

# ICBVI Regular Board Meeting - Minutes

August 15, 2017

Boise, Idaho

ICBVI Commissioners Present: Britt Raubenheimer; Mike Gibson; Sue Payne, Sue Walker and Al Schneider.

ICBVI Staff Present: Beth Cunningham; Raelene Thomas; Greg Metsker; Trina Ayres; Nancy Wise; Mike Walsh; Corey Bresina; Larry Henrie; Melanie Hertling; Beth Pederson, and Jeff Weeks.

Guests Present: Jan Gawith; Dana Ard; Don Nepple, Ramona Walhof; Daniel Solis, Deeann Solis; ATC Students: Drew, Erin, Lisa, and Marcie.

The ICBVI Mission Statement was read by Raelene Thomas.

**MOTION:** Approve the ICBVI Agenda for August 15, 2017, made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, all were in favor.

**MOTION:** Approve the ICBVI Minutes from the May 23, 2017 Board Meeting, made by Commissioner Schneider, seconded by Commissioner Payne, all were in favor.

## **SWEP (Summer Work Experience Program) Report by Larry Henrie:**

This year the program started on June 5<sup>th</sup> with a week of staff training. The following week the staff helped with the ICBVI College Days program. On June 18<sup>th</sup> the participants arrived and went through a week of training with the Department of Labor, the ATC staff and bus training with the local Valley Ride system. The SWEP participants started working on Monday June 26<sup>th</sup> through August 3<sup>rd</sup> and stayed at the BSU University Suites again this year. The program was extended by a week and we added the new positions of Job Mentors. Adding the mentor positions was a success and positive addition to the SWEP.

This year we had 13 participants in the program. 4 clients decided not to attend before the program started. We had 4 ladies and 9 men. 5 were from Twin Falls area, 4 from Eastern Idaho, 2 from Boise area and 2 from Lewiston. Boise Parks and Rec sponsored the Dutch Oven cooking, Lucky Peak tubing, ceramics class, camping trip, rafting trip and ty dying activities. The Northwest Association of Blind Athletes sponsored the goal ball and beep ball activities. The NFB sponsored a Beep Ball tournament and picnic for the participants. Fun was had by everyone.

The program had 29 staff this year. We had to take down the job notice in early April due to the number of applications, which was 52 applications for the 29 positions. SuChen Gee assisted in implementing the program. She was instrumental with the organization of the hiring process, helping with the reorganizing of the training manual, organizing the shift responsibilities and organizing the staff and participants training week. The majority of the staff were educators of different capacities. The program hired 7 to work as full time job mentors and we used ATC staff and week-end staff to fill the part time mentor positions for the participants that didn't need a full time mentor. We have 20 of those staff that want to return next year.

This year we had 9 employers associated with the program. They are Boise Parks and Recreation, ADA County Housing, St. Vincent's DePaul, Deseret Industries, Botanical Gardens, BSU Bronco Shop, All Valley Animal Clinic and the ADA County Elections office. All Valley Animal Clinic, ADA County Elections, BSU Bronco Shop and

Desert Industries were new employers this summer. The two participants at All Valley Animal were show cased in a news interview by Channel 2 news this year. We still have a long list of employers that are still willing to work with the SWEP.

At the end of the program a survey of the employers, staff and participants was taken. The results were judged on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important.

1. Students judged the program on a 4.0
2. Staff Judged the program on a 4.2
3. Employer's survey indicated that the employers were very pleased with the job mentors and the performance of the participants. They want to be a part of the program again in the future.

There were some great suggestions for improvement next year and all of the feedback was positive.

In summary, the program ran very well this year. The participants had a great experience and did well in their jobs. We had an exceptional staff that did an outstanding job. They kept things running smoothly on each shift and were organized. Larry wants to thank the board for allowing him to be a part of the SWEP again, Beth Cunningham for taking the time to see the participants in action on the job sites, Greg and the ATC team for assisting in the training of the staff and participants and everyone in the commission for their assistance in helping him to put the program together. With the size and complexity of the SWEP, it is nice to have such a great team to work with, thank you.

#### **Administrator's Report by Beth Cunningham:**

Beth noted to the Board that there may be redundancy in her report and the other manager's reports. She may broadly touch on some things that the managers may discuss with more detail in their reports. The agency has been very busy since our last meeting with all of our summer programs, which you will be hearing more about during the individual program reports. We successfully completed our summer program in collaboration with IESDB, our College Days program and SWEP. We were able to get some media coverage of two of our SWEP students who worked at the All Valley Pet Clinic. Larry and the kids made the news.

Tom has worked tirelessly building our new case management system and Mike and Raelene with help from counselors have been providing feedback to try to work out all of the kinks. The system was finally able to launch yesterday and we anticipate meeting the RSA's data collection requirement. The counselors came to Boise for a hands on training on the new system at the end of June. Raelene and Mike worked hard preparing this training.

**Independent Living** - Nancy and Beth have been staying on top of the proposed changes in the Independent Living program. About a year ago, the Independent Living funding, which we know as the Part B funds, were transferred from RSA to HHS (Health and Human Services) and under HHS with ACL (Administration for Community Living). Recently, ACL made recommendations that were included in the President's May budget outline that proposed to eliminate Independent Living Part B program (which for us is annually about \$137,000. Which goes to our IL program) and consolidate it into a new program called Partnership for Innovation, Inclusion and Independence (PIII). This would take the IL Part B funding, the Council on Developmental Disabilities funding and the Traumatic Brain Injury funding and put it all together and reduce it by \$57 million. We oppose this proposal and they have asked for public comments. Beth, along with Nancy, have submitted a letter of opposition to the proposal. In her letter, she cited the distinct missions of the different agencies as well as highlighted how the Part B funding that we receive provides for specific skills training that is unique to working with people who are blind and visually impaired just as the DD Council has specific needs and services required to assist individuals with intellectual disabilities. On Friday, Beth listened in on a conference call that allowed

agencies to communicate its concerns in opposition of this proposal. There were many reasons given for how this will water down services and the impact, as well as be impractical and complicated.

We will keep you posted as we hear more on this issue. Nancy will tell you the specifics about the information that she submitted in opposition.

**Emerging Leaders** - 2 of our managers, Greg and Corey are attending the Emerging Leaders training, which is helping them to grow and think long term about how to improve and positively influence their programs.

