

MASWM

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

MASWM: Working Hard for Workshops, Managers and Missourians

MASWM provides a surprising range of services and benefits, so many that it can be a challenge to keep track.

Services and benefits are ultimately what the association is about. MASWM is the one organization dedicated to finding solutions for the challenges facing workshops throughout Missouri.

Telling the Workshop Story

One of the most important efforts today is political advocacy: creation of a voice for workshops and the people they serve. Two years ago, this led to the creation of MASWM's sister organization, Missouri Employment Supports and Advocacy, Inc. (MESA). It also includes the almost unbelievable work by two legislative co-chairs and other officers. These efforts occur almost daily, and without them, it's possible Missouri workshops would have significantly lower state funding or laws and regulations that could make their work impossible.

"Political advocacy is one of those things that very few shops could do on their own, financially or timewise," ex-

plained MASWM President Aaron Martin. "But today, it's critical. We need a voice in Jefferson City and even Washington."

Other MASWM benefits include efforts to establish best practices for workshops, regional meetings to share ideas and new member information packets. Increasingly, these and other services are becoming invaluable.

Helping Each Other

The most dramatic benefit may be the community of managers organized to help each other. "Just the camaraderie of other managers is important," Martin said. "Having people I can pick up the



Members of the MASWM Board of Directors are meeting or holding conference calls at least monthly in order to keep up with challenges facing workshops.

phone and call if I have questions is invaluable. I've been a manager for 15 years, and that's still helpful to me."

MASWM is working to formalize many of these benefits while adding others. A new manager packet is a good

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Commensurate Wage Helps Expand Opportunities

Commensurate wages may be one of the most debated issues surrounding workshops today. But despite misunderstandings, commensurate wages used by Missouri workshops are a key to developing employment opportunity for people with disabilities.

"Commensurate wages provide opportunity both for employment and training," explained Kit Brewer, Moberly workshop manager and MASWM Board of Directors member. "It provides an op-

portunity for individual growth, and it does not limit earnings to less than minimum wage."

Equally important is what commensurate wage is not. "Commensurate wage is not intended to be a control on labor expenses for either the certificate holder or its customer base," Brewer continued. "Commensurate wage is intended to provide additional opportunity for employment training and participation to individuals."

Another workshop manager and board member stressed that commensurate wages help workshops to function in a competitive work environment. "Many people with disabilities would have no other options to work and contribute if they didn't have a workshop," said Russ Kuttentkuler. "Without a workshop, they would miss all of the physical and mental benefits of working. They just wouldn't have other options."

(please continue to page 3)

Inside this Issue:

Workshop Services on Website 2
Missouri Day on the Hill 3
SWIM Helps 4
Jeff City Meeting Jan. 29-30 4

Merger Means More 5
Representatives Honored 5
Workshops Make the News 6
Kingdom Projects Success 6
Anniversary Open House 7

60 Years Marked 7
Workshop Updates 7
Area Meetings Added 8
Customer Provides Party 8
New Branson Manager 8

MASWM
www.moworkshops.org
www.facebook.com/moworkshops/

MASWM Website Adds Workshop Services Page

MASWM's website has a new, interactive page that details the services available to businesses and others from Missouri workshops (www.moworkshops.org/services.html).

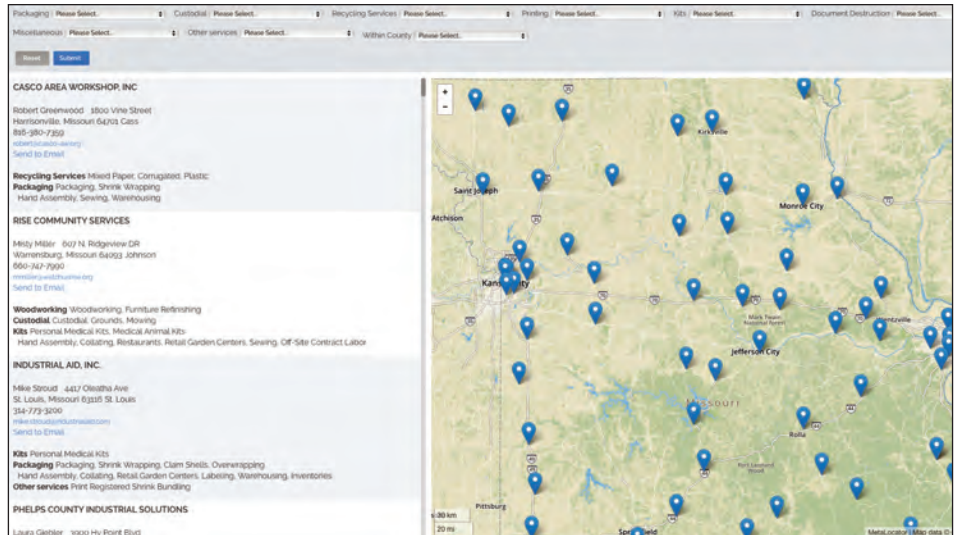
The page provides companies and individuals who might use workshop services with an easy way to search for a shop by the types of services offered and geographic location.

