

Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Board Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2017

Board Members Present: Britt Raubenheimer, Chair (by phone); Mike Gibson, Vice Chair; Sue Payne; Al Schneider; and Sue Walker.

ICBVI Staff Present: Beth Cunningham, Nancy Wise, Mike Walsh, Greg Metsker, Raelene Thomas, Corey Bresina, Jeff Weeks, and Rocio Gil.

Guests Present: Dana Ard, Don Nepple, Daniel Solis, Tony Bridges and Mark (ATC Student).

ICBVI Mission Statement was read by Raelene Thomas.

MOTION to amend the ICBVI Agenda to allow Nancy Wise to give her program report first at 1:45 p.m. instead of Greg Metsker, made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, all were in favor.

MOTION to amend the November 4, 2016 ICBVI Board Minutes, on page 10, the State Plan Date is incorrect and needs to be changed from year 2000 to 2017, made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, all were in favor.

Administrator's Report – Beth Cunningham:

Beth indicated to the Board that we received 20 surveys from staff from the Staff Survey sent out in December. For the most part, the surveys were very positive and we had some good suggestions including a couple suggesting quarterly all-staff meetings, for the purpose of connecting and updating. We felt this was a great suggestion and we had our first all staff phone conference meeting on January 25th. Other themes from the surveys included people wanting communication, being connected, training and transparency- most felt they did make a positive impact on their clients and people were fairly well satisfied with their caseload sizes.

In our first all staff meeting, Beth gave an agency update and overview, each of the offices gave a brief update of things they have been doing in their regions. Then each manager gave a brief update on their programs. We discussed possibly doing these all-staff meetings quarterly and also having some training, perhaps by someone from our staff.

After this first meeting, Beth requested feedback so that we could gauge whether staff felt that the meeting had been useful. Overall, people enjoyed meeting and connecting.

Some comments included:

- Hardest part of this job is the isolation- like connecting to co-workers
- Duration was good

- Agency address was good
- I think the meetings are a good idea
- Yesterday was great. I am glad to see the meetings starting up again
- Essential for the agency
- I liked getting updates from the managers on the programs
- Quarterly or 2-3 times per year
- We all have some expertise in areas that we could learn from one another.
- I think the training idea is a good idea if the subject is of interest to all staff.
- Meetings every 3-6 months
- It was really good to have Trina explain how things work with the grants and funding
- I liked the phone conference and video would be good too.

On January 18th, Beth presented to JFAC, which went smoothly. We are requesting a position which if approved, will begin in July. This position will be a full-time Transition Project Coordinator. This person will report to Mike and will be located in Boise, however, he or she will be responsible to develop programs state-wide. This position will focus primarily on Pre-employment transition services and business engagement. The money to pay for the position will come from the 15% that we need to spend on pre-employment transition services. Therefore, we were not requesting any additional funding, and it looks likely that the position will be granted as it was recommended by the Governor after he looked at our budget.

We are embarking on a comprehensive state-wide needs assessment. Kathy Matrone and Susan Bonnell from University of Washington will be conducting this assessment. You may hear from them regarding surveys to your clients or how to contact clients to invite them to a focus group etc. We are beginning the process of creating the Memorandum's of Understanding with our partners as required by WIOA.

Beth and Mike attended an all-day meeting on January 24th, with Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and with the Tribal VR programs. We worked on developing a MOU with them and we will have additional upcoming meetings in each area to learn how to collaborate with our VR tribes as needed and how to work together on shared cases. This includes the Tribes from Shoshone-Bannock, Nez Perce, Shoshone-Paiute, and Coeur D'Alene.

Beth is on a committee to work on developing the One-Stop in Idaho along with Department of Labor (DOL) and IDVR. This is something that is required under WIOA. She has also been attending meetings with DOL regarding their new Disability Employment Initiative grant. We are looking for ways that we can work together in our pre-employment transition services.

Monthly, Beth attends the Consortium for Idahoans with Disabilities meetings, Region 10 Director meetings via conference call, and a monthly Director meeting with Consortium of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). Ensuring that our agency is represented when different disability related services and policies are discussed is a big part of Beth's job. This week, Nancy and Beth attended the State Independent Living Council (SILC) meetings to be involved with any upcoming changes to our Independent Living services. The Independent Living grant has been moved from Department of Education to Administration for Community Living (ACL), which is under Health and Human Services.

Beth was fortunate to attend the NFB's Legislative luncheon, which was well attended by many senators and representatives despite the ice and snow. The NFB did presentations that discussed the importance

of our Independent Living services and also supported our need for a transition project coordinator to implement transition services programs across the state.

The first week of January, Beth met with Billy Henry regarding blind sports and we discussed ways that we may be able to collaborate in the future with sports camps for transition age students. Beth told them that she would love to see us develop a program in Eastern Idaho. We will be talking more about these possibilities and opportunities.

Commissioner Gibson suggested to Beth and the rest of the ICBVI Board that we let clients and staff know that they can join ICBVI Board meetings by conference call if they are unable to be here in person. We will make sure this is added to the next agenda.

Commissioner Walker asked Beth why only 50% of the staff responded to the staff survey. Beth felt that it could be because they were concerned about anonymity, as was noted in one staff response. Commissioner Raubenheimer suggested that we consider using survey monkey for the next survey for anonymity.

