

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

Moving Forward with Workplace Diversity

by MASWM President Brent Blackwell

Looking at the sheltered workshops across the state of Missouri, one of the first things you notice are the different types of jobs and services offered.

Unfortunately, when the economy is down, companies generally take work from the workshops to allow them to keep certain employees they do not wish to lose. This creates more challenges and thus the reason managers must look at any and all work that can be performed in their particular shops.

I highly commend each workshop manager for looking at all opportunities for work because without that ability, the workshops would cease to exist. This sometimes means substantial investments for equipment and materials. Thankfully, there are entities like

the United States Department of Agriculture, Department of Economic Development, Solid Waste Districts (Missouri Department of Natural Resources), Senate Bill 40, businesses and others that assist with grants, loans and donations. In a perfect world, workshops would receive 70 to 80 percent of their funding through their contract sales and the additional monies from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and local tax levies, for those counties having a Senate Bill 40. But, as we all know, a perfect world is a goal—not a reality.

So, the search for and maintaining of work is of the utmost importance. For that reason, we are grateful that we have the support of DESE through the



MASWM President Brent Blackwell cites the challenges and successes for Missouri's workshops.

Director and the Technical Field Supervisors to keep up with any and all compliance issues and work with us hand in hand to ensure the safest possible environment in the shops. We are also extremely grateful for all the support we have from the state legislators in Jefferson City, without whom we would not have the funding necessary to provide dignified and meaningful employment for the developmentally disabled adults of Missouri.

All that being said, you would think that we are truly blessed, but our real blessing is the opportunity to work with and support the individuals we serve, who continue to amaze us with their enthusiasm and broad range of capabilities.

DESE/DED Task Force Examines Proposal

The DESE/DED Task Force met with Dr. Stephen Barr, Assistant Commissioner, and Fulvio Franzi, director of the Sheltered Workshop Division, from DESE in June.

The Task Force efforts are part of the continuing efforts to determine the advantages and disadvantages of moving workshop state involvement and funding from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to the Department of Economic Development.

At the June meeting, the group had

a very positive exchange of information. The Task Force will meet with DED the week of July 20.

The Task Force is contacting many Missouri legislators. However, if any managers have an opportunity to communicate with a legislator, they should be asked for their feedback regarding this issue. Any such information should be sent to Co-Chairs Rob Libera (Lafayette Industries, rlibera@lafayetteindustries.com) and Eric Giebler (Empac Group, egiebler@empacgroupinc.com).

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New, Returning Leaders Announced—and Appreciated!

MASWM is greatly assisted by members who volunteer to serve in leader-

ship positions.

At this April's meeting, new officers were elected: President Brent Blackwell, Vice President Bruce Young, Secretary Ginger Williams and Treasurer Dee Fronenberg. Brent and Bruce are moving into new positions, while Dee is continuing in her position of Treasurer. Ginger has replaced Bob Engemann as the new Secretary. Dee has agreed to continue as Treasurer in order to not have all new officers in one year. Bob indicated he will be available to assist, when needed, during this transitional year.

C.J. Welch of Boonslick Industries, Boonville, was later elected by the

Board of Directors to fill the Area VI Director's position, vacated by Bruce Young, when he became vice-president. Randy Hylton, VSI, Liberty, has agreed to continue as Legislative Chair, assisted by Jim Guyre, co-chair. More recently, Rob Libera of Lafayette Industries in Manchester and Eric Giebler of EMPAC Group in Sullivan agreed to be co-chairs for the DESE/DED Task Force. Laura Johnson has agreed to be the Task Force secretary.

These volunteers deserve appreciation for their time and commitment that is furthering the goals and aspirations of the Association.

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 Chair Randy Hylton at (816) 781-6292 or e-mail rhyton@vsiserve.org; or President Brent Blackwell at (660) 584-7232 or bblackwell@ctcis.net.

HR 803 Likely To Bring Dramatic Change

Legislative Chair Randy Hylton recently reported that a new bill may dramatically change how services are delivered to all people with disabilities in terms of Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

HR 803, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), appeared likely to pass Congress as this newsletter was nearing press time. Different from the now-dead Skills Act, this bill will significantly change how services are delivered to all people with disabilities under section 14(c). The good news is that legislators have seen the importance of section 14(c) programs, and just as the Department of Justice has done, they have included workshops in the service delivery structure.

