

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

50 Years of Joy and Challenge Serving Missourians

by MASWM President Brent Blackwell

The Missouri Extended Employment Sheltered Workshop (EESW) program continues to face challenges, even as we celebrate 50 years of success.

In some cases, this is due to a lack of understanding of how the program actually works. Back in the 1960s, the workshop system was started largely by parents and guardians. These caring Missourians wanted a safe place in their community where individuals could go and perform tasks allowing them to learn skills and be productive. Until then, many had simply sat at home, not socializing, not producing, not earning.

Over the years, workshops have blossomed into businesses that provide dignified, meaningful employment and the opportunity to develop the skills needed to move into competitive employment in the community. Although the program is specifically meant for those who do not have the capability to be competitively employed, there are groups pushing for

the EESW to be eliminated and replaced with community placement programs.

So where will these individuals end up after time? Our concern is that they will be placed in day habilitation programs or end up at home on the couch, which is exactly what parents and guardians wanted to avoid over 50 years ago!

EESW companies also face challenges just like any other business, especially since the bulk of our funding comes from contract sales. Although the economy continues to struggle, rather than closing, the managers and boards of directors are developing new lines of business and offering a diversity of services, including community placement opportunities. Change is never an easy thing to accomplish, but the EESW has been doing just that for 50 years. The glue that holds everything together is made up of the managers, staff, board members and supporters, including our state legislators.

You may wonder why we fight so hard

and endure all the criticism, but all it takes is one smile from an employee who is proud of accomplishing a job well done to make it worth it.



MASWM President Brent Blackwell: one smile from a worker with a disability makes it all worthwhile.

Minimum Wage Issue Gains Attention Locally and Nationally

One of the biggest issues continuing into 2016 involves workshops and minimum wages.

On local, state and national levels, well-meaning individuals seek to increase minimum wages so that all workers can hope for a "living wage." There are many sides to this issue, but sheltered workshops are deeply concerned that a blanket increase would include workers with disabilities, without considering where the extra money would come from.

Budget Realities

Workshops may pay employees with disabilities "subminimum" wages under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Workshop costs—including wages—are generated largely by contracts for packaging, assembly, recycling or other business services, with state and county taxes making up the difference. In order to increase wages for approximately 7,000 workers with disabilities in Missouri, taxpayers would need to fund a

massive increase in workshop budgets.

The only other option is that workshops would increase their charges for business services such as packing and recycling. But workshops have already been losing contracts for years because many companies have moved such work overseas. If workshops raise their business costs, they'll lose even more business and income. Workshops would be forced to lay off workers with disabilities, and

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Missouri Managers' Association Helps In Many Ways

Some managers may wonder about the value of the association. It's a good question.

With federal, state and even local laws and regulations threatening workshops

MASWM

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Mission

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

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

almost daily, the importance of a united front and effective communications should be obvious. But connections to organizations like the Sheltered Workshop Insurance of Missouri are important for other reasons.

A recent case showed other help involves a newer manager.

Real-World Help

Susan Adams, general manager of Joplin Workshops, Inc, recently received notice that her shop would be subject to a Department of Labor wage and hour audit. She noted that the MASWM October meeting in Branson had included a valuable overview of DOL regulations, but now that her workshop was facing an audit, she wanted more detailed information.

Susan contacted MASWM editor Dale Garrison who forwarded her request to the Joplin area director and the MASWM leadership. The response was almost unbelievable. Within minutes,

Susan was answered by Aaron Martin, Randy Hylton, Brent Blackwell and state officials.

Advice from Hylton and Martin was especially notable for any manager facing this situation—first contact your DESE field supervisor. Adams' comments are also worth sharing. In Adams' case, DESE workshops Director Fulvio Franzi and Field Supervisor Dan Gier contacted her immediately.

"I have been so impressed with the generosity and support from other MASWM members," she added. "Within my first few weeks on the job, I was able to visit the workshops in Carthage, Lamar and Neosho and each of those managers offered up ideas, suggestions and solutions. They referred me to business resources and recounted their own best practices. MASWM has helped me feel as though I'm on a lot more stable footing than I would have imagined with this new career!"

Minimum Wage Issue Gains Attention

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many of these individuals would end up languishing at home with no assistance, socializing or supervision. One eastern state that eliminated workshops has seen two-thirds of the former employees fail to find and keep any job! Some seem to believe workshops can wave a magic wand to create millions of dollars in new wages.