The page is also linked from Missouri's new Division of Purchasing web page (<https://oa.mo.gov/purchasing>) that offers information for companies that would like to do business with the State of Mis-

souri. Companies that can include workshops as partners or subcontractors can earn credits that help them compete for state contracts.

The effort is one of several that provides members with added benefits

through their MASWM membership. If you did not send information for this page or need to change your information, contact Brian Hogan at bhogan@bvinds.org.



MASWM now hosts a new webpage to provide an interactive outline of workshop services for businesses. Located on the MASWM website, the page includes a searchable listing of workshops and their services, along with an interactive map of member 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, please contact President Aaron Martin, phone: (816) 796-7070 or email: amartin@jobonekc.org; Legislative Co-Chairs Kit Brewer – (660) 263-6202 or kbrewer@rcsiemployment.org; or Brian Hogan – (816) 483-1620 or bhogan@bvinds.org

MASWM: Working Hard for Workshops, Managers and Missourians

(continued from Page 1)

example, focusing on help for managers as they face the process of leading a workshop for the first time. Similar work is under way to better communicate with workshop managers who are unable to attend MASWM meetings. Major efforts are also under way to formalize and increase manager and staff training, a best practices document and other efforts.

All of this does take effort. Although they are donating their time, MASWM's Board members have steadily increased their commitment, expanding formal board meetings, holding monthly conference calls and often multiple daily emails and individual calls. Two directors, Legislative Co-Chairs Brian Hogan and Kit Brewer, add an additional layer of contacts and trips to Jefferson City and Washington, D.C. Ten directors serve as area directors who offer more individual

work with managers in their districts, including new area meetings being held monthly in each region.

Building on the Past

"This isn't entirely new," Martin noted. "Randy Hylton (past legislative chair) really set the tone for a lot of our legislative work. Bruce Young (past president) carried a very heavy load. We have increased the workload, but a lot of this has been done for decades. We're just increasing the pace."

The need for these efforts is likely to continue expanding. "There are many new issues facing workshops today and still more coming down the road," Martin concluded. "We need to stay aware of these things and deal with them. Above all, we need to keep our message out there. If we don't communicate the workshop story, others will. The workshop voice needs to be heard."

Big Success for DC Visit

Missouri Day on the Hill was a great success last summer in Washington, D.C.

More than two dozen members of the Missouri delegation traveled to the nation's capital for meetings with the state's federal representatives and their staff members.

The big day was Wednesday, July 25, with a walk to the nation's capital, where a room was reserved for meetings with congressmen and women, senators and staff members to discuss issues critical to workshops and, especially, the more than 6,000 employees with disabilities and their families.

Later, retired Congressman Jon Porter provided a VIP tour of the Capitol, including a walk onto the Speakers Balcony and other areas normally off limits.



Commensurate Wage Helps Expand Opportunities

(continued from Page 1)

The Basics

A commensurate wage rate is a special minimum wage paid to a worker with a disability. The wage is based on the worker's individual productivity, no matter how limited, in proportion to the wage and productivity of nondisabled workers performing similar work.

Some critics of workshops argue that this exploits workers with disabilities. Extremists even push for elimination of workshops and their replacement by community employment through private companies. The assumption seems to be that private companies would tackle the intense training and support provided by workshops, essentially at no cost.

