

SHELTERED WORKSHOP MANAGERS

Governor Gives Strong Support to Workshops in Opening Address

New Missouri Governor Jay Nixon wasted no time in giving strong endorsement to Missouri's workshops.

In the Jan. 27 State of the State Address, Gov. Nixon identified an employee of Missouri workshops while presenting his goal to increase funding for job development and training programs for all Missourians.

"And as we invest in Missouri's people, no one should be left behind," Gov. Nixon said. "Under my proposed budget, I have called for increased funding to help Missourians with developmental disabilities earn a living and contribute to society."

During his comments, Gov. Nixon introduced Glenn Cromley, a 61-year-old developmentally disabled worker who became an employee of the sheltered workshop program when it was first introduced in 1966. Also joining Glenn was his mother, Sue, and Roger Garlich, man-
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New Missouri Governor Jay Nixon (center) made a point of mentioning workshops in his inaugural state of the state address. The Governor even recognized one of Missouri's 7,500 workers with developmental disabilities during the speech. At left is Speaker of the House Ron Richard.

Waiting List Grows for Workers with Disabilities

Workshop Sales Down \$12 Million in 2008

Missouri's 93 sheltered workshops that employ approximately 7,500 state residents with developmental disabilities are a good bargain because they actually give the state a return on its investment.

But like other businesses, they have faced sharp losses with the recent economy. Workshops also face an additional and serious challenge because those 7,500 Missourians and their needs won't disappear, even if workshops close.

That was something of a missing factor in some recent discussion that considered closing workshops. The confusion is understandable, however, because unlike many state departments, workshops actu-

ally operate as businesses, earning money through contracts that ultimately pays a majority of their expenses.

According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the state actually provides only 15 to at most 50 percent for individual sheltered workshops. The largest portion of the remaining funding comes from each workshop's contract work for businesses and industry—services such as packaging, assembly, recycling and maintenance.

Last year, DESE found the workshops generated a total of \$71.5 million in contract work – a return of \$3.55 for every
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The Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshop Managers is comprised of professional leaders dedicated to enhancing Sheltered Workshops in Missouri, programs for the people we serve and the business services we provide. The association is a leader in the field of disability awareness through education, advocacy and active involvement in the legislative process.

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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: Richard "Mo" McCullough, (573) 619-1482 or workmscamo@embarqmail.com; or President Barr: Phone: (573) 36-7934, Fax: (573) 346-1214, E-mail: bill@lakeareaindustries.org.

Governor Gives Workshops Support

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ager of Cooperative Workshops, Inc., where Glenn is employed.

Gov. Nixon stressed that despite budget reductions that might close workshops, their value must be recognized. "Every Missourian is unique and valuable, and every Missourian must have the opportunity to realize the value of a hard day's work," he said. "Now, some have called for the Sheltered Workshop Program to be eliminated. Let me tell you - that's not going to happen. Not while I serve as your Governor. Quite the contrary, in order to ensure that more Missourians like Glenn have the opportunity to live independent and successful lives, my budget proposes increasing funding for our

Sheltered Workshop program."

Gov. Nixon also announced a plan to use increased payments from Missouri hospitals to expand Medicaid eligibility without additional costs to the state, adding an additional 34,800 poor and disabled Missourians to the program eligibility. Other areas included increased focus on marketing Missouri products, more attention to the state's agricultural strengths and a sharply reduced state staff to reduce Missouri government spending.

For workshop managers, however, the most dramatic moments came with the comments about workshops, which also included recognition of a workshop employee who was sitting in the capitol gallery.

Workshop Contract Services Hit Hard

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\$1 appropriated by the state.

The recent economy has hurt that contract labor statewide, however, and workshops have seen a decline in contract income as a result. On average, the contract income fell 17.2 percent last year. The drop was as high as 30 to 35 percent at some workshops, depending on local economic conditions, according to DESE officials.

Workshops are not taking a passive role in this, however. For years, workshops have fought to replace declining contract income with innovative projects that range from recycling to original products such as first aid kits. The recent, sharp downturn was more than these efforts could match, however, and while they continue to expand and research additional alternatives, the funding issue remains critical.

Bird's Eye View of Missouri History

Glenn Cromley may have had the best view of any for Governor Jay Nixon's State of the State Address.

The Governor recognized the worker with a developmental disability from Sedalia's Cooperative Workshops, Inc., during a key portion of the annual speech, which focused considerably on Missouri's nearly 100 workshops. The emphasis was thrilling for Glenn and for workshops, which in past years have rarely been identified during the annual governor's address. The recognition was even more

important since workshops have recently been suggested for massive funding cuts.

Workshop manager Roger Garlich was equally impressed. "We had a call from the governor's office asking us to represent sheltered workshops," Roger explained. "Glenn is one of the original enrollees of our workshop. He's been involved for 40 years, so he seemed like the right person."

Roger said he and workshop supporters from his area of Sedalia and Marshall were active in communicating the value of

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Workshop Employee Selected Grand Marshall

Shirlene Treadwell, a recent inductee into the Special Olympic's Hall of Fame, was selected as this year's Grand Marshall for the Governors Inaugural Parade held on Jan. 12.