Missouri Examples

In Missouri, a proposed state law (HB 722) would have increased Missouri's minimum wage and included sheltered workshops. Several municipalities, including Kansas City and St. Louis, later considered their own minimum wage bills. Proposals on the federal level seem to appear almost weekly.

The Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshop Managers (MASWM) has worked with organizations to protect the rights and opportunities of people with disabilities while ensuring that a range of employment options is fully funded.

One of the most dramatic examples includes the City of St. Louis discussions which reached a climax in early October, 2015, with an approved exemption of sheltered workshops to a then-proposed

minimum wage bill. Although the exemption eventually passed, a major concern arose when proponents proposed a gradual phase-in of minimum wage requirements. Without identified budget resources, these proposals are simply wishful thinking and would be catastrophic for people with disabilities.

Television Network

This discussion in Missouri even reached a national television network, Al Jazeera. Though relatively new, the New York based network broadcasts a wide range of new programming that this fall included a special look at Missouri's minimum wage topic. Their work included interviews with a St. Louis workshop and with MASWM Legislative Co-Chair Randy Hylton.

Unfortunately, the broadcast repeated several times the arguments of a small but vocal opposition group to even the concept of sheltered workshops. This group says workshops are an old and outdated model that is going away. As most parents and guardians of people with disabilities know very well, workshops are in fact the one sustainable, affordable program that has proven its worth over decades.

State Budget Includes Full Funding for FY16

It's always a reason for Missouri's workshops to celebrate when legislators pass a budget that includes their funding, but the FY16 budget was especially noteworthy as it included full funding for the first time in several years.

In May 2015, legislators passed and the Governor signed Missouri budget bills with an additional \$500,000 to cover full funding, including a "set-aside" that had been withheld because the Governor feared other budget problems. Although

Missouri workshops rely on a mix of state and county revenues, and especially their own business contract revenues, each component is important. This combination is critical for the more than 90 workshops that, in essence, are small businesses employing more than 7,000 workers with disabilities across Missouri.

MASWM members were at the forefront of ensuring this happened. Led by Legislative Co-Chairs Randy Hylton and Jim Guyre, managers worked hard to en-

sure that legislators learned the importance of the workshop budget. Efforts included the January legislative meeting and, perhaps most of all, individual contacts and workshop tours by legislators in their home communities. As is often the case, seeing is believing. Touring a local workshop, legislators are quick to realize the important services performed for businesses and individuals with disabilities.

Warren County Workshop Expands—and Continues Growth

Warren County Sheltered Workshop in Warrenton has been busy with a 5,000 s.f. expansion and more.

The new building has been operational since May, but the shop is growing so rapidly more space is likely to be needed.

The workshop also completed the ISO 9001.2008 process and now is ISO Certified as of September. This certification has allowed the shop to attract more complex job opportunities for employees. With this process complete, Warren County is able to employ more certified workers, as well as more staff.

After several years of applying to the Missouri Department of Transportation, the workshop now has a wheelchair-accessible minivan to directly transport employees who are in wheelchairs to and from work, instead of relying on other



A ribbon cutting recently launched Warren County's new location.

transportation. There is no cost to the workers.

Over the holidays, the shop held a Christmas Party for employees and hosted a large Christmas dinner during working hours (so that everyone could attend), complete with Santa.

"Most of all, we got to enjoy a few

hours of hanging out, wishing each other well and making sure all the employees know how very grateful we are for them," explained Executive Director Kelli Clodfelter. "This great growth we have been accomplishing is because of them and their hard work and dedication."

Casco Area Workshop Is Focus Of Newspaper Feature Article

The Cass County *Democrat Missouri* featured Casco Area Workshop in Harrisonville in an outstanding article in 2015.

The story noted concerns for the exploitation of workers who are paid minimum wage. Then, in what is often unusual, the writer Max Londberg did a thorough job of explaining the financial limits for extended employment and the importance of workshops for socializing and community involvement.

"...Others say workshops like Casco are a gathering place for disabled individuals—a place for them to socialize and contribute to society by way of steady employment," Londberg wrote.

The article appeared in April when a federal bill had been proposed to raise the wage rates of workers with disabilities.

