

## Missouri Workshops: The State's Biggest Bargain?

What provides employment for more than 5,000 Missourians, works with hundreds of businesses across the state and serves people with developmental disabilities?

The answer is Missouri's nearly 90 sheltered workshops. But don't feel bad if you were slow with an answer. You're not alone.

Although Missouri sheltered workshops are among the best bargains in the state, they're not the most visible. One reason is their very success: Missouri's workshops use an "industrial model" built on business services. This not only builds important work ethic among workers with developmental disabilities, it also provides training and opportunities for community employment and dramatically reduces the costs borne by taxpayers.

Missouri workshops provide services such as packaging and assembly, filling business needs in everything from recycling to maintenance, and even creating some original products for sale nationwide. The contracts for this work—the revenue that workshops receive from businesses and organizations—pay for the lion's share of overall workshop operations.

In other words, workshops earn revenue that covers much of their costs.

That means taxpayers don't have to pay for an expensive system, while communities across the state receive important services for people with developmental disabilities. On top of all this, workshop business services bring economic development by providing often critical business services that help their local economies prosper and grow.

It's literally a win, win, win scenario. This isn't perfect. Workshops have been especially hard hit by foreign outsourcing. And, everything from health care to workman's compensation often brings a double whammy for workshops and their employees with disabilities.

But since 1966, Missouri's workshops have been providing services that would otherwise cost taxpayers millions of dollars and guaranteeing employment opportunities for literally thousands of our residents. That really is a bargain.



## Community-Based Programs Collaborate for Widespread Goals

The Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshop Managers (MASWM) is unique among many professional groups with its emphasis on "bottom up" rather than "top down" priorities, leadership and even ongoing operations.

A big reason for this is the history of MASWM and its membership of nearly 90 workshops across the state.

The creation of services for people with developmental disabilities took a major step in the mid-1960s with a widespread grassroots effort. The work culminated in the 1965 SB 52 Sheltered Workshop Law and the 1969 voter authorization of SB 40. The latter allowed county-based tax levies to help fund such services.

These and other efforts came not from the state, but from grassroot parent and other individuals. These Missourians who founded and supported this legislation were the same people who founded and supported the creation of Missouri workshops and who continue that support today.

The motivation was straightforward. These Missourians saw firsthand the need for a practical, community-based programs to provide services for people with developmental disabilities – mostly their sons and daughters who until the mid-60s were often under-served and unemployed. Typical of realistic, real-world Missourians, they focused first on employment as a key to providing sustainable, practical solutions.

That grassroots focus continues today in several ways. Workshop boards of directors, as well as county SB 40 boards, are often led by parents along with interested civic and business leaders. Workshops and partner organizations rely heavily on parents and interested volunteers for many of their efforts. Although professional staff is critical, workshops remain very much "local services by and for local residents."

It's a formula that is a proven winner for Missouri and Missourians.



Workshop services include contracts with individual businesses which include everything from small local firms to national corporations.

## MASWM

- *Officers* President Rob Libera Berkeley (636) 227-5666 rlibera@lafayetteindustries.com
- Vice President Brian Hogan Kansas City
- (816) 483-1620 bhogan@bvinds.org
- Secretary Natalie Couch Camdenton (573) 346-7934
- director@lakeareaindustries.org Treasurer Robert Greenwood Harrisonville (816) 380-7359 robert@casco-aw.org
- Past President Bruce Young Columbia (573) 442-6935 cmsebruce@aol.com

## **Board of Directors**

- Area I Byron Myers St. Joseph
- (816) 232-8083 byron@specialty-industries.com
- Area II Brian Hogan Kansas City
- (816) 483-1620 bhogan@bvinds.org
- Area III Heather Pugh Richmond
- (816) 663-3842 heatherpugh@idealindustriesincorporated.com
- Area IV Jeff Jones Carthage (417) 358-6891 jeffjones@carthagews.com
- Area V Melonie Nevels Hannibal (573) 221-3211 mnevels@2riversind.org
- Area VI Laura Giebler-Taylor Rolla (573) 364-2883 LGiebler@pci-solutions.net
- Area VII Tami Bock Jefferson City (573) 634-3660 cpinc@socket.net
- Area VIII Linda Kimrey Lebanon (417) 588-3241 lkimrey@hotmail.com
- Area IX Charlie Fischer Shrewsbury (314) 781-3999 cfischer@canterburyinc.org
- Area X Susan Wallis Cape Girardeau Phone: (573) 334-9661 susan@vipindustries.com

## 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 Rob Libera – (636) 227-5666 or rlibera@lafayetteindustries.com; or Legislative Chair Kit Brewer – (314) 647-3300 or cbrewer@cuinc.org.

## Services for Businesses Include Huge Range of Abilities

# Business services: providing an economic boost across the state and nationwide

Business and other services provided by Missouri's workshops include a wide range of outsourcing, custom and other important programs that save businesses money and make difficult projects possible.

Nearly every workshop in the state provides packaging, mailing, assembly and related services related to fulfillment and delivery. Because workshops offer these skills in an extremely flexible manner, often working with individual businesses to create custom programs, companies in effect have an ondemand expansion of capabilities.

Along with these traditional outsourcing programs, workshops also operate other on-demand efforts. These include award-winning 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. These efforts continue the expansion of employment opportunities for people with disabilities in communities throughout the state and also improve their communities while helping other businesses and organizations.

Many workshops also produce their own original products. These include first aid kits for pets or people to industrial wooden skids.

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.

## Jobs, Training, Community Skills and More

### Services for those with a developmental disability: employment and much more.

For more than 50 years, Missouri Sheltered Workshops have served as the hub for development of community based services for people with disabilities and their families. Some of these community services and supports are:

*Sheltered employment*—Facilitybased employment provides meaningful work experience based on the industrial model with support to accommodate individual needs.

