statewide survey that included responses from every MASWM workshop in the state. VR officials acknowledged the impressive results at the October MASWM meeting.

Congresswoman Tours Marshfield Workshop

Web-Co Custom Industries in Marshfield had a great visit with Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler this fall.

Workshop staff discussed their concerns over the new law WIOA and its implications with Congresswoman Hartzler. They also discussed concerns with elimination of 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, the TIME Act and HR188.

The Congresswoman expressed her

support of sheltered workshops throughout Missouri and the benefits that are given to the employees and their families.

Web-Co Custom Industries General Manager Mike Frazier (far right) was among those meeting with Congressman Vicky Hartzler at the workshop. Others were (from left) Board President Michael Daniel and Board Treasurer Robert Ahrens.



Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler and General Manager Mike Frazier inspected a packaging line at Web-Co Custom Industries in Marshfield during the congresswoman's visit.

MASWM Meeting Draws Crowd with State, National Issues

Major changes facing workshops and what to do about them were big draws for the MASWM meeting Oct. 5-7. Hundreds of managers and staff members jammed several sessions, including the standing-room-only training sessions.

Topics included vocational rehabilitation procedures, WIOA regulations and other changes that are impacting workshops.

On Wednesday, Oct. 5, the Board of Directors approved, in principle, a best practices document that includes a variety of topics, including expectations for member organizations, boards, managers and staff across a wide variety of areas. These best practices are designed to help managers and provide guidance. More information and downloadable copies are available on the MASWM website, www.moworkshops.org.

The training on Thursday, Oct. 6, kicked off with morning-long presentations by representatives of Missouri Voca-

tional Rehabilitation (VR). Speakers included Tim Gaines, Missouri VR Coordinator; Kim Gee, Missouri VR Director of Section 511 Services, Bob Simpson, University of Missouri-Columbia Hook Center, Director of Pre-Employment Transition Services; and Bob Simpson, Project Director, Pre-Employment Transition Services with the Hook Center. Following their presentations, they answered numerous questions from the more than 100 workshop representatives at the meeting.

The afternoon presentations began with Kate McSweeney, Legal Counsel for ACCSES, and Jon and Chris Porter of the Porter Group. These three from Washington, D.C. provided detailed insight into their work representing Missouri workshops and others before the nation's leaders.

Friday, Oct. 8 was an equally full day, with everything from state legislative updates, reports from SWIM and more.