The article also explained "piece rate" calculations used by workshops to calculate commensurate wages for workers with disabilities. Without massive taxpayer subsidies, workshops would otherwise go out of business.

"For example, say the piece rate is \$10 an hour for filling bags with rice hulls," the article noted. "If a nondisabled employee can fill 100 bags with rice hulls in an hour, and a Casco employee fills 50 bags an hour, then the Casco employee would earn \$5 per hour."

The feature told how workshops are

more than "just jobs" and that many of the workers with disabilities would not be able to obtain or keep competitive positions in the community.

Parent Nancy Baalman explained this aspect of workshops. "When you watch them work, a lot of them need a lot of supervision; a lot of help," Baalman said. "I support the way the pay structure is arranged, based on how much each individual can produce. I think it's fair, and the reason I do is because Casco works to give my son a sense of purpose and a sense of belonging. Everyone wants to do well and be involved, and we all need jobs and a purpose. Casco has given that to John (her son)."

Minimum Essential Coverage to Meet ACA Requirements

Many workshops and managers continue to struggle with definitions and requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

One of the biggest questions involves how it relates to Medicaid and meeting ACA's requirements for "minimum essential coverage."

MASWM recently received a report from the human resource management consulting firm, Mark Knuckles Associates, Inc. (www.markknuckles.com).

One of the most important elements for workshops is actually at the end of a report summary: "If the worker, including a client or consumer worker, is full-time, as defined by the ACA, whether or not they receive Medicaid, the employer must offer the 'opportunity' for the worker to enroll in the employer's health plan if the worker does not have MEC, minimum essential coverage. Medicaid or Medicaid Waiver is considered minimum essential cover, MEC."

The report emphasizes that a Medicaid Waiver has no bearing on a worker's status under the ACA. This includes a tradi-

tional employee, trainee, client or a consumer worker. The ACA contains no exception in the definition of "employee" for workers who are receiving Medicaid or Medicaid Waiver.

Knuckles also reported that to decide if an employer is a "large employer," with 50 or more full-time or equivalent employees, all workers receiving compensation must be included in the calculation, whether or not they receive Medicaid or Medicaid Waiver.

"This includes all clients and other consumer workers paid minimum wages and commensurate wages who are enrolled in paid work activity," the report noted. "Only those workers enrolled in a formal vocational rehabilitation type training program of a defined duration, typically a short program of four to six months, preparing them to return to competitive employment, are excluded by the IRS from 'employee' status."

According to the ACA, large employers with 50 or more full-time/equivalent employees must offer all full-time employees the chance to participate in the em-

ployer's health plan. The plan must also be affordable and have minimum essential coverage (MEC) or the employer must participate in the shared responsibility by making an assessable payment (a penalty).

A full-time employee has 130 or more hours of service in the standard measurement period selected by the employer.

Paid hours of service include paid benefit hours and hours the employee is entitled to payment. It does not include nonpaid "alternate nonwork" activity time such as recreation, therapy, basic education, job seeking skills training and similar nonwork activities.

Hours of service include all time in paid work, paid travel, compensable meetings, compensable emergency drills and compensable downtime between work.

Hours of service may also include hours where payment is not required by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or other law but where the employer decides to pay the employee a piece or hourly rate, such as a training wage.

Congresswoman Visits Central Missouri Subcontracting

Central Missouri Subcontracting Enterprises (CMSE) in Columbia recently hosted Congresswoman Vickie Hartzler.

Congresswoman Hartzler spoke with many of CMSE's employees during her visit. She also spoke with eight CMSE employees who work at a nearby automobile supplier, Otscon. CMSE has had a crew at Otscon for over 20 years.

Congresswoman Hartzler has been a strong advocate of Missouri's workshop program and its nearly 7,000 employees. "She understands that work is important to everyone and that it provides a certain level of confidence and self esteem," CMS Director Bruce Young. "Just recently, she's been helpful in our efforts with WIOA."

Congresswoman Vickie Hartzler (at right) recently spoke with Dale, one of several employees at Central Missouri Subcontracting Enterprises. Dale was working on some of the 75,000 admission packages CMSE is producing for the University of Missouri.



Active Shooter Threats Are All Too Real

Even before the tragic terrorist shooting at a center employing people with disabilities in San Bernardino, Ca., Missouri workshops have been concerned with security and related issues.