*Transitional employment*—Work experience and skills development



Packaging and assembly are among the most widespread business services provided by wrkshops, but weighing, counting and sorting are also evident. Customers range from small businesses to Fortune 500 corporations. designed to enable persons with disabilities to move from one work environment to another.

*School to work*—Sheltered employment to competitive employment; competitive employment to sheltered employment.

*Supported employment*—Work experience in a community-based, integrated environment with individual job coaching.

*Competitive employment*— Placement in regular industry with ongoing minimal support.

*Transportation*—Assistance in using existing public transit or provision of travel to and from work.

**Behavioral Support**—Accommodation and planned assistance for people with challenging behavior to enable them to better access work and community.

*Skills development*—Training in specific areas to acquire skills needed for work and community access.

**Personal care assistance**—Support staff to assist a person with a disability in personal activities of daily life (eating, dressing, etc.)

Advocacy and family support— Listening to the needs and wants of people with disabilities and their families and developing the support network to translate those needs and wants into meaningful services. This also includes development of selfadvocacy skills so people with disabilities and their families can advocate for themselves.

*Group homes*—Residential facilities where several persons with disabilities live together supported by staff.

*Work and social adjustment*— Programs designed to support people in the development of positive work and social behaviors which enable them to function more independently.

**Day activities**—Programs designed to support individual needs in an habilitative setting. Programs are not vocational in nature, but address skills development in the activities of daily living.

Assessment and evaluation— Systems designed to measure a person's level of functioning against established criteria and to predict future outcomes or design programs based on those findings.

*Community integration*—Planned opportunities to access the community with staff support.

*Recreation*—Leisure time activity opportunities.

**Retirement options**—Programs designed to meet individual needs to fill his or her leisure time with enjoyable, meaningful activities.

**Residential options**—Assistance and referral to group homes or independent living facilities.

## Workshops Build On Solid Foundation

Although Missouri's nearly 90 sheltered workshops are community-based organizations that reflect the unique needs of their region, they also share important fundamental values:

• Missouri Sheltered Workshops are based on an industrial model of development rather than the medical model used in many states. We value individual work ethic, skills development and productivity. The industrial model of service delivery provides meaningful employment of people with disabilities through the production of goods and services for the private sector. The medical model of service delivery, through intensive staff support and programmed development, relies heavily on public funds, and provides day activities with secondary emphasis on meaningful work.

• Missouri workshops represent the most experienced employment specialists for people with disabilities in Missouri. In 1966, nine workshops provided employment for 300 people with disabilities. By 1997, 90 workshops provided work for nearly 9,000 people with disabilities.

• Missouri workshops have a solid track record of providing meaningful, dignified employment to persons with disabilities in the state. People with disabilities, employed by Missouri's workshops produce goods and services for Fortune 500 companies as well as small local businesses.

A partial list of contracts include 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; document preservation; and entrepreneurial enterprises.

• Missouri workshops have been advocates for people with disabilities for over 50 years acting as a catalyst for development of other needed services and supports.

• Workshops are proven leaders in enabling people with disabilities to access a variety of vocational and personal options through direct service or referral networks.

• Workshops were instrumental in the support and passage of voter authorized county tax levies to assist people with developmental disabilities (Senate Bill 40) which provides for continued support of the local workshop and

In just one year, Missouri sheltered workshops returned to the community \$6.05 for every \$1 of taxpayer money invested.

expanded service opportunities for people with disabilities in their local community. The founders and supporters of Missouri Sheltered Workshops were the same persons who founded and supported the companion legislation Senate Bill 40 (voter authorized county tax levies to assist people with developmental disabilities) which was passed to provide local support for workshops and group homes.

In 1996, the 80 Missouri counties that had Senate Bill 40 tax levies collected approximately \$42 million and provided nearly \$7 million to more than 45 workshops around the state. It is estimated that more than 25 percent of these funds are used for capital and equipment expenses.

Not all workshops receive Senate Bill 40 funds. Contact your local manager for more information. Senate Bill 52-(Sheltered Workshop Law) passed in 1965 (RSMo 178.900-178.960) and Senate Bill 40-(Voter authorized county tax levies to assist people with developmental disabilities) passed in 1969 (RSMo 205.968-205.972).

• Our workshops are communitybased programs operated by local Boards of Directors responsive to the grassroots needs of their citizens with disabilities. Each workshop is unique to its own local community and circumstance. There are 90 Sheltered Workshops in Missouri governed by over 1,000 local citizens serving as volunteers on boards of directors responsive to the needs of their communities.

• In partnership with the State of Missouri, workshops collaborate to produce an outstanding return on investment for both taxpayers and people with disabilities. Through Missouri's investment of \$1.50 per hour per person, workshops provide services that otherwise would cost the taxpayer \$9.27 per hour per person providing a return on investment of 618 percent. And this includes a wide range of services beyond direct workshop employment and supported employment in the community: habilitation training, community integration and more.

• Working with business and industry, workshops are an integral part of their local economies. In 1996, Missouri Sheltered Workshops returned \$6.05 to the community for every \$1 of taxpayer money invested. Missouri Sheltered Workshops generated \$54,605,078 in sales. Sales, combined with local and state revenues and grants, contributed approximately \$79,181,645 back into local economies through payrolls and purchase of goods and services.

• Missouri Sheltered Workshops believe in the self worth of every person and their right to full participation in their local community, as they choose. Missouri workshops actively involve persons with disabilities in the community through mobile work crews, stations in industry, Adopt-a-Highway projects, participation in civic organizations, supported utilization of public transit, participation in community fairs, tours, open houses, volunteerism, Special Olympics, and other opportunities that intersect the natural flow of life.