Some highlights of the bill include:

1. It requires every state to have a plan for employing people with disabilities. We believe it will be key for MASWM to have a role in developing this state plan.

2. Every person with a disability must go through VR to enter a section 14(c) program.

3. They will not be able to enter a section 14(c) program until age 24, unless they have had their VR case closed or vocational rehabilitation (VR) has deemed them unemployable. This is very similar to what we do in Missouri now.

4. A person with a disability entering a section 14(c) program must have a person-centered plan upon entry, and it must be reviewed after six months and then annually thereafter.

5. States will have two years to implement these mandates.

This is just a quick synopsis of the bill, which contains a lot of additional information on employment of people with disabilities. It was voted out of committee unanimously and has support of both houses and the President. The plan is to have it passed by the August recess of congress and signed immediately by the President.

Recent Workshop Updates

Lauren Gibbs, manager of United Enterprises in Perryville, has a new name and email. Formerly Lauren Boland, Lauren has married this year. Her e-mail is now laurengibbs@unitedenterprises.org.

Kit Brewer is the manager for a workshop in Moberly operated by ICAN Missouri Foundation, Randolph County Sheltered Industries. His phone is (660) 263-6202 and his e-mail kbrewer@icanmo.org.

Workshop Safety, Forklift Training Planned through Oct. 30

SWIM, DESE and MASWM are sponsoring Regional Safety Trainings that began June 19 and continue across the state through Oct. 30 at five locations. The same curriculum will be repeated at each location for two consecutive days to allow all workshop managers and supervisors to attend.

These one-day safety workshops are open to all Missouri sheltered workshop managers and staff. The safety training is specifically designed to provide helpful tools that will assist in managing safety and risk management within the workshop.

This year, we will be offering the

regional safety seminars at five different locations: St. Louis, Columbia, Kansas City, Poplar Bluff and Springfield.

Complete registration and agenda details are available on the MASWM website at www.moworkshops.org/Training14/.



Those at Canterbury Enterprises during a recent congressional visit included two Canterbury employees, four members of the Board of Directors, including one parent, Manager Charlie Fischer and Congresswoman Ann Wagner (center right).

Congresswoman Visits Canterbury Enterprises

Congresswoman Ann Wagner visited Canterbury Enterprises in Shrewsbury during April.

The congresswoman first talked with staff, board members and parents. Following these discussions, Manager Charlie Fischer provided information regarding Canterbury's history, culture, customers and jobs. He noted the advantages of working at Canterbury

from the views of employees and families.

They also held a brief discussion on HR 831, which relates to wages for people with disabilities and the impact of how this would affect workshops. Fischer gave the congresswoman brochures on Canterbury and MASWM, as well as copies of the information regarding the advantages

of working at Canterbury.

After these discussions, Congresswoman Wagner spent time on the workshop floor speaking with employees and staff. Fischer said the congresswoman had a lively conversation with employees regarding the work they were doing.

DOL Offers Training Programs on 14(c) Compliance

The Department of Labor (DOL) is offering an eight-hour training on 14(c) compliance this summer.

The DOL is conducting two training opportunities, the first in Kansas City and the second in St. Louis. They are

free, but participants must register to attend due to conference room size.

The first session was scheduled for July 17 in Kansas City and the second in St. Louis July 29.

Workshop staff, Senate Bill 40 execu-

tive directors and any advocate or parents are welcome but must register in advance at

http://www.dol.gov/WHD/specialemloyment/FreeSeminar_Section14c.htm.

Rest Area Services in Flux

Workshops across the state are working with a private company that has been contracted by the Missouri Department of Transportation to manage workshop services at MoDOT highway rest areas.

Management of the popular work program for many shops was turned over to the Infrastructure Corporation of America 18 months ago. Although this privatization raised concerns, two managers working closely with the pro-

gram report it has gone relatively well so far.

“Things have gone smoothly during the transition,” reported Ginger Williams, Farmington. The corporation now contracts services to MoDOT, and we contract with the corporation.”