VR Policy Manual Update – Mike Walsh:

In order to make our VR Policy Manual compliant with all of the WIOA changes, Mike felt it best just to start over. The goal was to keep it under 100 pages. We have temporary business rules in place for staff to use until the final IDAPA rules are approved by RSA and the Board, and it goes through the Legislative process for rules next year in 2018. We will hold a public comment period after RSA approves this draft manual in the spring. Mike will most likely combine the comment periods with his spring trip to the offices. The IDAPA VR rules will be revised to encompass the WIOA changes and we will also take the payment policy out of there, showing that it has been incorporated by reference with the VR Manual. The ICBVI Board has until the end of February to get comments back to Mike on the VR Manual updates.

Business Enterprise Program Report – Corey Bresina:

Financial Snapshot from October, November and December 2016

2017	Oct-Dec Qtr 1	Jan-March Qtr 2	Apr-June Qtr 3	July-Sept Qtr 4	Total
Total Operator Sales	503,508.84				\$503,508.84
Total Net Income	100,907.07				\$100,907.07
Set Aside Collected	\$9,879.67				\$9,879.67
Average Income %	23.10%				23.10%

Location Updates - We are still working on two replacement micro market kiosks for primary location **V013**. BEP Specialist Scott Lind was able to set up a conference call between himself, 32M technical support, and BEP vendor Travis Beck. We were informed by our liaison at the INL that we will need to wait for their Cyber Security department to approve these 32M kiosks for hardware and software compliance. Once approved, we can continue with updating the programming on the units and transport them over to the CFA and SMC facilities.

Primary location **V009** added 2 new outdoor combo vending units back in November. Bhavani wanted to offer a greater variety of products to her Huetter Rest Stop customers. These rest stops are located on both sides of the road off of Interstate 90 at milepost 8 (Post Falls, Idaho) and are some of her highest volume machines.

Primary locations **V040** and **V021** both received new Capek Voice Adapted Amrotec Currency Counters. These currency counters are fully accessible for the blind and they make counting large volumes of currency a much quicker and more accurate task. This is very important for all vendors and especially for those who have large vending routes.

Primary location **C044** added a vending site at 936 Taylor Ave, Meridian. We placed a snack machine and a beverage machine at the Homecourt indoor recreation facility. This site was formerly owned by the Treasure Valley YMCA and is now owned by the city of Meridian. BEP vendor Daniel Solis is having success with these machines and will continue to try and grow the business at this site. We also updated the contract at the Idaho State Police cafeteria (700 S. Stratford Drive, *Meridian*). The contract was given a 2% increase on the base prices and the discount price tier structure was altered to benefit the BEP vendor when there are a higher number of trainees to feed.

Primary location **V011** completed a remodel of an open room on the 6th floor of the Idaho Health & Welfare tower in downtown Boise. BEP vendor Lynda Surles had vending machines in a 3rd floor breakroom for many years, however, this room was needed for additional office space and the move to the 6th floor was her only viable option. Proper electrical outlets and sub-panel were needed and installed at the expense of the Program. A new floor and a fresh paint job were paid for by the building owner. Although Lynda was not thrilled about this move, she is making the best of the situation. She also was kind enough to take over the combo snack machine in the basement of the agency.

Primary location **C042** now has an espresso machine at The Bridge Café located in Boise City Hall (150 N Capitol Blvd). Tony believes this addition will be a big hit with his customers in the building and will especially help with the early morning business. Tony also added another Square Point of Sale System to the Ada County Courthouse location (200 W. Front Street, Boise). This was a needed upgrade from the talking cash register and will help greatly with the coffee/espresso island within his café.

Primary location **V016** had all of the vending sites from primary location V018 added to it. Primary location V018 was formerly known as 'Idaho Dept. of Transportation' and was operated by BEP vendor Terry Harris for many years. The primary location V016 was formerly known as 'Boise Post Offices' and was operated by BEP vendor Bill Hesseltine. Bill had been contracting V018 since Terry retired in the spring of 2016. This location was dissolved on December, 31 2016 and the two locations are now one. The new name for the combined primary location V016 is 'Boise Metro' and Bill Hesseltine is the operator. The decision to combine these locations was a joint effort between the IBMC and the ICBVI. This new primary location provides an enhanced opportunity for the BEP vendor to produce more revenue and more income.

Disposal of Equipment - Scott and Corey have been busy with the disposal of broken and unusable BEP equipment. Some of this equipment was scrapped at the local junk yard and most was sold at an auction house out in Nampa. The State Board of Examiners authorized the disposal of these surplus assets. The Boise storage unit is much more manageable now and we hope to finish this project in the spring when the roads conditions are more favorable.

BEP Vendor Meeting & Training - The 2017 annual IBMC meeting will be held at the Golden Nugget Hotel in downtown Las Vegas, Nevada. A majority of the IBMC will be attending the RSVVA (Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America) Sagebrush National BEP Training Conference the week of the 13th-17th. Unfortunately, a couple of vendors are unable to attend. BEP Supervisor Corey Bresina and Specialist Scott Lind will also be attending the conference for the first time. ICBVI Administrator Beth Cunningham is headed here as well and will be attending the conference on the 15th, 16th and 17th. The complete conference agenda and additional details can be found at <http://www.randolph-sheppard.org/sagebrush/conferences.php>.

Corey also reviewed the BEP Survey that was conducted a few months ago. Six out of the eleven vendors responded. Corey read some of the vendor comments at the request of Commissioner Payne. Commissioner Raubenheimer would like the survey to go out in a more timely manner the next time. Beth indicated she is also very willing to go on a vendor's route with them so she can learn and understand how it works. Commissioner Raubenheimer asked Corey if he did shades training when he began his jobs here at ICBVI. Corey responded that he had and also Scott has, they completed several ½ days of training over a 3 month period. He does not have any schedule for the future but is open to doing more.

