

# Take Your Legislator to Work **2013**



**IDAHO EMPLOYMENT FIRST CONSORTIUM**

Disability Employment Awareness Month October 2013

# Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and during that month the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Idaho Employment First Consortium support a variety of activities to raise the public's awareness that every adult with a disability can participate in gainful employment and have a meaningful job in the community. "Take Your Legislator to Work" is one of those activities and its success depends on collaboration with Community Rehabilitation Providers and local employers around Idaho.

People with disabilities who participate in the campaign invite their legislators to visit them at work sometime in October. During the visit, the person with a disability has an opportunity to show their skills, introduce their co-workers, and talk about why their job is important to them.

In 2013, Idaho's first year of the campaign, 27 legislators visited people with disabilities who have jobs in their community. On the following pages are highlights from some of those visits.

## **Participating Legislators:**

Rep. Ken Andrus

Rep. Vito Barbieri

Rep. Maxine Bell

Sen. Bart Davis

Rep. Mathew Erpelding

Rep. Douglas Hancey

Rep. Frank Henderson

Sen. Brent Hill

Rep. Brandon Hixon

Rep. Wendy Horman

Rep. Hy Kloc

Sen. Roy Lacey

Sen. Todd Lakey

Rep. Lynn Luker

Rep. Luke Malek

Rep. Carolyn Meline

Rep. Ed Morse

Sen. Bob Nonini

Rep. Kelley Packer

Rep. Mark Patterson

Rep. Donna Pence

Rep. Christy Perry

Rep. Elaine Smith

Sen. Michelle Stennett

Rep. Janet Trujillo

Rep. Julie VanOrden

Rep. Fred Wood

# It's about people and jobs.

## **Donnie Jones – Hometown Kitchen**



Donnie has worked at Hometown Kitchen in Idaho Falls for over 15 years and is responsible for opening the restaurant, cooking breakfast, getting food ready for the lunch hour, and preparing for catering events. Senator Bart Davis visited him there and learned from owners Elmer and Sandy Cherry that Donnie is someone they count on to help their business succeed.

## **Sean Mason – Coeur d'Alene High School**



Tesh crew member Sean Mason and janitorial supervisor Al Clayton welcomed Representative Luke Malek to visit them at Coeur d'Alene High School where the crew keeps things in ship shape.

## **Justin Cooper – Walmart**

Pictured on the first page: Representative Maxine Bell spent some time with Justin Cooper at Walmart in the Magic Valley.

# Taking pride and earning wages.

## **Austin Biggs - CAL Ranch Stores**

Austin Briggs showed Representative Fred Wood his job duties at CAL Ranch Stores in Burley. "This is a good job, and I really like it," said Austin. He has a visual impairment and was referred to employment services provided by Community Partnerships of Idaho by the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Store manager, Wayne Hubbard, said "he is doing a great job and we work with his abilities."

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*"There is something for everyone out there. You just have to give them that opportunity." ~ Wayne Hubbard, CAL Ranch Stores*

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"Any program that we have that puts people to work and gives them self-worth and adds value to their life, even if they are only partially supporting themselves, is worthwhile to keep," said Rep. Fred Wood.



Photo: Ashley Smith, Magic Valley Times News

## Kevin Norman – Esterline

Representatives Ed Morse and Vito Barbieri visit Kevin Norman (right) at his job at Esterline Advanced Input Systems in Coeur d’Alene.



## Jason Bunn – Papa Kelsey’s



Representative Donna Pence takes a turn as Jason Bunn describes how he does his job at Papa Kelsey’s in Wendell.

## Trent – Sam’s Club

Representative Janet Trujillo spent time with Trent who has worked at Sam’s Club in Idaho Falls for 19 years. Sean, Trent’s boss, recently said “Trent has a work ethic like few others have... He knows his job well, stays focused and stays productive.”

Rep. Trujillo said “it’s great to see people with disabilities like Trent, have the opportunity to work and use their skills.”



# A contribution to make to the community.



Photo: Gabe Green  
Coeur d'Alene Press Tribune

Tim Wilhite works at Ground Force Worldwide in Post Falls where they manufacture heavy mining equipment. He takes pride in his work and is grateful for his job. Tim toured the plant with Senator Bob Nonini and Representative Frank Henderson along with Ground Force managers and representatives of Tesh Inc. and Ability Works who have provided placement services and benefits counseling.

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*“He’s been very, very committed to his work, so he can provide a better life for his family.” ~ Colleen Krajack, Ground Force*

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Russ Doumas, Tesh CEO, said, "We want people to see how this works from the employer's perspective, and from Tim's perspective, that people with disabilities have a contribution to make in the community." Rep. Nonini commented, "Tim's self-sufficient and he's got a good job, and we want to do anything we can to encourage that."

# Idaho Employment First Initiative

The **Idaho Employment First Consortium** was established in April 2012 and is supported by the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities for the purpose of improving how employment services and systems work in Idaho so that people with developmental disabilities are able to reach their career goals. It includes representatives from state agencies, advocacy organizations, service providers, parents, and self-advocates.

Through various strategies we hope to increase the number of individuals with developmental disabilities working in integrated community employment; increase the number of employers who hire people with disabilities; and increase the employment rate of young adults with disabilities completing high school.

## Contact Us

The Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities is located in the Joe R. Willams Bldg. just north of the Idaho statehouse.

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