Williams said there have been changes. “It did bring about a lot of changes, and it brought on some additional work,” she said. “I’m not sure it’s been this way for everyone, but, for

our rest area, it’s gone pretty smoothly.”

Both Williams and Susan Legaard of Bethany noted that high turnover at the company has been something of an issue. “We’ve had a lot more paperwork, and sometimes the turnover causes communication issues,” Williams explained. “Since it started, we’ve gone through three contacts. Every time you have a new contact, it’s like starting over.”

CASCO Connects with Congressman

Earlier this spring, Congressman Emmanuel Cleaver invited a worker from CASCO Area Workshop, Harrisonville, and his mother to breakfast.

The worker, Shawn Allison, hand delivered letters from workshop employees telling the congressman what harm the repeal of Section 14(c) would do to them and their ability to

access meaningful employment. Congressman Cleaver assigned one of his aides to research the issue and said he would carry the message to Washington on behalf of the workers and the shop.

Also at CASCO, Manager Peggy Kutchback has been out due to eye surgery, although her able staff has managed in her absence.

Shawn Allison of CASCO Area Workshop in Harrisonville was treated to breakfast with U.S. Congressman Emmanuel Cleaver (left). Shawn delivered letters from workshop consumers concerned with the repeal of Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Congressman Cleaver’s staff then investigated the issue and is carrying the message to Washington.



Easter Egg Business Reaches New Milestone in Springfield

Now in its seventh season, Sunny Bunny Easter Eggs continues with exceptional growth. What began as a concept to provide employment opportunities for community members with specific abilities, blossomed into a sustainable business. Sunny Bunny sold 2.8 million eggs during the first season and last year topped out at over 9 million. The current season of sales has exceeded \$1 million and has provided jobs for more than sixty individuals.

With an impressive national reach, serving all 50 states, Sunny Bunny is poised to become a market leader. SWI CEO, Larry Leek offers, “Our customers feel good about purchasing products made in the US and that also

provide meaningful work for members of our community. We continue to experience repeat business, and we look forward to becoming known as ‘the source’ for Easter eggs.”

Sunny Bunny is a program of SWI Industrial Solutions. SWI Industrial Solutions offers meaningful employment to individuals with developmental disabilities. For more than fifty years, this has been accomplished through the provision of varied occupational choices and experiences to enhance the quality of life for those served.

On average, fifty employees work on Sunny Bunny eggs. The eggs are filled with candy or toys by individuals

whose abilities are appropriately matched. The team takes great pride in their product, and the outcome is a significant confidence builder. Orders are accepted each season until two weeks prior to Easter.

Managers: Stay Updated!

Workshop managers are urged to make sure MASWM has your latest contact and shop information.

Especially if you’ve changed an e-mail address, go to www.moworkshops.org/form.html and help us to keep you informed about MASWM and workshop news in Missouri and the nation.

Mexico Recycling Effort Boosted by Contribution



Workers at Handi-Shop in Mexico had reason for pride recently when their recycling program received a big boost from a \$1,000 grant.

Archer Daniels Midland Company recently donated \$1,000 to Handi-Shop, Inc., in Mexico, Mo.

Like many workshops, HSI has struggled financially the past few years and has faced several expensive repairs and replacements of parts for balers, forklifts and vehicles that are used daily. This donation was provided to help replenish those funds and keep all aspects of the organization operating.

"I made a request to them stating that we, as a sheltered workshop, employ about 70 individuals with disabilities," said Kelly Polston, general manager of HSI. "One of our operations is recycling, and we are the only recycling facility in Mexico with the exception of a metal recycling facility outside of the city limits. Last year, we recycled 2.15 million tons, which makes it evident that the community

supports our operation. Even though we are not directly linked to the production of food, animal feeds or renewable fuels or chemicals, we are very much involved in keeping the environment clean by recycling and reusing to keep as much as possible out of the landfills and, ultimately, the soil. At the same time, we are educating many, those disabled and those not, on environmental practices."