**In- Service** - We had an all staff conference call in May that included a presentation by Live Better Idaho. We discussed our upcoming in-service, which will be in September. Beth asked for volunteers to be on a committee with her to plan a 2 hour team building session. She has been meeting with these staff from all different departments to plan this session's activities. Our in-service will be held September 26<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> at the Best Western in Boise. If any board members would be interested in attending either a session that Dr. Hansen is putting on or listening to the success stories that clients present, please let her know, we would be happy for you to attend.

**One-stop** - Mike and Beth have been attending close to a dozen one-stop meetings this year and are working in collaboration with other agencies to plan this in Idaho. Beth knows Mike will elaborate more on this. She has also attended the Workforce Development Council meetings.

**Building** - The office lease with Department of Aging has changed. We were previously charging them \$7805 per year. We have a new 2-year lease with them in which the charge was increased to \$5.00 per square foot, or \$11,019.96 per year, until next July, when it will go up again to \$7.00 per square foot, or \$15,428.00 per year. This increase will help with the costly repairs that seem never ending with the elevator and AC units etc. not to mention the increase in costs of utilities.

We are making headway on the tunnel situation in our building. The Dept. of Public Works gave us \$50,000 to tear out the old floor and put in a new floor, clean out any potential for mold, and seal off the tunnel.

We are working on getting a new locking system for the basement door so that we can keep it locked. We will have a buzzer that will go up to the front desk and then using an intercom someone can announce themselves and why they are here and we will be able to unlock the door from the front desk. This is our only access for people who use wheelchairs to enter the building.

**BEP** – Scott, Corey and Beth had a good meeting last week and will start having regular meetings to address long-term goals that BEP is working on in collaboration with the IBMC. We have a phone meeting set up at the end of this month to go over the management review, which largely focused on BEP practices. In this meeting we will go over some of the changes that are being required of us by the audit, such as monitoring financial accountability in accordance with the rules and regulations and updating the allowable cost performance standards manual.

**Transition Project Coordinator-** Many people have probably already heard that we have hired Alison Stevens and we are very excited to welcome her aboard and know that she will do a fabulous job. Beth was honored that she invited her to the parent presentation part of the Bell program and she got to see and listen to the kids talk about how they enjoyed the Bell program. Beth was so impressed with the song Alison taught the kids about their canes. She could see how the kids were having a blast while learning skills and creating new friendships. The parents seemed equally impressed.

**Newsline** - It was brought to Beth's attention that people were concerned about the future of Newsline, because we mentioned at the last meeting that we were planning to look at the current use of Newsline and do a survey about how it is currently being used. We are simply evaluating the usage and trying to learn what people are using and not using and look at the way we have been paying for this. This year, we have paid \$31,000 for our current plan. We do not have any intention of getting rid of Newsline, but want to make sure that we are paying for the right type of plan given the needs and interests of people using it. Raelene will discuss this later, but Beth just wanted to assure people that it is not our intention to discontinue it.

**Upcoming Training and events that Beth will be attending** - Beth just started shades training again. She will be completing 30 hours prior to the end of the year. She is looking forward to more interaction with students as well as the teachers. She got to lead a discussion class in July, which she enjoyed. The students shared a lot and Beth always learns from listening to their comments and stories.

In September, she will be attending BEP training at the Blast Conference- there will be specific training for staff, which she is looking forward to attending. This is September 11-14.

She has been invited by Billy Henry again to attend his luncheon fundraiser for the NW Association of Blind Athletes. She can take one guest if anyone from the Board or staff want to go with her, please let her know - it will be held on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Beth will attend the ICBVI All staff In-service on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>. On October 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> she will attend the NW Human Services Partnership conference in Boise. Beth will attend the Region X Meeting in Vancouver, Washington on October 12-13<sup>th</sup>. She will also attend the National Rehabilitation Association Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas at the end of October. In November, she will attend the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation in Greenville, SC.

**Discussion on Legislative Services Audit/Conflict of Interest – Adam Warr:**

A recent audit from Legislative Services requested that the ICBVI Board develop a policy regarding conflicts of interest between board members, the administrator, and staff. Per Adam Warr, Deputy Attorney from the Idaho State Attorney General's Office, we have to be mindful that a conflict of interest policy does not contradict current laws. The ICBVI presents opportunities that can cause a conflict, i.e., serving on the ICBVI Board and also being a Business Enterprise Vendor or client can cause a potential conflict. Adam will develop a draft of an internal policy and send to the ICBVI Board for their review. Trina Ayres will send out the Division of Human Resources Rules about nepotism to the Board and Administrator.

**NFB Newsline Proposed Survey Discussion – Raelene Thomas:**

We are currently cleaning up our NFB Newsline list of users by deleting consumers that may be deceased by comparing them to our Known Blind List for ICBVI. Once we get this finished we will conduct a survey either through Newsline or through mail, about the use of the 3 newspapers in Idaho that we sponsor, how much are they being accessed through Newsline, and what kind of device are folks using to access Newsline, phone, computer, I-pad, I-phone, etc. This survey in no way affects anyone's membership to the NFB Newsline Program.

**Consumer Input:**

Dana Ard – thank you so much to the ICBVI for their financial participation with the BELL (Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning) Program. We had a total of 23 participants in 3 programs this summer, which were in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho Falls, and Boise. Dana helped with ICBVI College Days by having a table at one of the workshops for the students. Special thanks to Al Schneider for being our newsletter editor. Dana is currently

working with their Twin Falls Chapter to develop the leadership there, as Chris and Judy Jones are moving out of state.

Don Nepple – recommends a book for a good read which is called the Power of Love, it took him ten hours to read it and it discusses how people went through blind skills training in Iowa.

Jan Gawith reminded the ICBVI Board that the 50<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary of the ICBVI will be in October 2017. Jan wanted to know how people who are older and have gone completely blind get full training service like coming to the ATC. Jan suggests that Counselors and Home Instructors know how to use NFB Newsline so they can train new clients on how to use it. Commissioner Raubenheimer suggested that maybe a telephone support group can be put together on how to use Newsline. Jan indicated she sometimes uses Newsline two hours a day.

Lisa Bright – is a current student at the ATC. She wants to know what the ICBVI plans are for future growth to provide serves to people with diabetes and the older population. How are you going to address advanced educated services with the population here at the ATC?

Kaylyn Hand – Learning to live blind experience in the ATC has been very valuable. It’s been hard but it gives her hope. The Braille training is difficult and feels like it’s out of order.

