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# ICED NEWS

State Interagency Committee On Employees With Disabilities

Volume 8, Number 1

February 2005

## Three New Members Appointed to ICED

In FY05 Governor Rod Blagojevich appointed three new employee members to ICED: Deborah Johnson-Small; Michael Knepler, and Elaine Lazell. **Ms. Johnson-Small**, who has been employed by the Department of Human Services (and one of its predecessor agencies the Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities) since 1980, has served in a leadership capacity in a variety of disability-related organizations. She served as the president of the Springfield Center for Independent Living in 1991, and the Chairperson of the Springfield Disabilities Commission from 1993 to 1998.

**Michael Knepler**, the second new member, worked for the Department of Agriculture from 2001 to the present, and before that served as the Department of Central Management Services' webmaster from 1995 to 2001. Mr. Knepler, too, has served as a member of various disability organizations, including SPARC, the Springfield Center for Independent Living, and the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities.

**Elaine Lazell**, the third new member, worked for the Department of Human Services (and the predecessor agency the Department of Rehabilitation Services) from 1983 to 1997, and the Department of Public Aid from 1997 to the present. She has a long history of management and strategic planning experience and received various awards for actively supporting disability

programs, including the Social Security Administration's *Award for Excellence*.

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**Editor's Note:** The following four articles concern recruitment sources for people with disabilities. These programs are a great way for state agencies to tap into a pool of talent.

### **Division of Rehabilitation Services Recruitment Services for State Agencies**

As Illinois' lead agency serving individuals with disabilities, the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), is committed to assist people with the most significant disabilities in preparing for, obtaining, and maintaining the kind of jobs they could not have received without our help. Our goal is to help these customers go to work in jobs that pay a living wage, provide health insurance benefits, and enable them to leave their Social Security benefits behind. Employment within state government provides the types of employment opportunities our customers need to become self-sufficient.

DRS offers an excellent resource designed to bring together state agencies and qualified individuals with disabilities with the skills and

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qualities to match the agencies' needs. State agencies can most effectively recruit employees with disabilities by discussing possible future vacancies with the DRS Employment Unit. Tom Minta, Manager of the DRS Employment Unit, will

meet with agency staff to discuss the agency's needs and share this information with his Employment Resource Specialists. These staff will work directly with DRS local office staff throughout the state to identify different candidates through the Severely Disabled Option. For more information on how the DRS Employment Unit can help state agencies find qualified employees, please contact Tom Minta at 312/814-4036 (Voice/TTY).

### **Anixter Center's Professional Placement Program**

Anixter Center's Professional Placement Program provides job staffing services specifically designed to facilitate employing people with disabilities. The program began in 1998 and is funded by a grant from Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Rehabilitation Services. Liz Albanese-Kaige, program manager, has been active with ICED since 1999 by recruiting, screening and matching interns to many departments in the State of Illinois. These internships are valuable, not only providing work experience, but often leading to consideration for a full-time position with the State of Illinois.

Through the years permanent hires resulting from successful internship with the Department of Transportation, the Department of Central Management Services, the Comptroller's Office, the Department of Human Services, and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission. Connecting college students with disabilities to internships through ICED is but one service performed by Anixter Center's Professional Placement Program.

The program is unique in that it serves DHS/DRS clients statewide and provides support services not usually expected. Once matched, candidates from Chicago participating in internships in Springfield were helped with locating housing, attendants, adaptive technology, and transportation. These same services are available to individuals seeking permanent employment. Any state agency seeking to locate prescreened, qualified candidates for employment can contact Anixter Center for assistance.

The following is a description of the program:

- Professional pool of diverse candidates for positions
  - \*Graduating seniors, all majors
  - \*Experienced professionals in technology and other advanced fields
  - \*Candidates for internships
- Statewide campus recruitment
- Proven successful placement
- Well-structured, efficient team approach
- Assistance with transportation and relocation, as needed
- Highly dedicated placement staff
- Cooperative, on-site consultation and support
- Mentor-building strategies for candidates and coworkers
- Resources for assistive technology in the workplace
- Placement follow-up provided for one year

To find out more, contact:

Anixter Center Professional Placement Program  
2001 North Clybourn Avenue, Suite 302  
Chicago, IL 60614  
773-248-6500 (Ext. 280)  
773-248-7345 (Fax)  
773-248-6941 (TTY).