• Through safe and productive employment, Missouri's workshops provide meaningful family support. VISION Missouri sheltered workshops were born of the dreams of families for the future of their sons and daughters. As successive generations have dreamed new dreams, we have been there to help make them a reality. Missouri Sheltered Workshops are committed to meeting the vision of the future for people with disabilities.

## Missouri Sheltered Workshop Directory

Below is a list of MASWM member workshops and their satellites by county, with contact information and manager's name where available. Counties without a workshop are shown as "none."

#### Adair None

#### Andrew

Opportunity Workshop, Inc. 1319 N Alanthus Ave po box 160 Stanberry, Missouri 64489 Phone: (660) 783-2093 Fax: (660) 783-2013 E-mail: owi\_tom@att.net Web: www.opportunityworkshop.org Tom Miller

#### Atchison

Northwest Missouri Industries 18671 Industrial Rd P.O. Box 28 Rock Port, MO 64482 Phone: (660) 744-2758 Fax: (660) 744-2737 E-mail: nwmia@rpt.coop Cindy Sons

#### Audrain

Handi-Shop, Inc. 508 E. Liberty Mexico, MO 65265 Phone: (573) 581-1191 Fax: (573) 581-0966 Web: www.handi-shop.com E-mail: hsimanager@handi-shop.com Martin Keller

#### Barry

Monett Area Extended Employment 204 S. Central, P.O. Box 474 Monett, MO 65708 Phone: (417) 235-3191 Fax: (417) 236-8386 E-mail: micaplummer@sbcglobal.net Mica Plummer

#### Barton

Lamar Enterprises, Inc. Workshop 1401 Maple Street Lamar, MO 64759 Phone: (417) 682-3506 Fax: (417) 682-3893 E-mail: timfasteddie43@gmail.com Tim Riegel

#### Bates

Bates County Industries P. O. Box 535 Butler, MO 64730 Phone: 660- 679-3667 Fax: 660-679-3408 E-mail: batescountyindustries@gmail.com Pamela Martin

#### *Benton* Epic

217 N.Highway 65 Lincoln, MO 65338 Phone: (660) 723-2401 E-mail: wendylight11@gmail.com Wendy Light

#### Bollinger None

#### Boone

Central Missouri Sheltered Ent. 4040 Bearfield Rd., P. O. Box 10147 Columbia, MO 65201 Phone: (573) 442-6935 Fax: (573) 499-0586 E-mail: cmsebruce@aol.com Web: www.cmse.org (main) Web: www.cmsegivinggardens.com Bruce Young

#### Buchanan

Specialty Industries Of St. Joseph St. Joseph, MO 64502 Phone: (816) 232-8083 Fax: (816) 232-8379 Web: www.specialty-industries.com E-mail: byron@specialty-industries.com Byron Myers

Clinco Sheltered Industries, Inc. 1205 W. Grand Cameron, MO 64429 Phone: (816) 632-3966 Fax: (816) 632-3248 E-mail: clinco@clincoind.com Debbi LeDuc

## Butler

Manufacturers Assistance Group 3080 Cravens Road Poplar Bluff, MO 63901 Phone: (573) 785-1624 Fax: (573) 712-2512 E-mail: jeff.arnold@magsws.com Jeff Arnold

## Caldwell

Clinco Sheltered Industries, Inc. 1205 W. Grand Cameron, MO 64429 Phone: (816) 632-3966 Fax: (816) 632-3248 E-mail: dleduc@clincoind.com Debbi LeDuc

## Callaway

Calloway County Extended Employment 2611 N. Bluff Fulton, MO 65251 Phone: (573) 642-7333 Phone: (573) 642-6699 E-mail: Manager@callawaycountyextendedemployment.com Marla Mason

#### Camden

Lake Area Industries 1720 N. Business Rt. 5 Camdenton, MO 65020 Phone: (573) 346-7934 Fax: (573) 346-1214 E-mail: director@lakeareaindustries.org Web: www.lakeareaindustries.org Natalie Couch

## Cape Girardeau

Cape Girardeau Community Sheltered Workshop 1330 Southern Expressway Cape Girardeau, MO 63703 Phone: (573) 334-9661 Fax: (573) 334-9655 E-mail: susan@vipindustries.com Web: www.vipindustries.com Sue Wallis

Cape Girardeau Community S.W. -Marble Hill Satellite 108 State Hwy 51S Marble Hill, MO 63764, (573)238-3522

Cape Girardeau Community S.W. -Fruitland Satellite 5616 US Hwy 61 Jackson, MO 63755 (573) 243-0239

#### Carroll

#### Carter

Big Springs Sheltered Workshop, Inc. HCR2 Box 2690 C Van Buren, MO 63965 Phone: (573) 323-8507 E-mail: big009@centurytel.net John Henderson

## Cass

CASCO Area Workshop 1800 Vine Harrisonville, MO 64701 Phone: (816) 380-7359 Fax: (816) 380-7363 E-mail: robert@casco-aw.org Robert Greenwood

## Cedar

Quality Products Inc. 3100 Industrial Parkway Nevada, MO 64772 Phone: (417) 667-8944 Fax: (417) 667-2450 E-mail: sdouglas@moqpi.com Web site: www.nevadamissouri.com/quality.htm Shane Douglas

#### Chariton

Chariton County Workshop 30109 Cleve Iman Lane Keytesville, MO 65261 Phone: (660) 288-3693 E-mail: ccoswksp@mcmsys.com Martha Nanneman

#### Christian

Christian County Enterprises 825 Enterprise Lane Nixa, MO 65714 Phone: (417) 725-5310 Fax: (417) 725-5311 Carlene Steward carlenestewardcce@outlook.com