At the October MASWM meeting, Alan Schmitt, vice president of Loss Prevention Services for Arthur J. Gallagher & Co., made a presentation for Sheltered Workshop Insurance of Missouri (SWIM). His information includes many good points and material. If this threat occurs, some of the key points are:

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Customers and clients are likely to follow the lead of employees and managers during an active shooter situation. In order of probability, consider:

1. Evacuate

- Have an escape route and plan in mind

- Leave your belongings behind
- Keep your hands visible

2. Hide out

- Hide in an area out of the active shooter's view.
- Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors; call 911 when it is safe to do so

3. Take action

- As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger
- Attempt to incapacitate the active shooter
- Act with physical aggression and throw items at the active shooter

Other information involved how to look for warning signs of psychological distress or other personal issues:

An active shooter may be a current or former employee. Alert your human resources department if you believe an employee exhibits potentially violent

behavior. Indicators of potentially violent behavior may include one or more of the following:

- Increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
- Unexplained increase in absenteeism and/or vague physical complaints
- Depression/withdrawal
- Increased severe mood swings and noticeably unstable or emotional responses
- Increasingly talks of problems at home
- Increase in unsolicited comments about violence, firearms and other dangerous weapons and violent crimes

The presentation included an extensive library of downloadable materials and an FBI video link that are especially useful. All of this material is available on the MASWM website, www.moworkshops.org.

Shop Opens Store in Kirksville

Executive Director Katy Fine-Newman of Community Opportunities in Kirksville reports the opening of Franklin Street Outlet on Nov. 13.

This new venture was a year in the making and is designed to provide more employment and revenue to support the workshop.

The workshop "elves" have been hard at work making ornaments, wreaths and pallet Christmas trees to sell in the store. The store also sells liquidated overstock merchandise.



Workshop Updates Include New Managers, Information

Joplin Workshops, Inc. recently announced that Susan Adams has joined the company as general manager. Executive Director Ron Sampson, who served workshops and the area's disabled community for over 22 years, has retired but will remain active through the transition in leadership. Susan was DESE Employer of the Year in 2012. The office phone is 417-781-2862 and the website is www.jworkshops.com. Her e-mail is susan.adams@jworkshops.com.

Adams previously held the position of Director of Human Resources for Able Manufacturing & Assembly, LLC, also located in Joplin. She has served on various nonprofit boards of directors in southwest Missouri and is a past chair of the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce.

She was named the 2008 "Breaking Traditions" Employer of the Year by the State of Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Courtney Murphy, manager at Ozark Sheltered Industries, Inc., in Pomona, has a new e-mail address: cjmosi@centurytel.net.

David Kesten is the new executive director at Lafayette County Enterprises, Inc. in Higginsville. His e-mail is dkesten@ctcis.net and his phone number 660-584-7232.

Cindy Schaefer, executive director of Macon Diversified Industries, Inc., in Macon, announced a new website for the workshop: www.macondiversified.com. Her e-mail is wrkshop2@hotmail.com and the phone is 660-385-3111.

Martin Keller has replaced Kelly Polston as the manager at Handi-Shop in Mexico. His e-mail is hsimanager@handi-shop.com and his phone is 573-581-1191.

Shauna Hasek at Casco Area Workshop in Harrisonville notes the organization has been very busy! The workshop was honored early in 2015 with a visit by Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler (Missouri 4th District). This fall, the shop participated in the annual Rotary Club picnic in September, Halloween party in October, Thanksgiving dinner in November and planned a winter ball. On Dec. 3, they visited the homeless shelter and donated long johns that were made at the workshop as part of a past contract.

Joplin Workshop Hosts State Officials, Legislators

Joplin Workshop held a Community Open House on Oct. 22 with 200 guests, including Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Sheltered Workshop Director Fulvio Franzini and Technical Field Supervisor Dan Gier.

The workshop's business partner, Downstream Casino and Resorts, provided a delicious lunch. Missouri Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard presented retiring Executive Director Ron Sampson with a proclamation recognizing his years of service to the workshop. Representative Tom Flannigan presented Sampson with U.S. and Missouri flags that had been flown over the state capital building. Also in attendance were Representative Bill White and former legislator Gary Burton. The Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce also hosted a ribbon cutting.