Also visit [www.anixter.org](http://www.anixter.org). Click on Employment

### **Department of Central Management Services Severely Disabled Option Program**

There are many jobs within State of Illinois government that persons with disabilities can perform thanks to the Severely Disabled Option Program implemented in December 1974, which allows individuals to be tested, with or without accommodations, and receive assistance with matching their abilities to State positions. The Department of Central

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Management Services (CMS) administers the program with the participation of the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) within the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Applicants who are current clients of DHS-DRS counselors, and have been determined to have a disability that limits two of their functional capacities, are eligible to participate in the program. Applicants must test for positions for which they wish to be considered, but need only

receive a passing grade (A, B or C). DHS-DRS counselors determine if the applicant is able to perform the essential duties of the job and is socially competent to be in a work environment.

Once Severely Disabled Option applicants achieve eligible grades, they may submit bids for open positions within the group of titles where they have established eligibility. A hiring agency may hire an applicant from the Severely Disabled Option eligibility list after other applicant pools have been given consideration. For more information on the CMS Disabled Workers Program, contact Wendy Butler or Brandon Singer, 217/557-6885 (voice) or 217/524-1383 (TTY), 217/785-3979 (TTY). To become a client of DHS-DRS, contact the counselor of the day at 217/782-4830. Employment information is available on the CMS web site at [www.state.il.us/cms](http://www.state.il.us/cms).

**Springfield Center for Independent Living's  
Employment Resource Program**  
By Ceceilia Haasis

The Springfield Center for Independent Living's (SCIL) Employment Resource Program serves to provide employment assistance and job referrals to people with disabilities throughout its service area. Services provided through the Employment Resource Program include the following:

- Employment Assistance
- Assistance with applications, scholarships and certificate programs/higher education
- Reasonable accommodation training
- Research
- Individual support
- Used Equipment list
- Support groups
- Assistance with finding low cost dental service
- Assistance with finding low/no cost pharmaceuticals.

State agencies that would like to receive referrals of well-qualified candidates with disabilities from the Employment Resource Program can contact Ceceilia Haasis at (217) 523-2587. A match will be made between the job demands and the applicant's abilities. People with disabilities who are looking for employment can reach me at the same number. The Employment Resource

Program stands ready to help both employers and applicants with disabilities.

**ICED Awards Ceremony**

ICED celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a signature event held in Springfield on September 15, 2004. The event consisted of a conference, awards ceremony, and entertainment from the School for the Deaf and the School for the Visually Impaired. Information about the conference, including some of the presentations, and the awards ceremony are posted on the ICED website (address below). The individuals and organizations honored by the Committee are as follows:

**Legislator of the Year** –Senator Vince Demuzio (posthumously), accepted by Senator Deanna Demuzio

**Employee of the Year** (co-recipients) – Alvin Roberts, Department of Human Services, Dennis A. Herbert, Department of Transportation  
\*Employee Certificate Winners – Linda Manes, Department of Transportation, Robert Schinall, Department of Transportation, Sal Perry, Criminal Justice Authority, Mshenda Diming, Department of Human Services

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**State Agency of the Year** – Dept. of Corrections

\*Agency Certificate Winners – Criminal Justice Authority, Department of Transportation, State Toll Highway Authority

**Nonprofit Agency of the Year (co-recipients)**– Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living  
\*Nonprofit Certificate Winners – Reality House, Ben Gordon Center, Progress Center for Independent Living, Asian Human Services

**Media of the Year** – Print – The Beacon-News  
Broadcast – Jerry Lambert, WICS

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**Gwen Diehl**, Department of Veterans Affairs  
**Katherine Gardner**, Department of Human Services  
**Patty Greene**, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission  
**Margaret Harkness**, Council on Developmental Disabilities  
**Jack Kanady**, Division Of Specialized Care for Children  
**John Riech**, Department of Human Services  
**Karen Wordelmann**, IETC

**ICED**

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Note: This newsletter is available in alternative formats upon request.

**Interagency Committee on  
Employees with Disabilities**

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