Sophie Wigton – she has participated in the Summer Work Experience Program twice and this is her first term here at the ATC and she is happy to be here.

Ramona Walhof – She has copies of the Power of Love book if anyone wanted a hard copy. The NFB has had the BELL program for 6 years and it’s been wonderful watching how the kids have changed. Alison Steven has been very resourceful in managing the BELL program. Please come out on October 15<sup>th</sup> to the Mardi Gras on 9<sup>th</sup> Street here in Boise to listen to three bands play in celebration of White Cane Day.

Marcie Chapman – is grateful to be here at the ATC and enjoyed working with Alison at the BELL program.

The ICBVI Board dismissed for lunch at 12:15 p.m.

The ICBVI Board reconvened into regular session at 1:30 p .m.

### **ICBVI Program Reports:**

#### **Fiscal – Trina Ayres:**

Final SFY17 budget:

		Appropriation:	Expended:	Percentage:	
Personnel	-	General Fund	790,600	774,725.88	97.99%
		Federal Fund	2,020,000	2,020,000.00	100%
		Adaptive A & A	20,400	20,399.32	100%
Operating	-	General Fund	65,700	65,700.00	100%
		Randolph-Sheppard	27,600	6,053.71	1.95%
		Rehab Revenue (SSA)	13,718	8,094.92	59.00%
		Miscellaneous	28,100	3,695.50	13.15%

	Adaptive A & A	47,900	44,626.57	93.17%
	Federal Fund	619,800	610,337.16	98.47%
Trustee/Benefit -	General Fund	599,200	573,282.00*	93.18%
	Randolph-Sheppard	100,100	19,141.57	19.12%
	Rehab Revenue	43,582	43,486.82	99.78%
	Miscellaneous	56,300	25,290.06	44.92%
	Federal Fund	541,500	550,914.00*	100%
Total	-	4,964,500		

\*Transfers from Personnel were made to Trustee/Benefit to meet obligations. \$15,874 was transferred in the General Fund, then \$41,892 was encumbered for outstanding authorizations; \$9,414 was transferred in the Federal Fund.

SFY18 expenditures:

		Appropriation:	Expended:	Percentage:	
Personnel	-	General Fund	796,500	53,506.35	6.71%
		Federal Fund	2,106,800	162,656.74	7.72%
		Adaptive A & A	20,600	1,634.16	7.93%
Operating	-	General Fund	65,900	4,218.49	6.40%
		Randolph-Sheppard	27,600	-0-	-0-%
		Rehab Revenue (SSA)	34,300	-0-	-0-%
		Miscellaneous	28,100	2,023.19	7.19%
		Adaptive A & A	47,900	11,705.48	24.43%
		Federal Fund	620,000	72,144.79	11.63%
Trustee/Benefit -		General Fund	599,200	23,769.87	3.96%
		Randolph-Sheppard	100,100	2,475.00	2.47%
		Rehab Revenue	13,000	-0-	-0-%
		Miscellaneous	56,300	3,060.86	5.43%
		Federal Fund	470,300	55,311.01	11.76%
Total	-		4,986,600		

Spending authority from the Federal Fund Trustee/Benefit in the amount of \$69,900 was transferred to Personnel to fund salary and benefits for the new transition coordinator position. The majority of the costs for this position will be applied to the 15% reserve for pre-employment transition services.

Regarding the 15% reserve requirement for pre-employment transition services:

As reported last board meeting the FFY16 requirement is \$379,110, of which \$250,337 had been expended by March 31, 2017. From April through the first week of August, approximately \$191,000 has been expended. This accounts for the remainder needed to satisfy the FFY16 requirement of \$128,773 and approximately \$62,000 toward the FFY17 requirement of \$380,987. Approximates are used to account for any expenditures that may have been incorrectly charged against the 15% requirement.

## **Vocational Rehabilitation Program – Mike Walsh:**

**Federal Reporting** - RSA-113 report was completed and submitted on July 31st.

**WIOA Update/WIOA Core Partners Update (BFF's)** – Raul Enriquez (Commission on Aging) accepted a position as the Area Agency on Aging III Director. His replacement representing the Commission on Aging with the WIOA Core Partners is Kevin Bittner. Also, with much sadness, Amelia Valasek (Career and Technical Education) has resigned her position with CTE. Her last day will be November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Her replacement representing CTE with the Core Partners will be Cruz Gallegos. Amelia was the workhorse behind the writing and editing of the Combined State plan; she will be missed.

**Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)** – Interviews / surveys with ICBVI staff and most community partners have been completed. We are in a bit of a holding pattern as we wait for some of our key stakeholders (special education administrators) to return to school, so they can be contacted and interviewed.

**Common Performance Measures** – Finally some significant movement with data sharing. IDOL and their DAG's have taken it upon themselves to create all of the data sharing agreements between us (and IDVR as well) and IDOL (UI wage data) and the SBOE (education and credential attainment data). They are just about done with these, and also have developed a draft model of the process for the sharing of data. Gail Richardson (IDOL) will be contacting Mike to set up a meeting with Tom and himself in the next 2-3 weeks to review the data sharing process.

**One Stop Systems** – We have completed the MOU and that we are now working on the infrastructure cost sharing for the 2 comprehensive One Stop Centers (Idaho Falls and Lewiston). Beth and Mike attended a rather extensive meeting at Labor this past week to begin discussions of cost-sharing. There are 2 key elements for the funding agreement: 1) infrastructure, and 2) shared services and operating costs. Since the 2 centers are at IDOL offices, they would incur the bulk of the infrastructure costs. There was some agreement that the agency contribution should be proportional to the client use. The agreement needs to be completed by Dec 1 of this year. All parties agreed to two things:

- 1) To have DOL run some numbers through the model that Wisconsin developed;
- 2) For all of the partners to agree on a contribution for this year, and then to evaluate the agreement SFY 2019 and revise if necessary.

**VR Field Policy Manual** - Public comment meetings were held at all of our regional offices in May and early June. Only a handful of people attended across the state, and there were no comments relevant to the material (policy manual and the client Rights and Responsibilities). The policy manual is completed, along with the Technical Assistance Guide for VRCs for the RSA-911 data points.

Because we are living in the age of WIOA, the policy manual will be subject to several revisions over the next few years. Mike foresees the majority of these revisions revolving around procedural things (case management policies) and data collection and reporting.

**MOTION:** Accept the ICBVI VR Policy Manual as completed; made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Schneider, all were in favor.