Commissioner Schneider would like a list of the type of machines that all the vendors have. Corey will get this for them and also said that 6 vendors have vending only, while the other 5 have a combined cafeteria/snack bar/vending.

Tony Bridges asked who has access to the finished survey results, and Commissioner Raubenheimer said they could make that available for vendors to see.

Commissioner Payne suggested that maybe we need to continue shades training for all sighted staff each year, for example go to one of the vendor cafeteria for lunch using shades.

Fiscal Report – Trina Ayres:

Status of the SFY17 budget as of January 30, 2017:

		Appropriation:	Expended:	Percentage:	
Personnel	-	General Fund	790,600	466,083.63	58.95%
		Federal Fund	2,020,000	1,165,720.57	57.70%
		Adaptive A & A	20,400	12,617.71	61.85%
Operating	-	General Fund	65,700	41,873.60	63.73%
		Randolph-Sheppard	27,600	12,766.45	46.25%
		Rehab Revenue (SSA)	3,718	2,995.00	80.55 %
		Miscellaneous	28,100	3,767.31	13.40%
		Adaptive A & A	47,900	30,166.76	62.97%
		Federal Fund	619,800	333,489.64	53.80%
Trustee/Benefit -		General Fund	599,200	352,816.23	58.88%
		Randolph-Sheppard	100,100	12,690.00	12.67%
		Rehab Revenue	43,582	43,127.82	98.98%
		Miscellaneous	56,300	14,990.04	26.62%
		Federal Fund	541,500	292,956.64	54.10%

Total - 4,964,500

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

After removing the non-allowed expenditures, the 15% reserve for FFY15 has been met in addition to \$171,620.48 of the FFY16 requirement. The 15% reserve for FFY16 is \$379,109.55 which means \$207,489.07 more needs to be expended prior to September 30, 2017. The current FFY17 15% reserve requirement is \$219,219.90. As a refresher, the 15% reserve is required for each grant award the agency receives; the current grant award for FFY17 is \$1,461,466.00.

We are currently undergoing a single audit which started the 2nd week of January. The single audit is a financial audit of the agency, and is required for any program receiving more than \$750,000. There is no update on the Management Audit from last year. The Management audit is based on internal controls of the agency and this last audit focused on the Business Enterprise Program. Beth and Trina had a visit from the State Controller and were discussing the STARS system, which is the financial system for the state of Idaho. It has been used since 1991 and the State Controller is looking at replacing it, which could cost millions. We expressed to the State Controller that the STARS system is not accessible nor is their website.

Consumer Input:

Tony Bridges – Tony knows there were some concerns and comments about the BEP survey, including how the survey was conducted, who receives the responses, and who responded to the survey. Tony wanted to speak on behalf of the vendors. We have some vendors that speak out, we have vendors that speak to the IBMC (Idaho Blind Merchant Council) board members, and then we have vendors that speak to the Board members but don't really SPEAK OUT. Sometimes members of the IBMC Board get labeled as the bad guys when they speak out for their members. It makes it really hard to move forward when you are elected by your peers to speak on their behalf, when they feel that they do not have a voice on particular situations. The IBMC board members are the voices for vendors on things they cannot express themselves or are not comfortable doing. We all know that this agency is based on disability. The vendors do not want to be put into a situation that makes them feel they are a burden or that they are asking for a handout, it's a sensitive subject. There are a lot of vendors that would like to speak up, but are not willing to because they are afraid. They are not going to express themselves to the SLA (BEP staff). Tony does not know who he should go to talk to, to get things going for vendors if it's an issue that the IBMC Board does not know how to handle. Vendors are going to accept a lot of things that they don't agree with, and Tony is looking for direction, he would love to call somebody and ask for guidance and not feel like he is the bad guy.

Commissioner Raubenheimer asked if there is anybody or group that you would feel comfortable speaking with, or would you feel more comfortable going directly to Beth, without going to Scott or Corey, or coming directly to the ICBVI Board. Tony responded that he does not have an answer for that. It's more of a personnel thing for a vendor, to feel comfortable enough to go to the SLA indicating for example: I'm uncomfortable with this account you have given me, etc.

Commissioner Gibson made comments about Tony's concerns, that it's an understanding of the philosophy of blindness, most people have their own perspective on their own individual visual impairment. When you communicate with someone that has not had the same experiences that you have, that ability to connect is difficult, and can be restrictive because of the limited understanding. He

believes, that dialog is the most important thing and to continue that dialog, with the agency or whomever you choose, and try to identify with someone that most closely matches your own philosophy.

Beth wants to reach out to vendors and increase mutual respect and get to know them better, increase the communication, so that vendors will feel more comfortable about expressing issues or concerns and that there will be no repercussion of speaking out.

Commissioner Raubenheimer feels that we need to figure out better ways to make sure people can express themselves more easily. How do we improve this communication day to day, how do we make the survey broader to get more responses? Thank you Tony for talking to us today and these are issues we need to improve and follow-up on.

NFB of Idaho Update /Dana Ard – It's a busy time of year as we are looking for more opportunities to get the word out about visual impairments and blindness. Kevin Pirney has been working on getting our website linked to other websites, and we also have a wonderful newsletter we put together. We just recently had the legislative luncheon in January, where we had 72 participants, good job to Jan and Harry Gawith for putting this together. Thank you to Beth for coming. Dana just recently went to the presidential conference in Washington, DC to have input on universities here in Idaho being more accessibility, and also working on the refundable tax credit for people that purchase blind technology. The NFB Idaho State Convention is March 23-25, 2017 here in Boise. At the reception on Thursday, the NFB Scholarship winners will be announced. The NFB will have a STEM program this summer, and a Jernigan Scholarship given at the National Convention.