A long time employee of Central Missouri Subcontracting Enterprises in Columbia, Shirlene had recently been inducted into the Special Olympic Hall of Fame when she was selected for the Jefferson City parade position.

"I think it's awesome," Shirlene, 39, told a Columbia newspaper. "It's a big thing."

The parade each year precedes the swearing in of the Governor and other statewide, elected officials.

A resident of Columbia for 20 years, Shirlene has earned state and national recognition in Special Olympics, most recently a statewide gold medal in volleyball. Two years ago, she won a silver medal in golf at the Special Olympics National Games. She also has been honored for her performance as a tennis player.

Workshop manager Bruce Young said

he was thrilled with the entire event. "We couldn't have been happier," he said after the parade. "It was wonderful for everyone and

Shirlene just had a ball. It was a great day."



Shirlene Treadwell from the Columbia workshop, Central Missouri Subcontracting Enterprises, was selected as Grand Marshall for the Missouri 2009 Inaugural Parade Jan. 12.

Bird's Eye View of Missouri History for Workshop Employee



Glenn Cromley and his mother (center) met with First Lady and Governor Jay Nixon prior to the Inaugural Address.

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workshops following rumors of a massive funding cut. He said that the Governor's support proved to be a welcome surprise.

"The governor had some good feelings about workshops as a whole and came out with some pretty bold statements," Roger said.

Glenn was also vocal, in a pretty dramatic fashion. He was asked to sit in the capital gallery during the speech and was one of only four people recognized by the governor during the delivery. When governor motioned for him to stand up, he waved and all of the senators and representatives on the floor stood up and gave him a standing ovation. Glen, his mother and Roger were asked to join a reception prior to the address.

Roger said the end result was heartening. "It's the first time I can remember that people with developmental disabilities have been mentioned in an address, let alone the workshops by program name," he concluded. "It was a good evening and gave a lot of attention to what was going on. Certainly Glenn and his mom were thrilled."

First Lady's Visit Brings More Focus to Missouri Sheltered Workshops

Missouri workshops received another significant state recognition recently when First Lady Georganne Nixon toured sheltered workshops in Fulton and Hannibal.

In Hannibal, Northeast Missouri Sheltered Workshop volunteer John Yancey said the visit there was a major event for workshop consumers, staff and supporters. "She seemed very interested in our recycling," he noted. "It is a great operation. Last year we recycled more than one million pounds of products."

In Fulton, Kingdom Projects, Inc., Manager Lon Little also saw real enthusiasm. "I found her to be sincerely interested in what workshops do and how they do it," he said.

The first lady's visits were designed specifically to discuss the importance of these facilities for Missourians with developmental disabilities, as well as the communities they serve. Mrs. Nixon also detailed the pledge by her husband, Gov. Jay Nixon, to increase funding for Missouri's sheltered workshops in the fiscal year 2010 budget, a pledge unveiled by the governor in the State of the State Address earlier in January.

"Every Missouri life is unique and special, and every Missourian deserves the opportunity to work and contribute to our society," Mrs. Nixon said. "For decades, Missouri's sheltered workshops have been helping to make that a reality. Our sheltered workshops offer meaningful, stable employment for Missourians with developmental disabilities, and they provide reliable, quality service for businesses and the community. Jay and I will continue to be strong supporters of Missouri's sheltered workshops, and we will push for increased funding for these vital programs, especially during these difficult economic times."

While Gov. Nixon outlined his priorities for the budget during his first State



Missouri First Lady Georganne Nixon recently toured sheltered workshops in Hannibal (top) and Fulton, talking to workshop managers, supporters and workers with developmental disabilities.

of the State Address, he called for a \$3.6 million increase in funding for sheltered workshops next year. That would bring total funding for Missouri's sheltered workshops to \$24.8 million.

According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the state provides only 15 to at most 50 percent of the funding for individual sheltered workshops. The largest funding actually comes from each workshop's work for businesses and industry. With recent economic slow-downs, this contract income last year fell 17.2 percent, or \$12 million.

Mrs. Nixon began her tour at Kingdom Projects in Fulton. Founded in 1976, Kingdom Projects employs more than 100 residents of mid-Missouri. Employees at Kingdom Projects work in a variety of capacities, including placing recycling bins throughout the community, collecting and sorting recycling items and manufacturing items for local niche markets.

Following her tour of Kingdom Projects, Mrs. Nixon visited the Northeast Missouri Sheltered Workshop in Hannibal. Employees at this workshop serve as contractors for a number of local businesses, but the workshop also specializes in shredding and recycling confidential documents. The Northeast Missouri Sheltered Workshop has served thousands of Missourians since opening in 1966.

"It's an honor and privilege to meet the hardworking employees at these workshops and the dedicated professionals who make these opportunities possible," Mrs. Nixon said. "We must ensure that more Missourians can benefit from these important programs in the years to come."

Across the state, 93 sheltered workshops provide work for about 7,500 Missourians with developmental disabilities.