Popular Service

HSI accepts many types of recycling products, as well as clothing and household items for resale in their thrift store, old t-shirts or other cotton material cut up for rags and any denomination of cash donations, which can be delegated for a certain purpose or for general operations. Cash donations have decreased dramatically the past several years, which has played a

part in the financial shortages that the workshop has faced. "We rely on all these different types of donations to keep us going," Polston said. HIS is a 501(c)3 organization, and all donations made are tax deductible.

This \$1,000 donation was given through ADM Cares, a social investment program that directs funds to initiatives and organizations that drive meaningful social, economic and environmental progress worldwide. The program comprises three distinct focus areas: supporting the responsible development of agriculture, improving the quality of life in ADM communities and fostering employee giving and volunteer activities.

The workshop thanks ADM for their generosity and appreciates the funding they provide to many organizations throughout the world.

Grant Promotes Recycling in Monroe City

The Monroe City Sheltered Workshop was recently awarded a grant for \$8,976 from the Mark Twain Solid Waste Management District for the purchase of a baler that will be used to process recyclables.

Cindy Hultz, district planner for the Mark Twain Solid Waste Management

District, said the award helps both the workshop and community. "The Monroe City Sheltered Workshop processes a large amount of recyclables, and the Mark Twain Solid Waste Management District is pleased to be able to be a part of the recycling process," she said.



Monroe City's new baler gets a workout, thanks to a \$8,976 recent grant.

Jeffco Holds Tailgate Sale and Recycling Event

Jeffco Sheltered Industries in Arnold, Mo., held their first annual Tailgate Sale at the Fox Service Center on April 26.

An electronics recycling event was also included. Many vendors and volunteers made the day very enjoyable, and Kohl's Department Store presented a \$500 grant, in addition to providing volunteers from their Arnold store.

All proceeds from the event will benefit JSI, the sheltered workshop, which

employs people with developmental disabilities from all throughout Jefferson County. JSI wishes to thank all the volunteers and vendors who participated.

Volunteers at Jeffco Sheltered Industries in Arnold were smiling after a successful tailgate sale and electronics recycling event this spring.

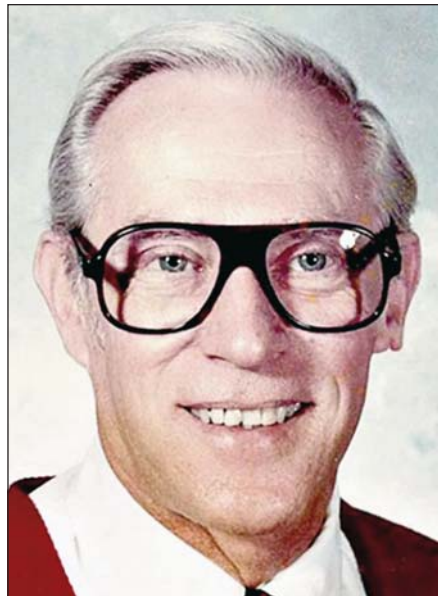


Workshops, Managers Mourn Passing of Workshop Founder

Another "rock" of the Missouri workshop world has passed with the death May 5 of Hilary Schmittzehe, longtime CEO of VIP Industries in southeast Missouri.

Schmittzehe was among the founders of VIP in 1967 when he became concerned for two daughters who had disabilities. He and other concerned parents across the state feared their children's growth would suffer if they did not have appropriate, challenging activities. Among the results of their tireless efforts was state legislation that paved the way for creation and funding of workshops. Richard Aufdenberg, chairman of VIP's board of directors, was quoted in a southeast Missouri newspaper praising Schmittzehe for his efforts. "He spent a big part of his life toward making life better for the handicapped," Aufdenberg was quoted as saying.

The concept of workshops that would, in part, earn their own way was novel when Schmittzehe and others began their efforts. Aufdenberg noted that workshops are places where people



Seen here in an early photo, the late Hilary Schmittzehe was among the key people who launched Missouri workshops in the late 1960s.

who cannot compete in competitive jobs can nevertheless find employment, earn a paycheck and interact with others.

Schmittzehe was born and raised in Cape Girardeau. He graduated from Notre Dame Regional High School before enrolling in the Montgomery and Taylor School of Horology, from which he earned a degree in watchmaking. He operated a jewelry business for 25 years before committing himself entirely to his passion of serving people with mental and developmental disabilities.