In November, the workshop converted to 100 percent payroll direct deposit and the transition went very smoothly. Workshop staff worked closely with families and case managers to accomplish this, and all coworkers are pleased with the ease and efficiency of having their payroll available first thing on Friday mornings. The administrative staff is thrilled with no more check distributions, lost checks, bank reconciliations or other payroll related paperwork!

The Joplin Workshop announced on Dec 8 that they will begin immediately accepting cardboard, paper and plastics for recycling. The City of Joplin has promised to provide a bin for drop-offs, and the workshop will pick up from area small businesses. They have had great support from the managers at the Carthage, Lamar and Macon workshops,



Missouri Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard presented retiring Executive Director Ron Sampson with a proclamation recognizing his years of service to the workshop. At the same meeting, Representative Tom Flannigan presented Sampson with US and Missouri flags that had been flown over the state capital building.

Innovative Industries, Lamar Enterprises and Macon Diversified Industries, in launching this new venture.

Holiday Parties Are Part of the Fun for Many Workshops

Like many workshops in Missouri, Lake Area Industries in Camdenton recently held their annual holiday party for their employees, in celebration of the holiday season and in appreciation of all their hard work throughout the year. LAI was grateful for the generosity of several area businesses and individuals whose contributions helped make this a memorable event for their employees.

"Our annual holiday party is one of the many ways for us to show our appreciation to our employees. They all have such pride and dedication for their work and our organization. It truly is amazing to have the opportunity to do something special for them," stated Executive Director Tiffany Maasen.

During the celebration, LAI recognized their Employee of the Year, Johnny Dutton. Johnny has been a loyal employee since 2005 and was July's Employee of the Month. His main function at LAI is in the wood products department, where he works to the best of his abilities. Good attendance and positive attitude are keys to being awarded Employee of the Month, which is why Johnny was honored in July. His willingness to always lend a helping hand and outgoing attitude all year long is what made him stand out to his supervisors when being selected Employee of the Year. "Johnny is a kindhearted individual. He has worked at LAI for over 10 years, always with a big smile on his face.



We were proud to award him our Employee of the Year," said Production Manager Lillie Smith.

Lake Area Industries, Inc. is a sheltered workshop in Camdenton. Since 1983, LAI has been providing meaningful employment for individuals with disabilities, providing them daily challenges and support to reach their greatest potential. To learn more about Lake Area Industries contact 573-346-7934 or follow them on Facebook.



Camdenton Shop Adds Secure Document Shredding Services

No matter what line of business you are in, there is always something to protect while discarding of documents—from a client's private information to trade secrets you wouldn't want your competitors getting a hold of.

We all have to take extra measures to secure this information. At Lake Area Industries we guarantee the security of your sensitive information, while at the same time making it cost effective for your business. Protect your business and your clients by staying compliant with privacy

laws in regards to document destruction by setting up an ongoing pick up contract with LAI. We will provide your business with a secured bin to dispose of sensitive documents and arrange pick up times that best meet your business needs.

Using Lake Area Industries for your secure document shredding and recycling needs assures your business that your sensitive information is being handled with the upmost security, while not heavily impacting your bottom line.

Since 1983, Lake Area Industries, Inc.

has been providing meaningful employment for individuals with disabilities, providing them daily challenges and support to reach their greatest potential. LAI also partners with and supports other nonprofit organizations in an effort to help others in the Lake Area, strengthening and bettering our community every day!

To learn more about Lake Area Industries contact 573-346-7934 or follow them on Facebook.

Big Events Coming Up for MASWM Members in 2016

MASWM members already have two major events on the 2016 calendar.

The first involves the important January MASWM meeting is at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City on Jan. 26 and 27.

This is both an important and enjoyable opportunity to meet with legislators and talk about workshop priorities with the people who will set the budget!

The Legislative Breakfast on the 27th in Hearing Room 2 in the State Capital Building.

Workshops statewide will also celebrate their 50th anniversary during 2016.

MASWM is planning a special publication in April, so stay tuned!



Christmas celebrations at Opportunity Sheltered Industries in Houston also brought some nostalgia. Manager Sharon Tyger was joined by employees who have been with the workshop since it opened in 1987: Kenneth Morrison, Lowell Stilley and (seated) Carla Crum.