**Quality Assurance** – Mike has begun a new QA checklist in Orion to be reflective of WIOA and the RSA-911 reporting requirements. We will also be creating a new QA case file audit sheet to be used during our annual file reviews. Raelene is helping Mike with this, and she is going to play a much stronger role with QA in the VR program.

**Negotiated Rule Making** - The ARRF has been submitted and approved (Docket No. 15-0202-1701) for publication in the September 6, 2017 *Administrative Bulletin*.

Public comment was on July 19<sup>th</sup>, and no one showed up or called in.

**Orion** - Staff training was held in Boise June 28-29. Raelene did a fantastic job putting the training material together, and assisting with the on-going support to the field staff. The launch has been delayed due to problems with data migration. We will have to do some back tracking to July 1 to ensure we are accurately recording services for our first quarterly report (Oct 1).

**CSPD and Staff Training** - Shane passed his CRC exam in July! Congratulations Shane!

All counselors attended the Idaho Chapter NRA conference July 20-21 in Boise.

Laine is enrolled in an on-line course through Deque University (Web Accessibility Curriculum).

Jeff, Jackie, and Rocio will be attending the National NRA conference in Texas October 26-29.

Jeff, Linda, and Rocio will be attending the Idaho Partnerships Conference on Human Services (sponsored by CPI) Oct 5-6.

We are having another one day in-service at IESDB (August 17<sup>th</sup>). There will be 10 of us attending. Greg will be having a discussion on the ATC, and Mike will be providing them an update on WIOA.

### **Assistive Technology and Social Media:**

**Training:** Laine continues training from Deque University, Web & Document Accessibility Training and completed 6 of 13 classes.

**Provided:** 54 hours of direct instruction to VR clients; 8 hours of consultation to IL/OB and non-client consumers; 2 hours job site assessment/training; 2 hours disability awareness to community/employers; 4 hours of basic/easy testing of IDVR's web site.

**Special projects:** Laine attended the quarterly Advisory Council meeting of the Idaho Assistive Technology Project, and was voted in, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, as Vice Chair of the council and now serves as the representative for the council on the IATP Loan Guarantee Review Committee.

Laine was asked to speak to Lt. Gov. Little's office in Feb., with Scott Pearl, Scott Hoover of DRI, Dana Gover of NW ADA and Jamie of SILC regarding web accessibility. That work group has met twice more, and is working with Bill Farnsworth of the CIO and Marlene Write of Access Idaho, to improve the

guidelines for agencies to follow when publishing on the web. The work group, now called SWAT, short for State Web Accessibility Team, was established by DRI in response to the ACLU, San Francisco, interest in Idaho’s Sec. 508 compliance. The group is now meeting bi-monthly. Scott, Laine & Larry will be testing 4 web sites; ICBVI, IDVR, SILC, and IDHRC, for basic/easy WCGA 2.0 compliance. The objective is to create material to use to make web masters and document/content creators at state agencies aware of their inaccessibility and, with the help of the IATP new training, provide them with training and resources for making improvements for all Idahoans to access state resources. ICBVI also is developing an internal policy to ensure accessible documents.

**College Days** - Participants: Total: 9 = Twin Falls: 3; Lewiston: 1; Coeur d’Alene: 2; and Boise: 3. 4 male and 5 female, ages 16-21, and 1 participant over 21.

Feedback from participants:

Mostly positive feedback from students, with two areas of suggested improvement: shorten sessions, and provide more breaks and less direct/hands on supervision in the evenings.

All participants felt that the social media session was the only session lacking significant value. We received constructive feedback on the social media session this year, being that in the future, if social media is included, have a hands on session on how to set and change privacy settings.

Extremely positive feedback on the “Tools & Resources Fair”. Huge thanks to Commissioner Gibson for all of his help coordinating that event!

**Social Media** - Since May ICBVI has provided a work experience for Nick, a Pre-Employment Transition Student. Nick is studying journalism at MSU, and has worked for ICBVI this summer creating a blog, and content specific to the College Days, SWEP, ATC, BEP (coming soon) and other ICBVI programs. He has also learned about section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and web/document accessibility, as much of the content in journalism is now published online.

You can see his work at: <https://www.facebook.com/ICBVI/> and <http://icbvi.blogspot.com/>

**Facebook:**

Type	Description	Number	Other
Total number of fans	Number of people who have “liked” our page	327	+ 17 since last report
Average Daily Reach	The # of people, each day, who see content from ICBVI	97.61 over 90 days	Last report was 18.57 over 97 days, approximate increase of 75 views per day
Negative comments	Meaning that a	11	+ 6 since last report

	viewer hid a post, or marked it as spam		
Average daily Engagement	On average, the number of people who engage with the page daily.	8.82 over 90 days	Last report was 1.32 over 97 days, an approximate increase of 7.5 users per day.
Total video views	Total number of times video was viewed for atleast 30 seconds	8	No change since last report
Number of people talking about ICBVI on Facebook	“Talking about” includes people liking the Page, posting to the Page's timeline, liking, commenting on, or sharing one of the Page posts, answering a question posted, responding to an events, mentioning the Page, tagging the Page in a photo, or checking in at our location.	65	Decrease of 67 from last report

**Transition students and pre-employment transition services** - Welcome Alison!!! Alison will start on 28<sup>th</sup> of this month. She will work PT (20 hours per week) until December 1, as she completes her internship requirements for her Master’s program. Mike plans on taking Alison to the regions this fall (if it works out), when he does the staff training on the updated policy manual (Sept or Oct).

**Business Services and Engagement** - Mike attended a meeting with Loni Hanka (Business Liaison at IDVR) at WinCo Foods Corporate Office. Texas VR has been working with WinCo Foods to assist in their hiring needs at a new warehouse in the North TX area.

Texas VR contracts with one of their CRP’s to do the 7 week soft skills program prior to interviewing, and then provides on-going Job Coaching after the individual is hired.

Craig McPhee (Vice President of Warehousing for WinCo Foods and based in Boise) wanted to connect with us to look at possibly developing a similar program to the one created in TX.

Mike is not sure how relevant this model is to ICBVI. It is more a general agency model. He did speak with them about direct hire and Work Experience programs (in their stores as well), and the training and support we could provide. They were open to this discussion.

**VR Spotlight – Roy Ahrens (Twin Falls)**

Roy Ahrens - The Rustic Pup - My Journey with ICBVI and beyond...