Typical of his hands-on approach, Schmittzehe helped draw up legislation to transform the Missouri state mental health system for people with mental and developmental disabilities. The workshop he founded, the Cape Girardeau Community Sheltered Workshop, has provided employment for more than 3,000 individuals since 1967.

Also active in the St. Vincent's Knights of Columbus in Cape Girardeau, as well as state-level positions, Schmittzehe held several offices and pushed for adoption of the Tootsie Roll Program for people with developmental disabilities as the major charity throughout Missouri. Since its founding, this program has provided millions of dollars in funding for programs for persons with disabilities.

Schmittzehe also served in the Navy Reserve and on numerous public and private boards, including the Cape Girardeau School Board, Cape Girardeau Board of Directors for United Way, Missouri Governor's Advisory Council on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Region 9 Developmental Disability Council, the Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, Saint Francis Medical Center Advisory Board and the advisory board for Notre Dame High School. He also founded and served as president of Marian Charities, a not-for-profit corporation formed in 1990 to provide aid to the poor and disadvantaged.

Don't Forget the Web!

Workshop managers and other interested individuals should remember to check the MASWM website at www.moworkshops.org.

It contains the latest information and useful material for managers and others interested in workshops and their efforts throughout the state.

Joco Workshop Making Improvements, Building Awareness

Ridgeview Café, the restaurant inside the Johnson County Sheltered Workshop in Warrensburg, has undergone some significant changes this year. Bright new colors, beautiful and inspiring decorations, smaller restaurant-style tables and new employee T-shirts are all part of the improvements aimed at improving the café's appearance for employees and increasing the public's use of the café. The café held a ribbon-cutting event with the Warrensburg Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the new look, with well over 50 people in attendance. Ridgeview Café was also the location of the Johnson County Board of Services pancake breakfast in March, and Senator David Pearce (R-21) was one of the celebrity servers.

Thanks to a generous, anonymous donation, the workshop was also able to make improvements and upgrades to the facility's training room. Bright colors now cover the walls, and the room is set up for new employee orientations, training and time studies on recycling, skill development and cut/sew projects. Employees get one-on-one attention in areas of potential improvement, as well as experience with both household and industrial sewing machines. This area is also used for cutting T-shirts (from the workshop's Helping Hands Thrift Store) into rags, which are marketed as RAGS: Recycled Aged Garment Sales. Small rolls of RAGS are sold at the workshop, at several other locations around Johnson County – including hardware and paint stores – and in bulk to industrial customers.



Johnson County Sheltered Workshop held a ribbon cutting for the new Ridgeview Café, a restaurant inside the shop in Warrensburg.

Also in their new cut-and-sew area, they've begun making Best Friend Beds. Employees cut the pieces of T-shirts left over from RAGS production into smaller pieces and then use them to stuff the beds, which are made from towels and blankets donated to the Helping Hands Thrift Store.

Workshop employees are featured in several radio ads this spring and summer, recorded at (and airing on) local radio station KOKO 1450/KWKJ 98.5 The Bar. Employees speak about the lunch and catering services Ridgeview Café provides, as well as highlights from each of the other areas of the workshop: the production floor, the thrift store and the recycling center.

The workshop's recycling center continues to be very busy, with many regu-

lar patrons using the center during and after business hours. Five new employees have been hired for the recycling area in just the last two months to keep up with the demand. Last year, the workshop partnered with Heartland Waste, through funds provided by the Region F Solid Waste Management District of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, to have a glass container bin placed on site, and the results have been great. This was the first glass recycling container in Warrensburg, and it's been heavily used. The Johnson County Sheltered Workshop is glad to be able to provide this service to the community!

Unlimited Opportunities Busy with New Building, Plans

It is a very busy and exciting time at Unlimited Opportunities and Boonslick Industries in Boonville.

One of the most visible issues is the organization's new building. It has been more than two years since fire destroyed the building that housed UOI offices, programs, BII Recycling Center and Savvy Seconds.

The new 45,000 sq. ft. building will be complete mid-September, if things continue as they have been. Moving

plans are coming together, and staff members are preparing for a major effort. The challenges are to continue to collect, process and sell, keep employees working and minimize what needs to be moved.