To workshop veterans and many parents, this well-meaning but misguided strategy is guaranteed to fail, leaving hundreds or even thousands of workers crowded into state-funded day programs or sitting at home. This would especially hurt workers with the most severe disabilities who need training and support far beyond that available through private companies focused on the bottom line.

"You have to consider both ends of the disability spectrum," Brewer said. "For some individuals, to come into a safe, comfortable environment and gain a bit of confidence before they move out into the wider world is all they need. On the other end, where you have significantly challenged individuals, it may be many years before they even have a desire to move into a competitive realm."

Ultimately, expecting private businesses to deal with thousands of individuals with intellectual disabilities is not realistic. "Most businesses are not prepared to deal with the necessities of helping that individual," Brewer added. "Every business is not prepared to deal with the individual struggles that some of our workers with disabilities have."

Other Issues

Among the original reasons for creating workshops was the need for training and employment for people with disabilities. Before that, options were limited or nonexistent. The label "sheltered workshop" grew from the need for a more nurturing environment than found in a for-profit business, even with some case management support. Even with supports, private "corporate culture" rarely allows for the long-term and ongoing assistance needed by a person with moderate or severe developmental disabilities.

A related challenge involves disabilities themselves, including developmental disabilities compared to physical disabilities. Despite some improvement, television and other media often focus on higher-functioning individuals who can hold competitive work positions with moderate support. A typical example involved a news "investigation" that used an individual with a visual impairment and then conflated her workshop experience with workshop employment of people with developmental disabilities.

"Too many people have a concept in mind of what a disability is," Brewer said.

"Your concept is different than mine, but neither is 100 percent correct. When we're dealing with developmental disabilities, we have to understand that reality."

Hidden Benefits

Managers and other workshop staff see positive aspects of workshops every day, but those outside frequently miss these activities: people with disabilities relating to their peers, socializing and just having fun.

None of this means workshop employees should not have opportunities to work elsewhere if they want to and can. They should also be paid as much as possible. But few know how to do this better than Missouri workshops, which also led the creation of successful community employment efforts.

Although many workshops struggle each year to balance business contracts and limited county and state funding, they still provide daily employment for more than 6,000 Missourians. Eliminating that option would be a disaster and doing so based on a misunderstanding of commensurate wages would be tragic, especially for those individuals and their families. It would also be wrong.

"The choice is not between commensurate wage and normal wage," Brewer concluded. "It's between commensurate wage and no employment at all. Without that option, hundreds, even thousands, who have found success because of this program would be lost."

SWIM Helps Workshops Save Money, Improve Safety

Shellie Knight has some big shoes to fill. Fortunately, she's ready and is getting guidance from the very person she's been selected to follow.

Shellie is working with veteran Leslie Miles to lead the Sheltered Workshop Insurance of Missouri (SWIM) program. Miles has been with the 27-year-old network since 1998 and plans to retire late this year. Their work affects a majority of Missouri's workshops.

United They Stand

SWIM is a group of eligible workshops that pool their funds for workers compensation coverage.

Administered by Arthur J. Gallagher and Company, SWIM is a 501c3, non-profit organization formed to offer an alternative to the expensive and risky environment of workers compensation.

An independent board of directors comprised of workshop managers, including Chair Ginger Williams of Farmington, governs SWIM. Serving for three-year terms, board members oversee SWIM policies and ensure a workshop orientation.

A key to SWIM is its financial foundation. Rather than purchasing insurance in a traditional market, the nearly 70 shops contribute to a pool at a rate based on actual loss costs. At the end of each year, unused funds not needed for projected expenses are returned to member shops. While this doesn't produce dividends every year, it does bring competitive costs for services that are highly

tailored to the unique needs of workshops serving people with disabilities.

"SWIM is not here to make money," Miles explained. "It's a pool to provide coverage that's designed especially for workshops. And on good years when they collect more than needed, they can return it to members of the pool."

The workshop-centered approach is

"It's really hard for workshops to purchase regular work comp. SWIM is a risk-sharing agreement created as an alternative way to have cost-effective insurance. It's owned by the members, and its entire cost purpose is to serve the members."

– Shellie Knight,

Sheltered Workshop Insurance of Missouri

important. "It's really hard for workshops to purchase regular work comp," Knight added. "SWIM is a risk-sharing agreement created as an alternative way to have cost-effective insurance. It's owned by the members, and its entire purpose is to serve the members."