Daniel Solis (BEP Vendor) – he is concerned about the survey for BEP and the accessibility in communicating for the blind. He is also concerned that ICBVI job opportunities are only filled by sighted people, maybe blind people need to step up their game when applying.

Al Schneider – reminded folks of the upcoming NFB Cycle for Independence in May, they do have a website on this.

Commissioner Raubenheimer noted that the Board will be proceeding with discussion of Amber Beck's comments that were brought up at the last ICBVI Board meeting in the Executive Session.

MOTION: The ICBVI Board will conduct an Executive Session, as allowed by Idaho Code Section 74-206(b), to hear or discuss an evaluation, complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member, individual agent or public school student. Made by Commissioner Payne.

Roll Call Vote to move into Executive Session 74-206(b) at 11:55 a.m.:

Commissioner Raubenheimer: Yes
Commissioner Payne: Yes
Commissioner Gibson: Yes
Commissioner Schneider: Yes
Commissioner Walker: Yes

The ICBVI Board reconvened back into regular session at 1:50 p.m. with the following motions:

MOTION:

The ICBVI Board asks ICBVI Administrator Beth Cunningham and Corey Bresina to work with BEP Vendors to put a policy in place for future transfers of BEP locations. Made by Commissioner Payne and seconded by Commissioner Walker, all were in favor.

MOTION:

The ICBVI Board asks ICBVI Administrator Beth Cunningham to seek the counsel of the Attorney General's Office concerning what are proprietary or non-proprietary assets as related to the 365 Micro Markets. Made by Commissioner Schneider, seconded by Commissioner Payne, all were in favor.

STATEMENT:

The ICBVI Board received a letter from a member of the public and they direct Beth Cunningham to contact the Attorney General's office to seek legal counsel.

MOTION:

The ICBVI Board recommends that Beth Cunningham receive a 3% increase in pay based on merit effective immediately upon approval from the Governor's office. Made by Commissioner Gibson, seconded by Commissioner Walker, all were in favor.

Independent Living & Sight Restoration Program Report – Nancy Wise:

The Rehab Teachers (RT) continue to be a very busy group. They are currently serving 516 OB and 65 IL clients and provide VR assessments and training.

On January 9th we had a RT conference call and we welcomed Steve Achabal back and discussed bringing everyone together, in person, for a day or two of information/training, and other options including group, or set training, one-on-one training as they encounter a specific need, or possible webinars.

April has provided a survey for all teachers to complete with our goal to get all Rehab Teachers on the same page teaching basic AT skills in each region.

We had a great discussion on AT devices and have scheduled another call February 27th. (Amazon Echo, Echo Dot, Kindle Fire, Apple TV Remote, KNFB Reader, downloading books with BARD).

Nancy attended the State independent Living Council (SILC) quarterly business meeting February 7-8, 2017. Several memberships to the council had term expiration dates and she is happy to say Candy Harris's application was reviewed and approved unanimously! She will be an outstanding advocate for the blind and visually impaired!

Commission staff will be participating at the Idaho State Capital on February 21, 2017 – 9:00 am – 2:00 pm for Fred Riggers Disability Awareness Day. Fred Riggers is another example of a true advocate. He began visiting the State Capitol over 17 years ago.

CDA Peer Support Group - Jodi Powell is starting a small support group for 3 young men between the ages of 31 and 40 who are musicians. The first meeting is on February 10th with a VR client who has a music recording studio in his home and has been involved with numerous musicians in the California area. He and his wife are very excited about hosting this group and all anticipate a regular monthly scheduled meeting.

Twin Falls Support Group Facilitation - Linda Croft is now in her 11th year as the group facilitator for the Senior Support Group in Burley, and has only missed one meeting due to illness. She lives in Heyburn but the group meets at the Burley Senior Center the last Friday of the month.

In 2005 Linda was forced into retirement from my 34-year-long profession as a speech-language pathologist because she caught the flu in 2004 and lost a good percentage of her hearing. She reported she went on disability because of her legal blindness and suddenly found a lot of time to do things she didn't have before. Linda was asked by the previous facilitator of the support group for the blind and visually impaired to speak to the group about her life as a person living with vision impairment. She spoke to the group in March, 2006 and attended the May meeting as well. In June the facilitator called Linda and asked her to take the leadership of the group. Linda had never done anything like that, but agreed to the new experience. Since she already had plans to attend a convention when the group's July meeting was to take place, she began her new role as group facilitator in August, 2006.

Linda reports, "At this same time I learned from Linda Upton who was the ICBVI rehabilitation teacher in Twin Falls about the Hadley School for the Blind and began taking correspondence courses from them. I took the two classes they had on support groups for the visually impaired. These were a lot of help in getting me started.

The loss of my profession as a speech pathologist left a large hole in my heart as I enjoyed working with people who have speech and language disorders. The job with the support group gave me back the chance to help others and has allowed me to be part of a wonderful group of people who just happen to have visual impairments as I do."

One of the group's favorite activities is to have Brenda Knight come and help solve various problems such as how to label garments for color, new cooking techniques, and equipment demonstrations. The group enjoys listening to old time radio shows which Linda has a collection of. Sometimes they end up talking about their vision problems and help each other with solutions. Another example was helping a member think through the problem of getting a service dog for a companion. He needed to decide on what type of dog to get.