## Clark

Industrial Opportunities, Inc. 510 N. Vine St. Kahoka, MO 63445 Phone: (660) 727-2515 E-mail: indopp2020@gmail.com Sara Louck

## Clay

Vocational Services Inc. 905 S. Kent Liberty, MO 64068 Phone: (816) 792-9553 Fax: (816) 781-8797 E-mail: kmothershead@vsiserve.org Web: http://www.vsiserve.org Kimbal Mothershead

Vocational Services - Liberty Satellite 905 S. Kent Liberty, MO 64068 Phone: (816) 792-9553

Vocational Services - North Kansas City Workshop 101 W 18th Avenue North Kansas City, MO 64116 Phone: (816) 792-9553 E-mail: kmothershead@vsiserve.org

Ideal Industries 601 N. Thorton Richmond, MO 64085 Phone: (816) 470-7137 Fax: (816) 776-8935 E-mail: heatherpugh07@gmail.com Web: http://www.idealindustries.net/ Heather Pugh

## Clinton

Clinco Sheltered Industries, Inc. 1205 W. Grand Cameron, MO 64429 Phone: (816) 632-3966 Fax: (816) 632-3248 E-mail: dleduc@clincoind.com Debbi LeDuc

## Cole

Capitol Projects, Inc. 2001 E. McCarty St. Jefferson City, MO 65101 Phone: (573) 634-3660 Fax: (573) 634-4437 E-mail: tamibock@hotmail.com Web: www.capitolprojectsinc.com Tami Bock

Kingdom Projects, Inc. 2611 N. Bluff Fulton, MO 65251 Phone: (573) 642-7333 Phone: (573) 642-6699 E-mail: little@kingdomprojects.org Lon Little

## Cooper

Boonslick Industries, Inc. 1620 W. Ashley, P.O. Box 239 Boonville, MO 65233 Phone: (660) 882-5576 Fax: (660) 882-3018 E-mail: geoff.shackelford@uoi.org Geoff Shackelford

## Crawford

Empac Group Employment Resources 104 Airport Road Sullivan, MO 63080 Phone: (573) 503-0000 Fax: (573) 468-2429 E-mail: tpoepsel@empacgroupinc.com Tim Poepsel

## Dade

Lamar Enterprises, Inc. 1401 Maple Street Lamar, MO 64759 Phone: (417) 682-3506 Fax: (417) 682-3893 E-mail: lsw.inc@outlook.com Judd Chesnut

Innovative Industries, Inc. 421 W. Centennial Avenue Carthage, MO 64836 Phone: (417) 358-6891 Fax: (417) 358-1849 E-mail: jeffjones@carthagews.com Jeff Jones

## Dallas

Innovative Industries, Inc. 421 W. Centennial Avenue Carthage, MO 64836 Phone: (417) 358-6891 Fax: (417) 358-1849 E-mail: jeffjones@carthagews.com Jeff Jones

## Davies

Unified Services 501 S. 26th Street Bethany, MO 64424 Phone: (660) 425-6300 Fax: (660) 425-6318 E-mail: hcsw@grm.net Tammy Taylor

## DeKalb

Clinco Sheltered Industries, Inc. 1205 W. Grand Cameron, MO 64429 Phone: (816) 632-3966 Fax: (816) 632-3248 E-mail: clinco@centurytel.net Evelyn Clemons

## Dent

Scenic Rivers Sheltered Industries P. O. Box 64 Salem, MO 65560 Phone: (573) 729-6264 Fax: (573) 729-6739 E-mail: joeb@scenicriversind.org Web: www.scenicriversind.org Joe Bruno

## Douglas

Doco, Inc. P. O. Box 638 Ava, MO 65608 Phone: (417) 683-3915 E-mail: dawn.doco@gmail.com Dawn Cox

## Dunklin

Cotton Boll Sheltered Workshop 1660 Industrial Drive Kennett, MO 63857 Phone: (573) 888-2666 Fax: (573) 888-2667 E-mail: cottonboll2013@yahoo.com Angie Benson

## Franklin

River Bluff Industries 103 Industrial Drive Hermann, MO 65041 Phone: (573) 486-2152 Fax: (573) 486-2153 E-mail: rbi@centurytel.net Muriel Brison

Empac Group Employment Resources 104 Airport Road Sullivan, MO 63080 Phone: (573) 468-3888 Fax: (573) 468-2429 E-mail: egiebler@simvinc.com Eric Giebler

Empac Group Inc. 1600 W. Main St. Washington, MO 63090 Phone: (636) 239-2744 Fax: (636) 239-9470 E-mail: tpoepsel@empacgroupinc.com Tim Poepsel

#### TEMCO

16950 Rinne Rd. Marthasville, MO 63357 Phone: (636) 433-2335 Fax: (636) 433-2312 E-mail: KLtemco@gmail.com Web: www.temcoworkshop.org Kylene Lottman

#### Gasconade

River Bluff Industries 103 Industrial Hermann, MO 65041 Phone: (573) 486-2152 Fax: (573) 486-2153 E-mail: rbi@ktis.net Muriel Brison

#### Gentry

Opportunity Workshop, Inc. P. O. Box 160 Stanberry, MO 64489 Phone: (660) 783-2093 Fax: (660) 783-2013 E-mail: OWI@JagTec.net Web: http://opportunityworkshop.org/ Tom Milller

#### Greene

SWI Industrial Solutions 2835 West Bennett Springfield, MO 65802-5183 Phone: (417) 866-2339 Fax: (417) 866-6485 fax Web site: www. swiindustrial.com E-mail: ddunn@swiindustrial.com Dave Dunn

#### Christian

Christian County Enterprises 825 Enterprise Lane Nixa, MO 65714 Phone: (417) 725-5310 Fax: (417) 725-5311 E-mail: creade-cce@ipa.net Chuck Reade