I cannot express my profound gratitude to the ICBVI and the staff, whom directed and assisted me towards a new career-and life. Thank you to Linda, Brenda, Judy and all the others behind the scenes, for all the hard work in searching out ways to help me to help myself.

From assisting in funding for schooling in Boise at Canine Design, to funding a place to park a camp trailer for my housing while attending my 3 month training, paying a huge portion of my grooming tools, to special sight aids to help in my hands-on-training; to glasses, large print paper to take notes on and so many other aspects...even to the Talking Book Service so I can relax my eyes and myself and “read” a book!

I completed my grooming training from Stacey Sullivan and her staff at Canine Design in August of 2013. This was challenging to me, and to Stacey and her staff, as they tried and succeeded in alternate ways to teach me, due to my sight issues. I came home and started searching for employment. I became gainfully employed in September-2 weeks after my graduation; at Wag-N-Tongue Self Pet Wash and Grooming. I was only earning minimum wage; but it was a start and Heather Stroup continued assisting me further with on-the-job training. She had been an instructor at an Oregon Pet Grooming School; so she was also a very competent instructor, groomer, and business owner. I was under her employ until approximately April of 2015. ICBVI once again assisted me in the purchase of a much needed electric lift grooming table that I use to this day!

In November of 2014, I started working part time as an Independent Self Employed groomer at Ohana Pet Grooming. I worked at both Wag-N-Tongue and Ohana until April of 2015, at which time I decided to only work for myself at Ohana. JoDee Collins owner at Ohana had been trained by a Certified Master Groomer; and once again, she was willing to assist me even more with grooming techniques. My daughter, Miranda, started work independently, as a bather/brusher for JoDee at Ohana, in 2016 and she also started learning to groom from myself and JoDee. We worked at Ohana till the end of May 2017 at which time I was approached with an opportunity to open and run a small grooming salon with my daughter; to help take over clientele and continue an established grooming business. Thus The Rustic Pup was born!

In the goals setting portion of my ICBVI counseling; my long range goal was for my daughter and I, to start our own grooming business. I was not absolutely certain that it would happen-but it has!

I have gone from a fearful woman learning of my glaucoma and eventual blindness in 2006, losing the sight in my left eye in 2009; having that eye removed in 2010; declining sight in the right eye, and becoming frightened, withdrawn and depressed-to a very humble and blessed business owner in 2017. This would not have even been a remote dream or possibility without the support of the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and all of the talented, caring, and passionate staff.

I will never be a fast groomer, nor will I ever gain great wealth in my chosen profession; however I have gained self-confidence, and I help out financially. I show compassion to the animals in my care, and respect for their owners. I have had potential clients not want to use me, as their groomer because of my sight challenges-and those same owners have changed their mind once they have talked to my other clients, as well as seeing for themselves some of my grooms. I have had clients thank me for finding health issues in their furry family members, and for being so thorough in my grooming. Our business could use some upgraded equipment to help us to be faster groomers, however, hopefully

that equipment will come as our clientele increases. The grooming industry is ever changing; and I hope to attend grooming expos-but I do try to stay up to date on new techniques through publications, subscriptions and memberships in many Facebook professional grooming groups. I even entered one of the world's largest grooming photo contests upon the suggestion of a fellow international groomer! I did this using the laptop that the ICBVI assisted me in purchasing...

Every aspect of my success has been a direct result from the ICBVI, and support from the staff. It has been very difficult at times, and I know there will be challenges ahead. I also know this agency will keep me going with more training in independence if/when my eye condition worsens. Thank you to this agency and its workers, for giving me my life back.

**Accessible documents** - Commissioner Raubenheimer asked Mike what kind of procedures does ICBVI have in place for documentation accessibility. Commissioner Gibson talked about the accessibility policy that BSU has and will send a copy to the Board, Beth and Mike.

### **Business Enterprise Program – Corey Bresina:**

**Emerging Leaders Series** - BEP Supervisor, Corey Bresina, traveled to Seattle, WA in late May, and again in late July, to take part in sessions 1 & 2 of the 3 part series. The content of the three sessions is based primarily on the ten behavioral commitments of successful leaders described in the book **The Leadership Challenge** by James Kouzes and Barry Posner. This workshop is a program of the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER) at the University of Washington and co-sponsored by CTAT, LLC in Colorado. It is designed to develop and enhance the leadership skills of managers in public and private rehabilitation agencies. The program is intended primarily for mid and upper-level managers of state and tribal rehabilitation agencies, community rehabilitation programs, Client Assistance Projects, Independent Living Centers, and similar organizations. The program consists of 9 days of training divided into three sessions of 3 days each. The purpose is to challenge individuals to become positive forces of change within their organization and the field of rehabilitation by adopting exemplary leadership practices. The goal is to provide the opportunity for participants to develop and refine their leadership skills in relation to their current job and future leadership positions. The last session will take place in early November in Olympia, WA.

**NAMA D.C. Fly-In 2017** - BEP Operators Theresia and Bhavani, and the BEP Specialist Scott Lind, recently returned from the NAMA Fly-In in Washington, DC. They had the opportunity to speak to our Idaho Congressmen on behalf of the blind vendors around the state, and they networked with other vending and micro market industry professionals from all over the country. Below is the summary Scott sent out to the rest of the IBMC –

*Bhavani, Theresia and I attended the NAMA Fly-In event from July 24-27. We were fortunate enough to get to talk to our elected representatives in the offices of Raul Labrador, Mike Simpson, Jim Risch and Mike Crapo. We even had the opportunity to briefly meet and shake hands with senators Risch and Crapo. In each meeting we informed the representatives about the Idaho Commission for the Blind, the Business Enterprise Program, the Randolph-Sheppard Act, and some of our concerns going forward. We decided to focus the conversation on the commercialization of rest areas and how it would*

*affect blind entrepreneurs. Terry Smith provided us with documentation regarding the commercialization of rest areas that we were able to pass on to the representatives and senators. They were all very receptive of what we had to say and promised that they will keep in touch with us on any legislation that may affect blind business owners. And we were lucky enough to have dinner with the Senior Vice President of NAMA, Eric Dell. He remembered Theresia and Bhavani from the Sagebrush Convention in Las Vegas last February.*