NFB NEWSLINE - Linda Croft also began using Newsline in 2006 as a telephone user. She states she has watched Newsline expand into a program with multiple user choices for connecting to it and many different kinds of material including magazines and state news from ICBVI. Linda likes the ability to read actual newspaper articles for the depth they give. She reads the Idaho Associated Press for news much of the time, but enjoys the Statesman and Idaho Falls Post Register. She has read election information, including party platforms, the Idaho Federation of the Blind newsletter, national news in which she has followed such things as tornados in North Carolina where her cousins live and a story about a UFO hoax in Colorado. She loves reading Guide Posts and the AARP magazine among others, and uses the TV channel schedule.

"Newsline" is an excellent tool for the blind and visually impaired and is well worth keeping."

VRA/Sight Restoration Program - The VRA's have served 61 applicants this SFY. They all continue to work very hard seeking similar benefits to reduce costs to the individual and agency.

Nancy appreciates Guyla's help with fielding SR calls. Guyla was excited to announce her retirement with her last working day to be February 24, 2017. Guyla interviewed in 1986 with Howard Barton, Administrator, and Ed Easterling, Rehab Services Chief for the open position in Lewiston. She received a

phone call from Ed offering her the position on January 13. Guyla states, "This was one of the best days of my life."

Guyla is very knowledgeable in her field. She loves serving people and is very kind and compassionate with our clients. No matter how overwhelmed Guyla might be she always has time for staff and clients. She has always taken pride in providing excellent customer service and is a great representative of our agency. She will be missed!

The VRA's and Heidi have been working with Collene on the new A & A system, who in turn works with Tom in getting all the kinks out.

We had our quarterly conference call on January 30th. We discussed and updated the SR Manual to reflect our current practices. Lynn Vaughn provided Low Vision Clinic information, and provided regions with updated patient forms along with the 2017 clinic schedule. Collene is always available for questions as well.

SR Success Story from Lewiston – An SR client experienced severe bilateral cataracts with 20/300 in one eye and 20/80 in the other eye, which reduced with glare and was restored to 20/20 so that she could maintain her employment as an upholsterer with a local boat company.

Through this experience the local company was purchased by a corporation who informed her that she would be on leave 60 days without pay as she posed a liability for the company due to her vision. She was expected to restore her vision and return to work within that time period.

Through the assistance with the SR Program with support, surgery and glasses coupled with the great discounts the physician's provided, she was able to maintain her employment to help support her family resulting in her ability to remain socially and economically independent contributing to her community and paying taxes once again. As the client reports, it makes her feel relieved to work with the ability to maintain her home and stability in her life.

Low Vision Clinic - As of 1/1/17 the LV Clinic is now an in network provider for PacificSource Insurance. Lynn is still working with BrightPath to credential us with SelectHealth and a letter arrived yesterday confirming the completion of the process – Kudos to Lynn! The clinic schedule is near full for January which is fantastic considering how bad the weather has been. We continue to strengthen our professional relationships with area eye specialists who refer most of the patients to the LV clinic.

Dr. Hansen Report - "I have enjoyed working with ICBVI for the past 12 years since coming to work at the Low Vision Clinic. It was my goal when starting; to help ICBVI become a referral source to the medical community in the different regional locations. I wanted to provide help for patients who have experienced impaired vision from a variety of causes including degenerative diseases, trauma or congenital origins. I feel we have developed important relationships with medical providers over the past years. Our referrals are up significantly and our appointment schedule is backed up nearly a month for open appointments for new patients. The tone of our referral letters has changed dramatically with the various medical offices asking us questions and requesting our help routinely in the impression and plan section of their examination forms. Making the Low Vision Clinic accessible to the various medical providers in each region has also allowed our IL Program to increase its utilization rates. Many of the patients I see in the Low Vision Clinic in both the Boise and Idaho Falls Regions have not had any previous contact with the Commission. They are very grateful when they learn there are programs and people available to help them deal with their visual impairment. I am currently working at the Boise Clinic about 4 days a month. I also see low vision patients for the Idaho Falls and Pocatello Region at my

private practice. This has been a benefit for Matt Queen who sends approximately 6 to 8 clients a month for services and to determine if they can benefit from the VR programs offered by ICBVI. I visit the Twin Falls, Lewiston and Coeur d Alene Regions about one time a year. I would love to increase our presence there. The regional staff is very good and takes great care of the clients in their respective regions. I have made myself available to them by E mail any time and I visit with them about visual needs of clients in between our yearly visits. We are very lucky to have so many dedicated staff members on our ICBVI team. I have considered it a great opportunity to work with so many people who are truly dedicated to helping our clients be successful and learn to deal with their various visual impairments. I am grateful and proud of our state for making this commitment to help those with low vision learn to use what vision they have left and benefit from the programs that we offer here at the Commission for the Blind. The most common comment I receive when I first visit with a client is "why didn't my doctor tell me about these services earlier?" That comment has become my mission statement making my goal to continue to work more and more with the public and medical community by helping them become aware of the benefits both they and their patients can experience by coming in contact with our organization and staff."

One last comment. Thank you for letting me be part of this team. We have wonderful people who really care and are a pleasure to work with.

Commissioner Raubenheimer – thank you to Guyla for her years of service to the ICBVI. Thank you to Lynn for getting us accredited and thank you to Dr. Hansen for his years of service to ICBVI.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Report – Mike Walsh:

Federal Reporting - RSA-113 report was completed and submitted on Oct 3rd.