Other Benefits

Beyond cost, one of the most widespread problems with for-profit solutions is unfamiliarity with workshops and the people they serve. SWIM claim handlers and staff understand workshops, certified employees and more.

"A dedicated adjuster handles all of our

SWIM claims," Miles said. "She has an understanding of guardianships and benefits that may be affected by a settlement or the medical challenges that some of these workers with disabilities face. In the standard industry, you'll get the next available adjuster who may know nothing of people with disabilities."

Equally important, SWIM has three dedicated loss-control consultants who visit participating shops and look for possible issues of concern that could impact safety – before injury and loss are encountered.

"They can look at where we're paying claims, then go out and help avoid problems in advance," Knight said. One example involved a number of people who were tripping over chairs. The loss-control team spent time teaching why it's important to push in a chair after getting up.

"That's a simple example,"

Knight said. "There definitely are more complex things. The key is that we look at trends and help reduce losses. It helps keep losses to a manageable level and reduce costs for workshops." Another benefit involves member training, which occurs throughout the year at various locations.

On-Call Help

Even when accidents happen, SWIM has other advantages. "If you're a SWIM member and you have a claim, you're connected with a nurse who can give advice on how to treat that injury," Miles noted. "It takes the workshop out of making medical decisions. Most of them wear enough hats as it is."

Both Knight and Miles are more than just mildly interested in the program. "I've always had a very special passion for this program," Miles noted. "I have a son who's developmentally disabled, and I believe in the opportunity offered by workshops."

Shellie has been with the program since early 2018 and agrees. "It's exciting to see something that works well and to have a role in carrying it forward," she said. "Plus, workshops are really extraordinary. It's gratifying to help them navigate something that can be challenging."

Jeff City Meeting Set For Jan. 29-30

MASWM will hold its annual Legislative Meeting Jan. 29 and 30 in Jefferson City.

The two-day conference will feature a busy series of meetings on Tuesday, then the Legislative Breakfast Wednesday morning.

The agenda Tuesday will start with the MASWM Board meeting from 8 to 11:45 a.m. The membership meeting from 1 to 5 p.m. will include discussion of online training. Workshops providing

maintenance services to highway rest stops and other facilities will want to note a special meeting from 6:30 to 8 p.m. with DBI Services and the Missouri Department of Transportation. All Tuesday events will be in the hotel.

On Wednesday, Jan. 30, the Legislative Breakfast will offer an opportunity for workshop managers to meet with legislators in the House Hearing Room 2 in the Capitol Building, from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m.

Big Thanks for State Representatives at Special CASCO Event

CASCO in Harrisonville hosted a great turnout for a special MASWM Recogni-

tion of State Representatives Rory Rowland and Jack Bondon.



CASCO Executive Director Robert Greenwood (standing) opened a special event to honor State Representatives Rory Rowland and Jack Bondon (at right). MASWM Legislative Co-Chairs Kit Brewer and Brian Hogan (left) were on hand.

The two representatives were honored for their outstanding support of Missouri workshops, including last year's sponsorship and co-sponsorship of Missouri House Concurrent Resolution 28. The resolution reaffirmed Missouri support for services of the sheltered workshops of our state.

The event was also a

celebration of the passage of Senate Bill 743.

Rep. Rowland, a Democrat, represents parts of Jackson County and Kansas City (District 29) in the Missouri House of Representatives.

Rep. Bondon, a Republican from Belton, represents parts of Cass, Jackson and Bates Counties.

Their support of Missouri workshops and the more than 6,000 people with disabilities they serve was a major plus statewide.

The CASCO event also included tours of the workshops and several big "thank you" from Missouri workshop representatives and workers.

Two-Shop Merger Means More Opportunity, Not Less

Jeff Jones may have a model for some workshops facing financial challenge.

Manager of Innovative Industries in Carthage for nine years, Jones has also become manager of Joplin Workshops, Inc. in a unique merger designed to better utilize limited funding for both workshops.

"It was bred out of necessity to shave some costs for both organizations," he explained. "But I see it as an opportunity for both shops as well."

Former Joplin Director Susan Adams first suggested the idea. She had joined that shop three years ago when the organization faced serious challenges, a position similar to that faced earlier by Jones in Carthage.