*On Tuesday of our trip Theresia’s hearing implant unfortunately had a malfunction that made communication in the meetings very difficult for her. She had been looking forward to talking to the elected representatives about the Business Enterprise Program and the Randolph-Sheppard act. She did not get the opportunity that she had been looking forward to for so long. Through all of this she remained the happy-go-lucky Theresia we have all come to love. I want to take a moment and give recognition to Theresia for her perseverance in this stressful situation.*

**BEP Fall Training** - BLAST 2017 will be held September 12-15 at the Nashville Airport Marriott Hotel. “Music City” is a fun town and this conference should be an enjoyable and informative experience for everyone. The pre-conference breakout sessions start at 1:00 PM on Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. Topics to be covered include improving the bottom line, theft prevention, micro-markets, office coffee services, SSDI, writing business plans, and jail commissaries. Jesse Hartle of RSA will do a session for members of Committees of Blind Vendors. For rest area vendors, there will be a special meeting on Tuesday afternoon at 5:00 PM to discuss the pending threat of commercialization. A half-day session will be conducted by Bonnie Knutson and William Donohue of the Michigan State University Executive Leadership Development Program. Many of the Randolph-Sheppard specific issues will be addressed Friday morning. For more information please visit the website at <http://blindmerchants.org/blast-2017/>

**Financial Snapshot**

<b>2017</b>	<b>OCT-DEC (Q1)</b>	<b>JAN-MAR (Q2)</b>	<b>APRIL-JUNE (Q3)</b>	<b>JULY- SEPT (Q4)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Sales	517,817.96	686,229.69	615,633.54*		\$ 1,819,681.19
Total Net Income	106,223.06	165,348.34	149,877.75*		\$ 421,449.15
Set Aside Collected	12,152.00	16,534.83	14,987.78*		\$ 43,674.61
Average income %	23.37%	27.52%	27.48%*		26.83%

\*Q3 figures are incomplete as 1 Operator has not completed the Set-Aside reports necessary.

Commissioner Raubenheimer has asked to have Corey give comparisons by years as we go forward in the BEP.

## **Independent Living & Sight Restoration Programs – Nancy Wise:**

**Program Updates – IL** - The Rehab Teachers have served 671 Older Blind and 89 Independent Living Clients this FFY, and our one-time referrals total over 320.

We had a conference call on July 24<sup>th</sup> and discussed SFY 2017 outcomes, SFY 2018 IL/OB and donation fund allocation, time tracking, number of clients served, and the State Plan for Independent (SPIL) tracking goals, and Administration for Community Living (ACL).

As we have reported before the IL funding was moved from the Department of Ed to the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL). Much has been happening in regards to eliminating all Part B funds that support statewide projects and underserved areas of the state through grants to the SILC and Idaho Commission for the Blind IL Program, Developmental Disability Councils, State Traumatic Brain Injury Partnership Grants and Disability Action Center-NW. The President's FY 2018 budget proposed a new grant program entitled Partnerships for Innovation, Inclusion, and Independence (PIII). This new program would combine the activities carried out by the State Developmental Disabilities Councils (DDC), Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILC) and Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Councils (TBIAC) into a single state grant program by forming a statewide, cross-disability entity.

I recently joined an IL Network partners call on August 7, 2017 by ACL who was especially interested in receiving comments from CILS receiving Part B funds in addition to the SILCS and DSEs. The States that provided feedback on the call did not support the new grant program PIII, and felt ACL should push back.

We provided comment to ACL by submitting success stories and how important the specialized training we are able to provide through our IL Part B funds assists the person who is blind or visually impaired to achieve personal independence. I have included several of the comments and stories submitted, and want to thank all the Rehabilitation Teachers for the many examples they forwarded onto ACL during this public comment period, which ends August 11, 2017.

**Submitted by Jason Madsen, Boise** - I believe the Independent Living program helps provide support and resources for disabled individuals to gain quality of life and be more fully integrated in to their families and communities. I have observed daily how training and services enable visually impaired and blind people to take positive steps in planning, learning, and becoming active members of their family, community, and country. I believe it is the right, privilege, and duty of citizens to reach upward and outward in helping others to overcome challenges and obstacles associated with disabilities. Successful families and neighbors are founded on principles of compassion, respect, trust, wholesome recreational activities, and hope. IL programs are essential to help provide the tools necessary to disabled individuals that help them learn how to live a full life, which includes giving back to their community. When resources and supports are available, disabled individuals become viable citizens that complement a vibrant economy and nation and complete the circle of citizenship.

Another story is a truck driver who retired early because of a genetic condition that resulted in vision loss. He has participated in variety training that has enabled him to use alternative skills and techniques to compensate for his vision loss. He continues to pursue his ambitious interests and meet

his family's needs. He continues to manage a community garden that is over an acre in size. When it is still snowy and cold outside his greenhouse is warmed by his ambition to carefully place seeds in thoughtfully prepared pots of fresh garden soil. His work shop is dusty from building Christmas gifts for family and friends. He walks his grandson to the bus stop in the mornings using his mobility cane. He cooks fabulous meals and entertains guest of every age and for every occasions, from Harry Potter parties and game nights to elegant evenings and hosting dignitaries from Mexico, Holland, and Brazil that are associated with his wife's career. He is currently on a 50 miler back packing trip with his sons and grandson along the Wasatch front in Utah. He uses his cane every step of the way and he uses his skills and alternative techniques in every facet of his life. He boasts of living a full life and loves every second of it. He reports it is not easy, it is challenging, but he could not do it without the support and training he received from the IL program.

Please consider future funding for the IL programs. Without the IL programs individuals, families, and communities will become victims to disabilities, rather than rise above them.

**Submitted by Steve Achabal, Boise** - The Independent Living program (IL program) through the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI) has been working with an individual; we will call him Ahmed for the purpose of this narrative and confidentiality, who recently moved to Boise from Syria. This individual came to the United States with his wife, and two children. He was diagnosed with Multiple Dystrophy early in his life which has affected his vision to the point where he is legally blind. He received no services, or training for his vision loss while living in Syria, and usually had to rely on others to assist him with many of his daily activities.

After moving to Boise, and obtaining the basic services that he, and his family needed to survive such as shelter, housing, etc., Ahmed and his social worked contacted ICBVI to see what types of services may be available to assist him. I first met with Ahmed, his social worker, and a translator back in March, 2017.