Innovative Industries, Inc. 421 W. Centennial Avenue Carthage, MO 64836 Phone: (417) 358-6891 Fax: (417) 358-1849 E-mail: larryl@innovativeindustries.org Larry Lloyd

#### Grundy

Hope Haven Industries 12 Herriman St. Chillicothe, MO 64601 Phone: (660) 646-5172 Fax: (660) 646-0922 E-mail: carole@hopehavenindustries.org Carole Hobbs

#### Harrison

Unified Services 501 S. 26th Street Bethany, MO 64424 Phone: (660) 425-6300 Fax: (660) 425-6318 E-mail: hcsw@grm.net Susan Legaard

#### Henry

Henry County Industries, Inc 516 N. Price Lane Clinton, MO 64735 Phone: (660) 885-7762 Fax: (660) 885-5288 E-mail: henryco.ross@gmail.com Carrie Ross

#### Hickory None

#### Holt

Northwest Missouri Industries 18671 Industrial Rd., P. O. Box 28 Rockport, MO 64482 Phone: 660-744-2758 Fax; 660-744-2737 E-mail: nwmia@rpt.coop Mary McAdams

#### Howard

Boonslick Industries, Inc. 1620 W. Ashley, P.O. Box 239 Boonville, MO 65233 Phone: (660) 882-5576 Fax: (660) 882-3018 E-mail: cj.welch@uoi.org C. J. Welch

#### Howell

Ozark Sheltered Industries, Inc. 4850 County Road 1330 PO Box 160 Pomona, MO 65789 Phone: (417) 257-1550 Fax: (417) 257-2877 E-mail: kh@centurytel.net Kimberly Hoopes

#### Iron

Iron County Sheltered Workshop PO Box 81, 201 Pine Street Arcadia, MO 63621 Phone: (573) 546-1010 Web: www.ironcountyshelteredworkshop.com Email: dstulce@ironcountysw.org Deborah Stulce

#### Jackson

Ability KC 1020 E. 12th Kansas City, MO 64106 Phone: (816) 472-7799 Fax: (816) 471-0019 E-mail: Marla.Nelson@abilitykc.org Maria Nelson

Alphapointe 7501 Prospect Kansas city, MO. 64132 Phone: (816) 421-5848 Fax: (816) 421-6523 E-mail: ggowin@alphapointe.org Gina Gowin

Blue Valley Industries 1608 Prospect Kansas City, MO 64127 Phone: (816) 483-1620 Fax: (816) 483-4863 E-mail: bhogan@bvinds.org Web: www.bluevalleyindustries.org Brian Hogan

#### JobOne

1085 S. Yuma Ave. Independence, MO 64056 Phone: 816-796-7070 Fax: 816-763-7824 E-mail: amartin@job1one.org Web: www.jobonekc.org Aaron Martin

Rehabilitation Institute Industries 3011 Baltimore Kansas City, MO 64108 Phone: (816) 751-7700 Fax: (816) 751-7983 E-mail: Marla.Nelson@rehabkc.org Marla Nelson

Rehabilitation Institute Industries -Satellite 1020 E 12th Street Kansas City, MO 64106.

Southeast Enterprises 6701 Booth, P. O. Box 9473 Kansas City, MO 64133 Phone: (816) 353-2704 Fax: (816) 353-3475 E-mail: lauren@southeastenterprises.orgWeb: www.southeastenterprises.org Lauren Hall

#### Jasper

Joplin Workshops, Inc. 520 Michigan Ave, Joplin, MO 64801 Phone 417-781-2862 Fax: (417) 781-4077 E-mail: jeff.jones@jworkshops.com Web: www.jworkshops.com Jeff Jones

Innovative Industries, Inc. 421 W. Centennial Avenue Carthage, MO 64836 Phone: (417) 358-6891 Fax: (417) 358-1849 E-mail: jeffjones@carthagews.com Jeff Jones

Crowder Industries 3707 Howard Bush Drive Neosho, MO 64850 Phone: (417) 451-5075 Fax: (417) 451-6105 E-mail: greg.cook@crowderindustries.com Greg Cook

#### Jefferson

Jeffco Subcontracting 2065 Pomme Road Arnold, MO 63010 Phone: (636) 296-6211 Fax: (636) 296-6212 E-mail: btrapp@jsi.org Web: www.JSI.org Bill Trapp

#### Johnson

RISE Community Services 607 N. Ridgeview Drive Warrensburg, MO 64093 Phone: 660-747-7990 E-mail: mmiller@watchusrise.org Web: https://watchusrise.org Misty Miller

#### **Knox** None

#### Laclede

Laclede Industries 941 Utah Lebanon, MO 65536 Phone: (417) 588-3241 Fax: (417) 588-2000 E-mail: Lkimrey@hotmail.com Web: www.lacledeindustries.com Linda Kimrey

#### Lafayette

Lafayette County Enterprises, Inc. 109 W 19th St. Higginsville, MO 64037 Phone: (660) 584-7232 Fax: (660) 584-6232 E-mail: lceinfo@ctcis.net Suzanne Smith

#### Lawrence

Monett Area Extended Employment

204 S. Central, P.O. Box 474 Monett, MO 65708 Phone: (417) 235-3191 Fax: (417) 236-8386 E-mail: micaplummer@sbcglobal.net Mica Plummer

#### Innovative Industries, Inc.

421 W. Centennial Avenue Carthage, MO 64836 Phone: (417) 358-6891 Fax: (417) 358-1849 E-mail: larryl@innovativeindustries.org Larry Lloyd

## Lincoln

BCI-Lincoln County 245 College Campus Drive Moscow Mills, MO 63362 Phone: 636-978-4300 x100 rkloppenburg@boonecenter.com Web site: www.boonecenter.com E-mail: Tcompardo@bcipackaging.com Troy Compardo