WIOA Update -

Pre-Employment Transition Services - There has been further guidance on what are allowable expenses under ADA's title II implementing regulations that define "auxiliary aids and services". The guidance is somewhat less than clear; which is why it has not been communicated to the field yet. We will be discussing it at the next Region 10 Chief's meeting to ensure we are all communicating the guidance consistently to our counselors.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) – We have finalized the contract with the University of Washington for our CSNA. Work should start sometime this month or early February. The contract cost is up a little bit (\$33,000), as we added some work around PETS.

Common Performance Measures – There has been some significant movement on the MOU since last quarter. The US DOL has issued a "draft" MOU. Jeanie Meholchick (IDOL Deputy AG) is coordinating a meeting this month to have preliminary discussions on the SWIS (State Wage Interchange System) and Data Sharing agreements.

One Stop Systems – This is another WIOA requirement. Both Mike and Beth and all of our core partners are involved in the planning and development of the system. There will be one physical location for a One Stop Center (Idaho Falls), and the rest of the state will provide services via the "system."

Customized Employment – IDVR is getting technical assistance from a WINTAC Center, and has invited us to participate. Our understanding of customized employment is continuing to evolve, much like any WIOA directive. We had an initial all day meeting with WINTAC last week, and are moving forward with plans to partner with IDVR with 5 pilot projects across the state.

Live Better Idaho (<https://www.livebetteridaho.org>) is an important part of the One Stop System. ICBVI has a presence on the site. Raelene will be maintaining our presence on this site.

MOU’s – Mike and Beth met with IDVR and Tribal representatives to discuss a 3-way MOU. The meeting was a success, and we have a draft MOU which will be signed soon (CdA tribe raved about our CdA regional office).

Mike updated the MOU with IESDB, and sent it to Brian and Paula for their review.

Special Programs / Events - Tools for Life – Registration is full. Twin Falls is normally considered the Boise area (in terms of conference registration) but Linda was allowed to register several of her students. Matt, Linda, Rocio (and maybe others) will be attending the conference.

College Days - Scheduled for 6/11 – 6/16 2017 - The agenda is tentatively set, Speakers have been, or are being, identified for each session and tentatively include: Lance Kaldor (IDOL), Larry L Lewis, Founder/CEO of Flying Blind LLC, Danielle Trevino, former social media director at the National Federation of the Blind, Josh Loya, a nationally recognized AT specialist and martial arts expert

The application has been made available to counselors, TVIs and community partners to distribute to potentially eligible individuals, counselors identified 20 potential participants state wide, there is currently 1 applicant from Rocio’s caseload.

Changes - Sessions will be 3 hour, interactive sessions; hiring more “speakers” session leads than before; activities will begin Sunday; more Rehab Teacher participation; hiring more content expert support because the Work Readiness camp in Gooding will run at the same time and some of our counselors and our ATC staff will be involved with WRC and SWEP.

Potential Community partners - BSU Career Center; BSU Education Access Center; Leading Edge Vision; National Federation of the Blind of Idaho; Adult Basic Education; Department of Labor; Toast Masters

Assistive Technology and Social Media:

Social Media - November 10, 2016 – February 2, 2017

Type	Description	Number	Other
Total number of fans	Number of people who have “liked” our page	299 (+7 since last report)	12 people have unliked the page

Average Daily Reach	The # of people, each day, who see content from ICBVI	29.08 over 84 days	Previous report 47.41 over 93 days
Negative comments	Meaning that a viewer hid a post, or marked it as spam	1	Decrease of 2 from last report
Average daily Engagement	On average, the number of people who engage with the page daily.	2.79	5.16 last report
Total video views		15 over 84 days	4 previous 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.	132 (decrease of 189)	311 last report

Assistive Technology

- Training: 67 hours
- Assessment: 11 (1 Pre-Employment Transition Student)
- Job Sites:
 - JC Penny Salon: 1 hour
 - SHIP in Boise – 2 hours
 - Qualfon in Coeur d’ Alene: 1 hour (remote)
- Technical Assistance (includes staff, clients and community members):6 hours & 10 individuals
- Provided Professional Development: 2 hours
- Public/Community Events:
 - Attended the quarterly Idaho Assistive Technology Project Advisory Council meeting in January
 - Scott Pearl and Laine participated in a meeting with DRI, SILC and NW-ADA in the Lt. Gov.’s office to discuss and raise awareness of agency web site accessibility. DRI was approached by the ACLU to find out what Idaho is doing to address web accessibility and it sounds as though ACLU is looking for a target for a web accessibility law suit in the region.

Transition students and pre-employment transition services - Beth and Mike met with Billy Henry and Stacey Gibbons of the NW Association of Blind Athletes. Counselors have been asked to reach out to the association to plan regional activities. They may also be participating in our summer programs.

We currently have close to 70 transition students (includes youth in post-secondary education). Counselors are currently making summer plans for all of their students, and putting together budget projections.

Business Services and Engagement -

Jackie/Region 1 - is working closely with Qualfon, a local call center. Jackie is close to placing a blind client working at their call center. He will be working for Serius/XM. It seems to be the consensus this will be the first placement like this in Idaho, or possibly even the country.

Shane/Region 2 - currently has 3 transition students participating in community based work experiences over the past quarter with placements at Head Start (accounting department), Adcope Athletic Club (maintenance) and The Life Care Center (activities assistant). They have 3 more placements pending that include the Winchester Community Library, the L-C Boys & Girls Club and the Riverside Veterinary clinic in Orofino.