Since that time Ahmed has participated in a Low Vision Evaluation in order to determine if there were aides and appliances to assist him in maximizing his current vision. During the evaluation it was determined that a number of items would be able to aid Ahmed in using his vision more efficiently, and effectively. ICBVI assisted in purchasing a mobile electronic magnifier to assist with reading, and seeing items close up which he can take with him where ever he goes, filtered glasses to assist with glare and lighting issues, and a talking key chain which auditorily lets him know the date, and time throughout the day.

A Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) which had recently been donated by a previous ICBVI client was repurposed, and given to Ahmed to use. This device is a larger magnifier that is not portable, but allows Ahmed to see other items such as his English as a second language homework, and other written communication more easily.

Ahmed, through his mosque was able to secure financing to purchase a pair of bioptics to allow him to see objects at a distance, creating a private - public partnership with ICBVI to assist this person.

Ahmed has also received training in Braille, and Activities of Daily Living to increase his independence as well as increasing his knowledge and confidence that he can attain things he never knew possible.

Such as obtaining employment, and being a more independent contributor for his children, and the Boise community.

Without the IL program at ICBVI Ahmed, and hundreds if not thousands like him throughout Idaho, would not have the resources to empower themselves to be more independent, and productive citizens.

I attended the State Independent Living Council (SILC) quarterly Business Meeting on July 12-13, 2017 and provided a quarterly report on activities ICBVI has done that are within the SPIL Goal Chart addressing Community Access, Civic Action, and Partnering. Idaho's 2017-19 State Plan for Independent Living was approved by the ACL September 1, 2016.

Under Community Access - The Low Vision Clinic at the ICBVI provides increasing physical and communication access to our health care settings by educating providers, insurance companies and consumers. The clinic has seen steady growth. In 2015 our clinic served 413 patients, in 2016 we saw 496 and in 2017 we expect the number of clinic patients to exceed 500. We make every effort to reach out to the community in various ways to raise public awareness of our services. Our Rehabilitation Teachers and Counselors make home, facility and school visits educating their clientele and the public about low vision services. We have developed close relationships with all statewide eye specialists receiving referrals and providing timely feedback and input on assistive technology for low vision needs.

Under section 1.3 ICBVI suggests an area where targeting city leaders (mayors, city council members, city coordinators, etc.) and offering information and training on accessibility, not just to specific businesses, but more general in terms of intersection analysis, crosswalks, auditory pedestrian signals, etc., and other pedestrian type issues throughout their towns/cities. Steve Achabal, Rehabilitation Teacher, did the Walkability Study for Star, Idaho.

Steve recently met with and walked around Parma with their Mayor. They went to many of the different intersections, and other highly used pedestrian areas to discuss accessibility issues.

#### Goal 1: Community Access:

Region 5 Staff often make referrals to Life INC for services including transportation. Staff and client will visit this SILC site to obtain Taxi Scripts. Staff will also provide training for all clients interested in using Pocatello Regional Transit Route Services and/or Door to Door services wherever possible. Typically training emphasizes access to healthcare providers, but also encompasses other important goals ranging from shopping to recreational access.

Staff work with area youth to learn about emergency preparedness action steps and connect with community partners and early warning providers.

#### Goal 2: Civic Action:

ICBVI staff has worked with Bannock Transportation Office to help improve the cities sidewalks, crosswalks, and transportation services.

An ICBVI Rehab Instructor is also in the process of developing and maintaining a Pocatello Pedestrian Safety Committee. Potential committee members include representatives from the NFB, Life INC, New Day Workshop, ISU, and the Mayor's office. This is still in the beginning phase. Interested parties are making plans to Rally for Pedestrian Safety in late August, or early September weather permitting.

### Goal 3: Partnering:

Staff and clients/care providers tour the local SILC office to learn about what services are available to meet their needs. This includes Payee Services, Attendant Care, Technology Access, and Transportation services.

**CDA – Training Days/ADL's** - The week of August 28<sup>th</sup>, Jodi (RT/CDA) and Gayle (RT/Lewiston) are planning a group training event with IL, OB and VR clients who need blindness skills training, particularly ADL skills for cooking and cleaning, money management, communication and diabetic management. Gayle and Jodi are planning to meet with several IL clients referred from DAC as well.

**Pocatello News** – The Pocatello office continues to stay busy. Region Five is maintaining a steady Older Blind caseload. The RT is currently working on expanding Transition Student Services to include vocationally focused activities. Some examples are: student completion of online employment inventories, soft skill development, increasing self-advocacy and awareness, and understanding workplace accommodations. April is also working to aligning Independent Living services to meet SILC standards. Goals here include: increasing community access, civic action, youth participation, and partnering with cooperating stakeholders to provide outreach and education to local providers.

**Program Update – Sight Restoration** - Kudos to VRA's on the recent Client Satisfaction Survey mailed to clients closed SFY 2017. I mailed 57 surveys, 6 were returned, unable to locate, or wrong address, and 17 surveys have been completed and returned. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent of the 5 questions only one (4) and the rest (5). See a few of the survey comments below:

“They guide me through the whole process which helped relieve all stress factors.”

“The VRA spent a lot of time making sure I understood and answered all my questions.”

“You have changed my life for the better.”

“All services were excellent. Assistants were cooperative, called checking on me before and after surgery, were honestly concerned and had all appointments arranged. I had a totally wonderful experience and outcome.”

On our recent quarterly call we reviewed our SR Program Manual – Citizenship is not a requirement, however, the individual must be present in the state to receive SR services. The individual must also be in the country legally and have a green card (registered alien), work permit or other documentation. It's always good to get together as a group and brainstorm ideas.

The VRA's are busy taking applications for SFY 2018.

Amy Zapata (Twin) and Dawn Ristsau (Lewiston) will be in Boise August 21-24 for ATC training and observing in the LV clinic as well.

**Low Vision Clinic** - Reported by Lynn Vaughan - In addition to serving the patients who consult with our Low Vision Specialist, the Clinic is involved in outreach efforts to educate the community and raise public awareness about the services that are available to people with low vision conditions. Our ICBVI instructors and counselors make home and facility visits. We have a strong referral network with eye specialists in the area. We partner with the special needs programs in our community's schools. In addition, the Clinic operates closely with the on-site ICBVI store used by both low vision patients and the public. The store offers a wide variety of low vision devices and aids. The store items are specifically selected for blind and low vision clientele to enable them to function more independently in their home, school, and work environments.