Earthwise Industries, Inc. 1386 S. Main St. Troy, MO 63379 Phone: (636) 528-8869 ext. 102 Fax: (636) 528-5417

Warren County Sheltered Workshop 1760 Daniel Boone Industrial Pky. Warrenton, MO 63380 Phone: (636) 456-4800 Fax: (636) 456-7711 wcswdirector@gmail.com Jami Washburn

#### Lewis None

#### *Linn* None

#### Livingston

Hope Haven Industries 304 Clay Chillicothe, MO 64601 Phone: (660) 646-5172 Fax: (660) 646-0922 E-mail: carole@hopehavenindustries.org Carole Hobbs

#### Macon

Macon Diversified Industries 1103 Enterprise Rd. Macon, MO 63552 Phone: (660) 385-3111 Fax: (660) 385-3009 Website: www.macondiversified.com E-mail: mdidirector@outlook.com Bill Darnell

#### Madison

Madison County Sheltered Workshop 425 N. Chamber Drive Fredericktown, MO 63645 Phone: (573) 561-1460 Fax: (573) 783-4575 Web: www.madisoncoworkshop.org E-mail: cowaboonega@yahoo.com Debby Boone

#### Marion

2 Rivers Industries, Inc. 659 Clinic Road Hannibal, MO 63401 Phone: (573) 221-3211 Fax: (573) 221-1321 Website: www.2riversind.org E-mail: jbarnhart@2riversind.org Justin Barnhart

#### **McDonald**

Crowder Industries 3707 Howard Bush Drive Neosho, MO 64850 Phone: (417) 451-5075 Fax: (417) 451-6105 E-mail: greg.cook@sbcglobal.net Greg Cook

#### Mercer

Unified Services 501 S. 26th Street Bethany, MO 64424 Phone: (660) 425-6300 Fax: (660) 425-6318 E-mail: hcsw@grm.net Susan Legaard

#### Miller

Gateway Industries 1204 E. North Street Eldon, MO 65026 Phone: (573) 392-4405 Fax: (573) 392-4423 E-mail: gatind@att.net Rebecca Hedrick

#### Mississippi

Community Sheltered Workshop 515 Northwest St., Box 586 Sikeston, MO 63801 Phone: (573) 472-0583 Fax: (573) 472-0598 E-mail: Imccall@comshelterinc.com Lee McCall

#### Moniteau

Monroe Monroe City Sheltered Workshop 701 South East Border Monroe City, MO 63456 Phone: (573) 735-4751 Fax: (573) 735-3224 E-mail: mcsw@rallstech.com Connie Thurman

#### Montgomery

Warren Co. Workshop 1760 HGP Ave Warrenton, MO 63383 Phone: (636) 456-4800 Fax: (636) 456-7711 E-mail: wcswoffice@centurytel.net Ken Beckett

Handi-Shop, Inc. 508 E. Liberty Mexico, MO 65265 Phone: (573) 581-1191 Fax: (573) 581-0966 Web: www.handi-shop.com E-mail: rodney@handi-shop.com Web: www.handishop.com Rodney Shivers

Kingdom Projects, Inc. 2611 N. Bluff Fulton, MO 65251 Phone: (573) 642-7333 Phone: (573) 642-6699 E-mail: little@kingdomprojects.org Lon Little

River Bluff Industries 103 Industrial Hermann, MO 65041 Phone: (573) 486-2152 Fax: (573) 486-2153 E-mail: rbi@ktis.net Muriel Brison

#### Morgan

Quality Industries Of The Lake of the Ozarks 301 N. Monroe, PO Box 124 Versailles, MO 65084 Phone: (573) 378-6122 Fax: (573) 378-4713 E-mail: rosequalityind@yahoo.com Rose Pickerel

#### New Madrid

Community Sheltered Workshop 515 Northwest St., Box 586 Sikeston, MO 63801 Phone: (573) 472-0583 Fax: (573) 472-0598 E-mail: comshelter@sbcglobal.net Harvey Cooper

#### Newton

Crowder Industries 3707 Howard Busch Drive, P. O. Box 86 Neosho, MO 64850 Phone: (417) 451-5075 Fax: (417) 451-6105 E-mail: klausgtamme@sbcglobal.net Klaus Tamme

Innovative Industries, Inc. 421 W. Centennial Avenue Carthage, MO 64836 Phone: (417) 358-6891 Fax: (417) 358-1849 E-mail: jeffjones@carthagews.com Jeff Jones

Joplin Workshops, Inc. 501 S. School Ave., P. O. Box 1609 Joplin, MO 64801 Phone: (417) 781-2862 Fax: (417) 781-4077 E-mail: jeff.jones@jworkshops.com Web: www.jworkshops.com Jeff Jones

#### Nodaway

NoCoMo Industries, Inc. 319 S. Newton Maryville, MO 64468 Phone: (660) 582-2928 Fax: (660) 582-7414 E-mail: manager@nocomoindustries.com Jason Auffert

#### Oregon

Oregon County Workshop 20674 US 160 Alton, MO 65606 Phone: (417) 778-6332 Darrell Strain - jdsocsw222@gmail.com

#### Osage None

**Ozark** None

#### Pemiscot

Pemiscot Progressive Industries, Inc. 201 S. Pemiscot St., P. O. Box 475 Hayti, MO 63851 Phone: (573) 359-1551 Fax: (573) 359-1560 E-mail: ahudgens4@live.com Angela Hudgens

#### Perry

United Enterprises, Inc. 618 Industrial Drive Perryville, MO 63775 Phone: (573) 513-0014 Fax: (573) 547-7840 Web: www.perrycountyworkshop.com E-mail: janetsquibb@unitedenterprises.org Web: www.unitedenterprises.org Janet Squibb