Jeff/Region 3 - has been working more with IDOL in Canyon County with employer engagement. Jeff is also involved with the development of the One Stop system in the Treasure Valley (TV).

Linda/Region 4 - attended Annual Hiring Event at Twin Falls Magic Valley Mall. She also reached out to Deseret Industries (DI) and discussed the DI Work program and she was given a tour of the facility. Linda placed an IESDB student at Simerly's Grocery Store in Wendell. The student is doing a great job and has moved from courtesy clerk to working on the floor unloading freight and stocking shelves. When he has completed this work experience he will know many functions of the grocery business.

Matt/Region 5 & 6 - has engaged with multiple employers to determine the needs of the employers and hopefully to place students there this summer. Two of the hopeful business partners are 3 Peaks Financial and Straightedge Auto Restoration.

Program Statistics - Average hourly wage for successful closures in FFY 2016:

CdA - \$13.00 an hour (job titles LPN, Insurance Agent, Cashier, Admin Assistant)
Lewiston - \$12.36 an hour (job titles Manager, Cashier, Consultant, Vehicle Detailer)
Idaho Falls - \$12.89 an hour (job titles Cook, Child Care, Teacher, Home Health)
Pocatello - \$11.14 an hour (job title Social Worker, Nurses Aid, Manager, Mechanic)
Twin Falls - \$12.10 an hour (job title Janitor, Truck Driver, Carpet Installer, Landscaper)
Treasure Valley 1 - \$14.87 an hour (Teacher, Computer Tech, Cook, Mechanic)
Treasure Valley 2 - \$12.71 an hour (Admin Assistant, Truck Driver, Customer Service, Child Care)

Current Caseload numbers as of January 2017 (Total of 374 active clients)

CDA – 41; LEW – 67; TV 1 – 75; TV 2 – 71; TWF – 32; POC -30; IF – 58

Regional Updates:

CdA - Over the winter break, Jackie conducted some career workshops with her students. Jackie (and Kevin) are helping to organize the IESDB summer Work Readiness camp. Jackie serves as the ICBVI state Deaf-Blind specialist, and serves on the Helen Keller (HK) National Center National Community of Practice (NCOP) board. Jackie is planning a trip to the HK Institute as part of her professional development. Jackie services on the Kootenai County Emergency preparedness coalition as the representative for special populations.

Lewiston - On October 28th the Northwest Association for Blind Athletes sponsored an activity at the Hamilton Recreation center in Moscow. Eight blind individuals participated in goal ball, target shooting and tandem biking. Team Lewiston has a meeting scheduled on March 1st on the Nez Perce Tribe Nimiipuu Optical where Guyla, Gayle and Shane will meet with Dr. Ilene Huh and her staff to talk about how we can make the best use of each other's services and resources. Three Lewiston transition students have requested and plan on attending the NFB-Idaho state conference March 24-26th.

Treasure Valley - We have an intern from the University of Idaho Rehab Counseling program doing her practicum here at the commission. Her first two weeks have been spent in the ATC. She is a great student, and a joy to have with us! Rocio and Laine are working on an outreach project intended to engage Special Ed (SPED) Teachers and School Counselors with the purpose to educate them on our employment services and programs. Rocio now serves as our agency representative on the Idaho Interagency Transition Council, and is assisting Dan Dyer in the planning of the Tools for Life Conference. Jeff has been appointed as our National Employment Team (NET) Representative for the VR program. Jeff is our Joining Forces Treasure Valley Representative –This is a group of agencies and organizations for veteran services in the TV. There are two groups, one in Ada County and one in Canyon County, and they meet once a month.

Twin Falls - Linda coordinated and participated in a function with a few of her students with the Northwest Association of Blind Athletes. In December, Linda took 3 transition students to St. Edward's Soup Kitchen to volunteer and serve dinner.

Idaho Falls / Pocatello - Matt has been working closely with the SPED Ed departments in the Idaho Falls school districts, although the Pocatello school district has been somewhat challenging in identify potential referrals. Matt has been leaning on his community partner (IESDB) in Pocatello to identify referrals, and help in the outreach to the school district. Matt is actively involved with the One Stop Center in Idaho Falls. Matt continues to serve on the Bonneville County Transition Team and is assisting in the planning of the Tools for Life Conference in March. Matt will be attending this conference.

VR Spotlight - Frank Guensor is a 67 year-old man who lives in central Coeur d' Alene with his wife and grandson. Frank was first referred to our agency by North Idaho Eye Institute. Frank has a severe form of Keratoconus, which causes him to have severe and significant vision loss.

When Jackie first spoke to Frank he shared that he had a desire to work, but that he had doubts about his ability to return to employment due to his vision loss and his advanced age. He also shared that his

family was financially struggling and he felt helpless to assist in financial stability. After a great deal of discussion about Frank's life and hobbies, he shared that his greatest passion in life is bee keeping. Together Frank and I developed a small business plan that would incorporate Frank's passion and allow him to contribute financially to his family. Thus, Cedar Gate Apiary was born.

Frank has done the vast majority of the work. He knows his business very well. Frank's hives are kept in his yard, and will soon expand to a neighbor's yard as well. He also did the research to find out the laws of honey production and sales. He has developed his business image. Frank is the only local in Coeur d' Alene in the honey business. Honey is utilized by people to reduce their seasonal allergies. The more local the honey, the better the results in allergy reduction, thus his honey is very highly sought after. He is currently selling by word of mouth and social media. There is a very popular local grocery store that has sought him out to sell in their brick and mortar store. At the moment his production is not high enough to meet their demands, but he is growing and hopes to be able to provide them 1,000 jars in the summer of 2017.