The Low Vision Eye Clinic at ICBVI provides a critical service to the low vision community in Idaho. The impact on individual lives can be profoundly beneficial. The impact on families and the communities throughout the state is incalculable. Through the services available at ICBVI and the Low Vision Clinic, we advocate for and provide the means for many people to take control of their lives, gain access to otherwise limited opportunities, and integrate fully into the mainstream of society.

Our clinic is full to overflowing through mid-October and our traveling low vision clinic serving CDA and Lewiston is scheduled the week of October 16<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Payne asked Nancy when was the last time we asked for an increase in the Sight Restoration budget. From what we remember it may have been back in 2008 that the SR Budget was cut and nothing has been asked for since. Beth has indicated she will gather some statistics to see if we could ask for an increase in the budget.

### **Assessment & Training Center – Greg Metsker:**

We have just passed the halfway mark through the summer term in the ATC, which began on July 11<sup>th</sup>. This has been an interesting term in regards to attendance. Students have been trickling in over the course of the first 5 weeks, with three more arriving last week. What initially looked like it would be a very busy term has turned into kind of a quiet term after 5 clients who were on the roster didn't make it. The reasons were varied; medical issues, family emergencies and one student who came for her computer class the first week of the term and then got a job and went to work right away. We like that reason. Currently there are 8 students in the ATC. Last week, the week of August 7<sup>th</sup>, we had two students from the Lewiston region that came down for a one week "Discovery Days" type of experience. Next week we will be hosting our two newest VRA's, Dawn and Amy, as they will be in the ATC to learn some more about blindness and the skills we teach in the ATC. We are hosting an O&M intern this summer. Her name is Whitney, and she is studying to be an O&M at Stephen F Austin University. Whitney is doing a great job so far, and seems to enjoy working with Mel and Kevin and their students. Mel is her supervising teacher. We currently have 16 clients who want to come in for training in October, and Greg has started a list for the winter term in January as well. Given that the ultimate goal for our students is to get prepared to return to work, Greg will start reporting how many of the successful VR closures since our last board meeting have been ATC students at one time or another and what kind of work they are doing. Since this is the first time he has done this, the list will

include clients who have gained employment since January 1, 2017. There have been 19 former ATC students who became employed in the last 7 ½ months, in jobs such as Receptionist, Social Worker, Custodian, Alternative Energy Consultant, Professor, Teacher, Contract Specialist, Carpet Cleaner and Lumber/Hardware Customer Service.

The ATC staff were busy in June assisting with the IESDB Work Readiness Camp, then with the SWEP staff training, the SWEP student training and then some Job Mentoring for a few of the SWEP kids. The Work Readiness Camp went well. There were 9 participants and the agenda was full of good activities and information. Kevin, Jackie Stallings and I went down to Gooding on Monday June 12<sup>th</sup> and assisted with the Ropes course, and a visit to a hotel where the kids learned about the kinds of jobs available in the lodging and food service industries. Jackie spent the next few nights there with the kids as well. On Tuesday Kevin, Justin, Mel and Greg went down and helped to facilitate a session that Justin developed where the kids got a chance to use power drills, impact drivers, a chop saw, wrenches and hammers. The kids worked their way through stations where they got to cut boards with the chop saw, drill holes and connect boards with nuts and bolts and use wrenches and ratchets to tighten it all down. They also got to use an impact driver to put screws into wood as well as pound in nails with a hammer. The session was intended to point out that not all jobs involve sitting behind a desk or going to college. Sometimes we forget the trades and all the job possibilities out there that involve working with your hands to build and repair things. The session was very well received by the participants and the IESDB staff, who were there as well. Greg also facilitated a panel discussion with the mentors who were there with the kids all week, to get an idea of the different paths the mentors have taken to get where they are today. All the mentors were young people who are also visually impaired. On Wednesday of that week, Kevin, Scott, Larry and Lisa went down and did AT assessments with each participant and Lisa facilitated a session about relationships and personal boundaries that come into play on the job and how they differ from hanging out with your friends and family. I think the camp was well done, and Kevin Jernigan and Jackie Stallings did a great job of representing the ICBVI during the planning and implementation of the camp.

The rest of the month of June was spent training the SWEP staff and the SWEP participants. Both of those activities went well. We had a great SWEP staff this year and they all were very enthusiastic about participating in the training and learning more about blindness. We had 20 staff in all. A majority of the staff have indicated that they would like to return next summer. We also got some good feedback from surveys we did with the kids, the staff and the employers and we will likely tweak the program a bit next year to reflect that input.

Lisa has been working with a group of Hewlett Packard engineers over the last 6 months or so who are trying to incorporate some accessibility features into a new commercial scanner/copier/fax machine that they are designing. This all stemmed from a SWEP related Facebook post that Lisa made regarding volunteers for a bicycling activity the kids were doing to which an HP representative responded. Subsequently, Lisa, Mike and Beth attended functions at HP where HP was trying to bring some awareness of disabilities to their employees in Boise. Lisa mentioned to them that disability awareness is great, and hiring disabled employees is fantastic, but that they should also focus on making their products accessible. As a result, a group of HP engineers contacted Lisa and she has given them her personal feedback on their designs as well as bringing in other visually impaired individuals to visit with the engineers to help them understand how to make their equipment more accessible for

people with vision loss. HP has spoken with Lisa numerous times and has held two different sessions here in the ATC. Lisa has arranged for 8 or 10 different people with differing levels of vision loss to come in during those sessions and visit with the engineers and designers. They have talked about things such as how to make a screen more usable, contrast, how to incorporate speech into the commands, the best place to put a headphone jack on their machine, how a keyboard should be laid out and what kind of buttons/commands should be included and so forth. They have brought a scanner and different keyboards with them so people could get a good “feel” for what the machine will look like and actually try different input options. It has been a great experience for everybody, and the folks who came in as test subjects left here feeling really positive about the experience and the potential for office equipment to be more accessible in the future. Lisa and the HP representatives have talked about doing some sort of media event when the machine is introduced, and Greg believes Beth asked the HP folks if they would let the Governor know how well this collaboration has worked. HP has also indicated that they will be donating one of the new machines to the agency when they become available in the next 4 or 5 months. Through their time commitment and the way they solicited feedback and listened to it intently, it is evident that this team from HP is serious about making their products more accessible. At each session they videotaped what was happening, took copious notes and asked great questions. Kudos to Lisa, Beth and Mike for helping to get this all started.

**New Business** – The next ICBVI Board meeting is set for November 30<sup>th</sup>, (Thursday) here in Boise.

The ICBVI Board Adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Raelene Thomas