#### Pettis

Cooperative Workshops, Inc. 1500 Ewing Drive Sedalia, MO 65301 Phone: (660) 827-2100 Toll-free: 888-615-6332 Fax: (660) 827-3034 E-mail: agraff@chs-mo.org Web: www.chs-mo.org Ann Graff Cooperative Workshops, Inc. - Marshall Satellite 175 West Slater Marshall, MO 65340 Phone: (660) 886-4261 Fax: (660) 886-9997 E-mail: agraff@chs-mo.org

#### Phelps

Phelps County Industrial Solutions 3900 HyPoint Blvd. Rolla, MO 65402 Phone: (573) 364-2883 Fax: 573-364-2456 E-mail: Itaylor@pci-solutions.net Laura Taylor

## Pike

Pike County Sheltered Workshop P. O. Box 346 Bowling Green, MO 63334 Phone: (573) 324-2205 Fax: (573) 324-5367 E-mail: jmoorepikeshop@yahoo.com Julie Moore

## Platte

Ability KC 1020 E. 12th Kansas City, MO 64106 Phone: (816) 472-7799 Fax: (816) 751-7983 E-mail: Marla.Nelson@abilitykc.org Maria Nelson

Rehabilitation Institute - Satellite 1020 E 12th Street Kansas City, MO 64106.

Vocational Services Inc. 905 S. Kent Liberty, MO 64068 Phone: (816) 781-6292 Fax: (816) 781-8797 E-mail: rhylton@vsiserve.org Web: http://www.vsiserve.org Randy Hylton

Vocational Services - Liberty Satellite 905 S. Kent Liberty, MO 64068 Phone: (816) 781-9300

Vocational Services - North Kansas City Workshop 101 W 18th Avenue North Kansas City, MO 64116 (816) 421-7440 E-mail: randy@vsiserve.org

#### **Polk** None

**Pulaski** Pulaski County Workshop #3 Industrial Road PO Box 914 Richland, MO 65556 Phone: (573) 765-2500 Fax: (573) 765-2501 Web: www.pcsw.org E-mail: pcswmanager@gmail.com Dee Peterson

#### **Putnam** None

#### Ralls

Northeast Missouri Sheltered Workshop, Inc. 659 Clinic Road Hannibal, MO 63401 Phone: (573) 221-3211 Fax: (573) 221-1321 E-mail: nemoworkshop2@yahoo.com Pollyann Nicholson

Monroe City Sheltered Workshop 701 South East Border Monroe City, MO 63456 Phone: (573) 735-4751 Fax: (573) 735-3224 E-mail: shelteredwork@centurytel.net Connie Thurman

#### Randolph

Mid-Mo Productivity & Packaging Specialists (MPPS) 1751 Robertson Road Moberly, MO 65270 Phone: (660) 263-6202 Fax: (660) 263-0773 E-mail: spretz@mpps.rocks Shari Pretz

## Ray

Ideal Industries 601 N. Thorton Richmond, MO 64085 Phone: (816) 470-7137 Fax: (816) 776-8935 E-mail: heatherpugh@idealindustriesincorporated.com Web: http://www.Idealindinc.com Heather Pugh

#### Reynolds

Reynolds County Sheltered Workshop, Inc. 133 Highway 72 East, PO Box 127 Bunker, MO 63629 Phone: (573) 689-2213 Fax: (573) 689-2214 E-mail: reynolds004@centurytel.net Janis Gordon

## Ripley

Current River Sheltered Workshop 112 Fisheye Lane Doniphan, MO 63935 Phone: (573) 996-2707 Fax: (573) 996-4571 E-mail: crswinc@gmail.com Jessica Billings

#### St. Charles

BCI-St. Peters 200 Trade Center Drive W St. Peters, MO 63376 Phone: 636-978-4300 x100 Web site: www.boonecenter.com E-mail: Tcompardo@bcipackaging.com Troy Compardo

#### TEMCO

16950 Rinne Rd. Marthasville, MO 63357 Phone: (636) 433-2335 Fax: (636) 433-2312 E-mail: kltemco@gmail.com Web: www.temcoworkshop.org Kylene Lottman

## St. Clair

Osage Area Sheltered Ind. and Services -Clinton Satellite 417 S. Center Butler, MO 64735 Phone: 816- 885-8208 Fax: 816- 885-4705

## St. Francois

MO Community Improvement Ind. 1687 S. Westmount Drive Farmington, MO 63640 Phone: (573) 756-6406 Fax: (573) 756-7051 Ginger Williams Web: www.mciifarmington.com E-mail: ginger@mciifarmington.com

#### Ste. Genevieve

Ste. Genevieve County Sheltered PO Box 166 Industrial Drive Ste. Genevieve, MO 63670 Phone: (573) 883-7431 Fax: (574) 883-9082 E-mail: office@sgi-inc.org Brenda Stuppy

## City of St. Louis

CWP Industries 5300 Arsenal Street St. Louis MO 63139 Phone: (314) 877-5976 Fax: (314) 877-6134 E-mail: aj.sander@dmh.mo.gov A.J. Sander

Industrial Aid 4417 Oleatha Ave. St. Louis, MO 63116 Phone: (314) 773-3200 Fax: (314) 773-4120 E-mail: mike.stroud@industrialaid.com Mike Stroud

Project CU, operated by Challenge Unlimited, Inc. 2828 Brannon Avenue St. Louis, MO 63139 Phone: (314) 647-3300 Fax: (314) 647-6057 E-mail: cbrewer@cuinc.org Kit Brewer

Worth Industries, Inc. 4124 N Broadway St. Louis, MO 63147 Phone: (314) 231-6600 Fax: (314) 231-2266 Web: www.worthindustries.com E-mail: dave@worthindustries.com Dave Orr