"She had turned things around," he noted. "We were in a similar spot when I took over in Carthage. We'd suffered fi-

nancially for a few years, and we had to hustle a little bit to become profitable. That's also what we're trying to do now."

The merger began last summer and was finalized Oct. 1. Jones serves as executive director for both shops, as a Carthage employee and as a contractor for Joplin. Tami Barton is now operations manager in Carthage, and Traci Tune fulfills that role in Joplin. Each shop retained their individual board of directors and other functions. Some areas may be consolidated in the future, but the biggest changes may involve increased opportunity and services for what is now a more connected organization.

"There are some synergies between each workshop," Jones explained, noting Joplin's recycling and the Carthage secure document service. "This gives us some ac-

cess to customers we didn't have before and creates opportunities for us to go after larger jobs because we have two locations and a combined workforce."

There are challenges as well, starting with Jones driving between two shops located about 20 miles apart. "It does keep me hopping along pretty hard," he laughed. "But it's good because it's created a lot of opportunity for both shops."

The effort is also proceeding carefully. "We're taking our time and figuring things out," he stressed. "Right now, we want to maintain our identities. That may change at some point, but both organizations are community oriented. We want to keep that identity. The key is to do what's best for our employees and make sure we have work for everyone."

Workshop Board Member Off to Capital

A longtime board member of Missouri Community Improvement Industries (MCII) in Farmington is starting a new career as a Missouri state representative.

Dale Wright, who was recently elected to serve as state representative for the 116th District, is going to Jefferson City with strong support from his friends at MCII.

"I just can't say enough for this man," Workshop Manager Ginger Williams said.

Rep. Mike Henderson (117th District)

joined Dale at MCII's recent Christmas party.

MCII has been fortunate to have Dale on their board for nearly 19 years. "His guidance and support have been invaluable," Williams said. "Selfishly, I'm sad to lose him from the MCII Board, but I know he will fight long and hard for those with mental illness and developmental disabilities. We will all be blessed to have him working on our behalf in Jefferson City!"



Missouri Representatives Dale Wright (left) and Mike Henderson visited MCII in Farmington. Rep. Wright is familiar with workshops, having served as MCII board member.

Workshops Earn Headlines, Broadcast News

A number of MASWM workshops have recently received positive attention for their programs and services. Here are a few highlights:

- Jeffco Subcontracting, Inc. was recently featured in an outstanding article in the City of Arnold's online presentation "showcasing owners of Arnold's successful small businesses that have stood the test of time." The complete article is here: www.arnoldmo.org/executive-excel-

lence.

- Lafayette Industries was the subject of an in-depth video by Channel 5 in St. Louis. The feature told how the workshop in Manchester "helps change lives." The full video is here:

www.on.ksdk.com/2LzMLmY.

- Job One in Greater Kansas City received over \$250,000 from regional foundations to benefit more than 300 adults with disabilities.

- Fifty-five employees from Laclede Industries in Lebanon experienced Christmas in October when they went on a shopping trip at Wal-Mart as part of First State Community Bank's "Gives Back Month." The Laclede County Record covered the event at this link: www.laclede-record.com/local/fscb-employees-give-back-shopping-spree.

Open House Awards Honors, Welcomes Visitors in Houston

Opportunity Sheltered Industries, Inc. in Houston honored some incredible commitment during an open house in November.

Carla Crum, Manager Sharon Tyger

and Kenneth Morrison were honored for 31 years of service.

The City of Houston Fire Department also came to the open house. Employees were allowed to climb into the truck and

see up close what it looks like.

The City of Houston Police Department joined in as well and brought McGruff the Crime Dog to visit. He was joined by workshop employee, Dusti.

State Representative Robert Ross spent the morning with the workshop employees and staff. He also visited with DESE

Workshop Director Dan Gier and McGruff the Crime Dog from the Houston Police Department.

The event was planned by Sheena Postlewait as a senior project for college.



Opportunity Sheltered Workshop Manager Sharon Tyger hosted Missouri Representative Robert Ross and McGruff the Crime Dog from the Houston Police during a recent open house.



Opportunity employees recently honored for 31 years of service were (from left) Carla Crum, Manager Sharon Tyger and Kenneth Morrison.