Handi-Shop Manager Kelly Polston (background, left) recently accompanied Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler from Missouri's 4th District on a tour of the sheltered workshop in Mexico. Clients Caleb Clagget and Kelsay Hobbs, along with Production Supervisor Steve Woodward, were busy assembling Christmas trees for the Handi-Shop's thrift store, Seconds to Go.

New Service Offers Transportation Help

MO RIDES referral service coordinates affordable rides for people with transportation challenges throughout Missouri. The service can especially benefit senior citizens, individuals with disabilities and those with low-to-moderate incomes by helping locate a transportation company that will get the rider to job interviews, work, medical appointments and other places throughout the state of Missouri.

The mobility managers at MO RIDES

will assist people in finding the most affordable public transportation options to meet specific needs. Riders pay the transportation company of their choice for the ride and there is no fee to call MO RIDES for assistance.

Visit www.morides.org/search-counties to learn about some of the transportation providers available in each Missouri county.

WIOA Issues Continue to Develop, Including in Missouri and Nationally

Signed into law in 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) continues to approach full implementation, which will likely impact every workshop in Missouri.

The “Final Rule” detailing implementation of WIOA is expected in April 2016. An initial announcement concerned only the regulation’s impact on subminimum wage and not the total package of the act.

Some preliminary information connected with WIOA was highly critical of extended employment, “segregated” programs such as sheltered workshops. Also receiving criticism were subminimum wages allowed under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

MASWM’s legislative team of Randy Hylton and Jim Guyre has worked diligently on its own and with national organizations such as ACCSES to share the importance of workshop services and how they actually function, including the often misunderstood budget process. ACCSES represents more than 1,200 disability service providers across the country as the Voice of Disability Service Providers.

Bob Engemann of MASWM’s Financial Stability Committee noted that some of the criticisms of workshops comes

from so-called “advocates” who have brought a lot of attention, much of it negative, to extended employment as an option, as well as commensurate wages.

Even with workshop input, WIOA requirements will certainly bring major budgetary challenges. Workshop operations receive some funding from Missouri General Revenue, subject to yearly appropriations, at a rate of only \$19 per day

per employee in attendance through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. WIOA will require significant increases in revenue to

meet all of the new requirements for compliance.

An even greater concern involves calls to eliminate workshops entirely. ACCSES recently noted a troubling example. A group preparing WIOA recommendations decided to accept testimony from parents of workshop employees—after they had already issued a preliminary report. What is often lacking is extensive “on the ground” research, which has shown that where workshops have been reduced or eliminated, up to two-thirds of the workers with disabilities do not find community employment. Instead, they end up staying home, a situation reminiscent of the days before parents and guardians joined to create the work-

WIOA will require significant increases in revenue to meet all of the new requirements for compliance.



Early this fall, clients from Rehabilitation Institute Industries wrote letters to Santa describing what they would like for Christmas. On Dec. 10, holiday wishes came true at the annual Rehabilitation Institute of Kansas City (RIKC) Ladies Auxiliary client holiday party. Clients gathered over lunch to eat pizza and cookies and unwrap their presents. Patrick, a client of two years with R.I. Industries, received a portable radio. He was so happy he expressed his joy and his thanks for his family, friends, and gift.

shop network.

“While there are some positive recommendations included in the Interim Report, we believe that any recommendations on the elimination or phase-out of sheltered workshops and Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) 14(c) Certificate Programs is systemically flawed,” said Leann Fox, ACCSES Director of Government Relations.

“The almost complete lack of data in this field is striking,” Fox continued. “The latest federal analysis was nearly 15 years ago. There has been no comprehensive review of what happens to individuals with disabilities in communities where these programs have been shut down, and there has been limited study of how many individuals are transitioned out of employment and into day habilitation programs as a result of ending the programs. We continue to urge you to use restraint in regard to your recommendations moving forward. Please take the time to fully research outcomes before eliminating jobs.”

Crowder Industries Supports Salvation Army

Crowder Industries in Neosho rang bells for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign in early December. It was a great experience for employees and served the community.

Ten employees from Crowder rang in one-hour shifts throughout the day.

Denise Moore, Crowder Industries office manager, said, “We had great weather to be outside. It was a good opportunity for us to serve in the community.”



Crowder employees Calvin Henslee and Don Depung were among those ringing bells for the Salvation Army over the holidays.