#### County of St. Louis

Canterbury Enterprises 7228 Weil Ave. Shrewsbury, MO 63119 Phone: (314) 781-3999 Fax: (314) 781-1129 E-mail: cfischer@canterburyinc.org Web: www.canterburyinc.org Charlie Fischer

Heartland Industries, Inc. 9727 Green Park Industrial Drive St. Louis, MO 63123 Phone: (314) 487-7200 Fax: (314) 487-7201 E-mail: mmacauley@heartlandindustries.org Mike Macauley

Lafayette Industries 179 Gaywood Drive Manchester, MO 63021 Phone: (636) 227-5666 Fax: (636) 227-9650 E-mail: rlibera@lafayetteindustries.com Web: www.lafayetteindustries.com Rob Libera

Lafayette Industries ITE 4621 World Parkway Circle Berkeley, MO 63134 Phone: (636) 227-5666 Fax: (636) 227-9650 E-mail: rlibera@lafayetteindustries.com Web: www.lafayetteindustries.com

Project, Inc. 2828 Brannon St. Louis, MO 63139 Phone: (314) 647-3300 Fax: (314) 647-6057 E-mail: matt@projectinc.org Matt Burridge

## SEED

8007 West Florissant Avenue Jennings, MO 63136 Phone: (314) 766-4025 Fax: (314) 766-4025 Web: https://mersgoodwill.org E-mail: dgore@mersgoodwill.org Deborah Gore

Valley Industries 1 43B McDonnell Blvd. Hazelwood, MO 63042 Phone: (314) 731-1771 Fax: (314) 895-4471 E-mail: jim@valleyind.net Web: www.valleyind.net Jim Guyre

#### Saline None

Schuyler None

Scotland None

#### Scott

Community Sheltered Workshop 515 Northwest St., Box 586 Sikeston, MO 63801 Phone: (573) 472-0583 Fax: (573) 472-0598 E-mail: comshelter@sbcglobal.net Harvey Cooper

#### Shannon

Reynolds County Sheltered Workshop 133 Highway 72 East, PO Box 127 Bunker, MO 63629 Phone: 573-689-2213 Fax: 573-689-2214 E-mail: reynolds004@centurytel.net Manager: Janis Gordon

Three Rivers Sheltered Industries P. O. Box 99 Birch Tree, MO 65438 Phone: (573) 292-3768 Fax: (573) 292-3768 E-mail: trsworkshop@centurytel.net Beth Voyles

#### Shelby

Macon Diversified Industries 1103 Enterprise Rd. Macon, MO 63552 Phone: (660) 385-3111 Fax: (660) 385-3009 E-mail: wrkshop1@hotmail.com Cindy Schaefer

#### **Stoddard**

Stoddard County Sheltered Workshop 1118 Center Dexter, MO 63841 Phone: (573) 624-5971 Fax: (573) 624-5972 E-mail: scsw@sbcglobal.net

#### Devin Miller

#### Sullivan None

#### Taney

Tantone Industries Inc. 1629 E. State Highway 76 Branson, MO 65616 Phone: (417) 334-7447 Fax: (417) 336-4065 E-mail: Jclark@tantone.org Web: www.tantone.org Jenifer Clark

#### Texas

Opportunity Sheltered Industries, Inc. 1085 Opportunity Circle Drive, P. O. Box 122 Houston, MO 65483 Phone: (417) 967-3608 Fax: (417) 967-5576 E-mail: styger@opportunityshelteredindustries.org Sharon Tyger

#### Vernon

Quality Products Inc. 3100 Industrial Parkway Nevada, MO 64772 Phone: (417) 667-8944 Fax: (417) 667-2450 E-mail: tcm@sofnet.com Web site: www.nevadamissouri.com/quality.htm T. Clem McFarland

#### Warren

TEMCO 16950 Rinne Rd. Marthasville, MO 63357 Phone: (636) 433-2335 Fax: (636) 433-2312 E-mail: retemco@gmail.com Web: www.temcoworkshop.org Bob Engemann

Warren Co. Workshop 1760 HGP Ave Warrenton, MO 63383 Phone: (636) 456-4800 Fax: (636) 456-7711 E-mail: wcsw@centurytel.net Jennifer Hazlett

#### Washington

Enhancements, Inc. 200 Frizzell Street Potosi, MO 63664 Phone: (573) 438-7141 Fax: (573) 438-1524 E-mail: enhancements.workshop@gmail.com Nathan Litton

Missouri Community Improvement Ind. 1687 S. Westmount Drive Farmington, MO 63640 Phone: (573) 756-6406 Fax: (573) 756-7051 Web: www.mciifarmington.com E-mail: ginger@mciifarmington.com Ginger Williams

#### Wayne

Services For Extended Employment 6 Sugar Creek Road Piedmont, MO 63957 Phone: (573) 223-7705 Fax: (573) 223-7710 E-mail: seeinc@semo.net Web: www.see--inc.com Alma Griffith

#### Webster

SWI Industrial Solutions Marshfield 948 S. Prairie Lane Marshfield, MO 65706 Phone: (417) 468-5890 Fax: (417) 468-5892 Web: www.webcocustom.com E-mail: ddunn@swiindustrial.com Dave Dunn

#### Worth None

#### Wright

Unique Services, Inc. 301 E. 17th Street Mountain Grove, MO 65711 Phone: (417) 926-6345 E-mail: uniqueservices@centurylink.net LaDonna Kennedy

Innovative Industries, Inc. 421 W. Centennial Avenue Carthage, MO 64836 Phone: (417) 358-6891 Fax: (417) 358-1849 E-mail: larryl@innovativeindustries.org Larry Lloyd



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