Big Success Marked at Kingdom Projects in Fulton

Connie Hale recently expressed her thanks to other managers and MASWM for their help in her 27-month effort providing critical leadership for Kingdom Projects Inc. in Fulton. Several managers said Hale is the one who deserves credit for coming out of retirement to help lead a workshop to success.

In late 2016, Kingdom Projects was facing bankruptcy, a significant OSHA fine and other problems. Today, those problems are in the past, and the workshop even has a new, \$103,500 roof.

"I have appreciated each and every moment and action of support given to help me rejuvenate this Callaway County shel-

tered workshop," Hale said. "I am exhausted, but I am also overwhelmingly grateful that I had the opportunity to participate in moving KPI into a forward mode." She likened the effort to parenting: "the hardest job you will ever love."

Jodi Neal is the new manager. A life-long resident of Fulton, she owns a local accounting firm. She will be training two days per week beginning in January while she continues to honor her longtime customers with one more year of preparing their tax returns. On or near April, she will begin full time. Hale will continue part-time until then.

Previously manager of the Handi-Shop

in Mexico beginning in 1989, Hale strongly recommended MASWM for new managers. "I learned more from each of you than I could have acquired in years and years of trial and error," she said.

Hale also described the challenges of workshop management, especially for small and rural shops. "It certainly takes far more than 40 hours per week to run a rural shop because you wear so many hats," she said. "You can't have a complete thought without being interrupted."

Hale plans to continue her involvement after Jodi takes over, especially in areas like grant writing.

50th Anniversary Open House

Many members of the community attended the 50th Anniversary Open House for the Monroe City Sheltered Workshop.

Mayor Neal Minor spoke about his memories of the workshop and how it has always been a part of the community. Others shared their memories as well.



Associate Judge Michael Wilson and his wife, Kathleen, visited the Monroe City Sheltered Workshop's 50th Anniversary Open House. They were interested in the variety of jobs that the employees do daily.

Employees received a commemorative 50th anniversary T-shirt and a recognition certificate for their years of service. As visitors toured the workshop, employees enjoyed visiting with everyone and explained the jobs they do at the workshop. The board of directors served refreshments.



Missouri Senator Cindy O'Laughlin recently visited the Monroe City Sheltered Workshop. Operations Manager Jeff Blackford explained some of the jobs performed by employees during her tour.

60 Years Marked at Project Inc.

Project, Inc. in St. Louis celebrated its 60th anniversary in early 2018.

Project Inc. was founded by a group of parents and guardians from the St. Louis ARC who sought better lives for their adult children with intellectual disabilities. They struggled for a future that included their children working in industry and becoming more fully integrated into society.

CEO Matthew Burrige said the parents' experience was an outstanding combination of their vision and their determination to make a difference. The path they began led to a federal grant to explore this potential, learning that with

the right vocational training and work environment, some of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities could work in industry. But even after training, no business would hire them, so they launched Project, Inc., hiring their children to perform hand and piece work on a contract basis to support the local business community.

Today Project Inc. is blessed with stewardship of this legacy and is grateful to work with customers, suppliers, teammates, a tremendous board of directors, community business leaders, DESE, funding agencies, peer organizations, donors and social investors.

New Work Project Succeeds in Rockport

Northwest Missouri Industries, Inc. in Rockport has taken on a new project to help increase their greenhouse sales.

The shop purchased several fresh-cut Christmas trees and wreaths in order to offer them to local businesses. The service included decoration of a tree, delivery, removal and disposal. Although this was a new venture, Manager Glennette Chris-

tian is pleased to report that businesses liked the idea, and it was a success.

Northwest Missouri Industries' car detailing has also thrived. It has more than doubled from what they have done in past years.

The workshop is looking forward to even bigger and better things for their employees with disabilities.

Workshop Updates

United Enterprises in Perryville has a new interim director, Stephanie Boxdorfer. Her email is stephanieboxdorfer@unitedenterprises.org.

Randolph County Sheltered Industries in Moberly has rebranded. The shop is now Mid-Mo Productivity & Packaging Specialists (MPPS). Manager Kit Brewer has a new email in connection with the change: kbrewer@rcsiemployment.org.

Lauren Hall is the new CEO at Southeast Enterprises in Kansas City. Her email is

Lauren@southeastenterprises.org.