UOI's new Recycling Manager, Geoff Shackelford, started June 19. He has started implementing plans and actions to prepare for the move and to streamline recycling processes.

Savvy Seconds, the resale store, is

also looking ahead to the move in September. The store is busy, and discount sales events are helping to reduce inventory. Along with the workshop and store, three other locations will be moving to the new building.

In addition, the agency's CARF certification is scheduled in July. Staff members count themselves fortunate, however, to have such great events under way.

Awards Honor Residents with Disabilities and Those Who Help

The 14th annual Vocational Services, Inc., Community Awards Night May 22 recognized Kansas City area residents with disabilities and those who have made dramatic contributions to improve their lives.

An especially moving honor went to VSI Board Member of the Year, the late Jerry Davis. Founder and owner of the Stars N Bars Music company, Davis became involved with VSI through his disk jockey and karaoke performances at VSI consumer parties. His involvement grew until he became a member of the organization's Board of Directors. He passed away in February and his fiancé and business partner, Cynthia Greene, accepted his award.

Other honorees included a wide range of business and civic leaders. Steven Elliott of the Developmental Disabilities Resources Board earned the Director's Award while Eastern Clay County Commissioner Luann Ridgeway was presented the "Working for the Public Good" award. Employers of the Year were McDonald's of Platte City and Home Depot of Gladstone, which cooperate with VSI's supported employment program.

Julie Hentges was recognized as Volunteer of the Year for her extensive service. Mary and Allen Iske received the Robert F. and Claire Sevier Parent/Guardian of the Year Award. Benefactor of the Year was accepted by Cliff Schuette of the Thrivent for Lutherans of Southern Clay County.

VSI Vendor of the Year went to Merit Packaging, while the VSI Customer of the Year was presented to Boulevard Brewing Company, represented by Mike Moritz.

VSI staff member Jerry Crabtree earned the Margaret Hylton Award as employee of the year. Also honored were employees of the quarter Vivian Hawthorne, Sharon Wade and Donna Hicks.

A highlight of the event is the annual Consumer of the Year Award, which recognizes one of the nearly 200 workers with disabilities employed at VSI's three workshops in Liberty and North Kansas City. This year's honor was pre-



Eastern Clay County Commissioner Luann Ridgeway was presented the "Working for the Public Good" award during the Vocational Services Community Awards Night May 22. Presenting the award was VSI Board Assistant Director Bill Barr (left) and Executive Director Randy Hylton. Ridgeway is a former Missouri state senator.

sented to Nick Boulter.

Although most of the honorees were from the Northland, the Legislator of the Year Award went to state representative Rick Stream (R-Kirkwood) for his efforts on behalf of workshops throughout the state.

Held at Finnigan's Banquet Hall in North Kansas City, the event drew nearly 300 people and also featured a silent auction that raised funds for VSI programs. Honored guests included Betty Boney of Clay Platte ARC and Bill Taylor, president of DDRB.

Four VSI consumers were recognized upon their retirement: Susan Myers, employed since 1975; Marian Warren, employed since 1967; Patricia Sage, employed since 1982; and Steven Turner, employed since 1982.

VSI Executive Director Randy Hylton opened the event by noting the organization has grown both in numbers of people served and in terms of the range of programs since it was founded in 1966.

"We have employed literally thousands of individuals in our Sheltered Workshops and have found hundreds of jobs through our Supported Employment Program," Hylton said. "But none of this would have been

accomplished were it not for the outstanding community that we have here in the Northland."

VSI Awarded Three-Year CARF Accreditation

CARF International has announced that Vocational Services, Inc. has been accredited for a period of three years. The award follows an intense survey in May by a team of CARF surveyors who examined programs at VSI's three locations in North Kansas City and Liberty, as well as VSI's community employment program.

This accreditation decision represents the highest level that can be awarded to an organization and shows VSI's substantial conformance to the CARF standards. An organization receiving a Three-Year Accreditation has put itself through a rigorous peer review process. It has demonstrated to a team of surveyors during an on-site visit its commitment to offering programs and services that are measurable, accountable, and of the highest quality.

VSI has been providing employment and other services for Northlanders with developmental disabilities for more than 40 years.