As an additional arm to his business Frank is hoping to begin to hold classes and seminars for other residents who are interested in having hobby hives. There seems to be a great deal of interest in Bee Keeping. Frank has a huge wealth of knowledge to share with others in the community.

The Commission for the Blind has provided Frank with custom contact lenses to maximize his functional vision. Skills of blindness training, some bee keeping supplies that have dramatically improved his production abilities, a new printer and supplies for printing labels and jars to put honey in and VR Counseling and guidance throughout the duration of his plan. Frank has been an excellent VR Client. He has been self-motivated, organized and very determined. Frank would like to thank the Idaho Commission for the Blind for, "Believing in him when he did not believe in himself".

Assessment and Training Center Program Report – Greg Metsker:

There are currently 12 students in the ATC, 6 attend full time and 6 are attending part time. Half of the students are staying in the dorms. February 10th is the mid-term report writing day for the staff, so this term is moving right along. March 17th is the last day of the winter term. We have students from Boise, Meridian, Twin Falls, and Pinehurst, Idaho this term. The snow and the cold made for an interesting start to the term, with days where I wasn't sure just what combination of students and staff would be able to make it into the center. Hopefully we are through the worst of it by now. The Mobility students definitely got a good chance to practice their snow travel skills. Kevin was telling me about a student just a few days ago who was struggling to complete his mobility route because the snow had melted off the sidewalks which totally changed the student's perspective in terms of the landmarks he had been using the first few weeks of the term when everything was covered with snow. We always tell students that we will go out on mobility lessons, no matter what the weather may be, but the first few weeks of this term really tested our commitment to that practice.

On January 27th our students participated in their first Activity Day of the winter term. They decided to go snow tubing at Bogus Basin in the morning, then get lunch in the lodge afterward. It turned out to be

a great activity, although there were quite a few of the students who admitted to being fairly hesitant about it at first. I did not attend the activity this time, but I knew it was a good one when the students and staff returned to the building and I heard excited voices and a lot of laughter as they assembled in the conference room to discuss how the day went. Everyone who attended indicated that they had a great time and several students mentioned that they would not have believed they could do this sort of thing as a person who is blind. Sliding down the hill, finding the rope tow to get back up the hill and finding the launch point again at the top of the hill all proved to be easily done and it sounds like they made plenty of runs down the hill during their session. Scott Pearl maintained his tradition of screaming "I'm going to die" as he made his first run down the hill, which made everyone laugh. The buffet lines, short order grills, soda fountains and seemingly random table placement in the lodge, combined with crowds of people at lunch time made for some interesting challenges and then comments later in the day when we discussed how the activity went. It was a good chance for some students to test their mobility skills, and for some students who are in that fiercely independent stage of their training to realize that sometimes it is OK to ask for assistance. All in all it was a very good day. I believe the students are planning to do a progressive meal which will take them to a handful of downtown Boise restaurants for their February activity day. That should be interesting. I can't recall that we have done that in the years I have been in the ATC, but we have a student who knows someone who coordinates that kind of thing for people. I think the students are even planning the March activity as well, and I heard them talking about going out to Wahooz in Meridian to do Laser Tag. That is always a fun activity and there are always great stories about who shot who, and how people hid from one another, or didn't hide too well. All the staff and students wear shades for that activity. As always, we get comments from students afterwards about how they hadn't been out to a restaurant since they lost their vision, or how they would have never believed that they could still tube, or climb a rock wall, or bike down the greenbelt, or go fishing, or enjoy a museum, or any of the variety of things we do for activities.

During the week of March 20th, we will be offering the ATC Discovery Days program for the third year in a row. As of this writing, I haven't received any applications, but they were only delivered to the Counselors a couple of weeks ago. As you probably recall, it is just a chance for clients who aren't sure about training, or maybe can't devote a big chunk of time for training to come in and see what the ATC is all about. After the last two Discovery Days weeks, the majority of the participants ended up coming back to the center at some point for more training, which is exactly what we hoped would happen. Discovery Days is as much about marketing the center as it is about offering a short term option to clients who need it.

Larry is already making plans for the SWEP 2017. We have a dozen or so staff from last year who wish to return this year, as well as a handful of resumes from new folks who are interested in being SWEP staff and we haven't even posted the staff jobs on the DHR website yet. That is particularly good news as we will be hiring more staff this year in order to support the kids at their job sites. We have been working with a CRP the last 7 or 8 years to provide that support and training, but we are going to hire our own folks this year. We have also added an additional week to SWEP so the students will get to work an extra week.

Larry is also working with Canyon County to get their voting polls accessible.

Kevin Jernigan is representing the ATC on the committee that is planning the Work Readiness Camp at IESDB this year. Jackie Stallings is also part of that group, and they have met two or three times already to plan for this year's program, which will be held June 12-14, 2017 on the IESDB campus in Gooding. The tentative agenda already looks good. It should be a valuable program again this year, for kids who are 14 to 17 years old or so, and aren't ready for SWEP yet, but need a chance to start thinking about career exploration and what sorts of skills and preparation they need to have in place to become employed.

New Business:

The ICBVI Board would like to hold their next meeting in Idaho Falls or Lewiston on May 22nd or 23rd. After this meeting, ICBVI Board Assistant Raelene Thomas, researched travel options and it was determined it was too expensive to fly staff and ICBVI Board to Idaho Falls, and much cheaper to get them to Lewiston. The next meeting will be held at the Red Lion Inn in Lewiston on May 23rd.