Executive Director Bob Florence says Lafayette County Enterprises in Higginsville has several new contracts, including maintenance services for the Odessa truck parking center on I-70 near Odessa, WILS office cleaning in Higginsville and new partners for recycling.

Martin Whipple is the new general manager at Tantone Industries in Branson. His email is

mwhipple@tantone.org.

Laura Giebler is now the executive director of Phelps County Industrial Solutions in Rolla. Laura's email is LGiebler@pci-solutions.net.

Devin Miller is now the manager of Stoddard County Sheltered Workshops in Dexter. His email is devin_csw@yahoo.com.

Sheila Brown is the new manager of Oregon County Sheltered Workshop in Alton, replacing Dennis Foulks who retired early in 2018. Her email is sd-abocsw@centurytel.net.

Heather Pugh is the new director of Ideal Industries in Richmond. Her email is heatherpugh07@gmail.com.



Lafayette County Enterprises in Higginsville has several new contracts, including a recycling partnership with the Lexington R-V School District.

Area Meetings Add Avenues for Increased Communications

A series of MASWM area meetings reaching out to individual managers is off to a great start following the Area VI Regional Meeting at Boonville in November.

The meetings are being held around the state to gauge interest and hear opinions and questions on how MASWM can best help managers and their shops. The smaller meetings allow time and attention to each manager and his or her questions. Managers from outside a district are welcome, but all are asked to RSVP so that adequate preparations can be made.

"The regional meeting proved to be beneficial to all who attended," MASWM Secretary Natalie Couch reported. "We all felt that we should continue to meet on a regular basis."

The District VI meeting was hosted by C.J. Welch at Boonslick Industries. Topics included:

- Work experience programs and the importance of keeping relationships with high schools so that the graduating students know that workshops are an option for them.
- President Aaron Martin discussed the MASWM structure: four elected officers, typically pulled from board members. Each of the 10 state districts has a representative on the board who is appointed by the steering committee.
- MESA (Missouri Employment Supports and Advocacy, Inc.) was formed due to the need to move quickly on legislative issues. MASWM sets the legislative strategy, and MESA has the authority to do the work.
- The minimum wage increase.
- Board Development: It would be beneficial to provide managers with tools on how to develop their boards.



Martin Whipple (left) with Tim Connell, who sponsored a recent luncheon and service ceremony at Tantone Industries in Branson.

• Best Practices: They would be helpful for new managers and could help train boards and the executive director, as well as set a standard for all shops.

Upcoming sessions have been tentatively set for:

Area 10: Susan Wallis, Cape Girardeau, February 2019.

Area 8: Linda Kimrey, Lebanon, March 2019.

Area 9: Russ Kuttenkuler, Arnold, May 2019.

Area 1: Susan Trump, Bethany, June 2019.

Area 2: Brian Hogan, Kansas City, July 2019.

Area 3: Pam Martin, Butler,

August 2019.

Area 5: Kit Brewer, Moberly, September 2019.

Area 7: Tammi Bock, Jefferson City, November 2019.



VSI Customer Says Thanks with Pizza Party

It was "Pizza Friday" Dec. 14 at the North Kansas City location for Vocational Services, Inc.

Staff members from the Tnemec Company paid a visit and brought over a dozen boxes of much-appreciated pizza for a lunch celebration. Tnemec, a long-time customer of VSI, sponsored the event as a show of appreciation for the good work done by VSI's employees with disabilities.

"We just appreciate their good work,"



explained Tnemec assistant Tammy Hudlemeyer. "They take a lot of care in everything they do for us." Joining her were other Tnemec employees, Tyson Strickland and Emily Zagorach.

Vocational Services applauded the visit. "Tnemec has been a great business partner of VSI for a long time," noted Executive Director Randy Hylton. "They are just a great team with outstanding products, and this is just the kind of extra effort they are known for."

Based in North Kansas City, Tnemec manufactures high-performance protective coatings for a wide range of industrial and other uses. VSI has provided the firm labeling and other services for over 10 years.

New Branson Manager

New General Manager Martin Whipple has had an exciting first few weeks at Tantone Industries in Branson.

He's gotten to know the employees and found that, among other things, they definitely enjoy eating. "The first week on the job I had three Thanksgiving meals," he noted.

He's also amazed at the community support Tantone receives and looks forward to meeting everyone from the other workshops.