

Idaho Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2015

Board Members present: Britt Raubenheimer, Chair; Mike Gibson, Vice-Chair; Sue Payne; Al Schneider and Travis Beck.

Staff present: Nancy Wise, Raelene Thomas, Greg Metsker, Trina Ayres, Gina Washburn, and Kevin Jernigan

Guests present: Ramona Walhof, Susan Bradley, Travis Frach, Allison Pearson, Shirley Mendenhall, Jed Deemer, Louis Blank, Melissa Lambert, and John Kennewick.

The agency mission statement was read by Raelene Thomas.

MOTION to approve the agenda for January 23, 2015, as stated. Motion made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Gibson – all in favor.

MOTION to approve the minutes from October 3, 2014 and January 12, 2015. Motion made by Commissioner Beck, seconded by Commissioner Payne – all in favor.

Administrator's Report – Nancy Wise:

The Administrator's Report will include the presentation to the Joint Finance Appropriations Committee which was included as part of this board meeting.

Slide #1 - Presentation to: Joint Finance & Appropriations Committee
By Nancy Wise, Acting Administrator
Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
January 23, 2015

Slide #2 – Five Member Governor Appointed Board
ICBVI's Chair is from Sandpoint, she is a blind Associate Scientist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution since 2004, and employed there since 1999. She is the only blind scientist certified by the American Academy of Underwater Scuba.

ICBVI's Vice Chair is from Nampa, he is an Assistive Technology Coordinator, working at Boise State University for 7 years. He has been in the rehabilitation and disability support services field for 14 years.

Garden City Commissioner is a visually impaired retired high school teacher who has served on the Board for 3 years. He is active in the community including the Idaho Chapter of the National Federation for the Blind, a peer support group, and the Lions Club.

Boise Commissioner, who is sighted, is a retired Vocational Rehabilitation Chief with over 30 years of

service to the State of Idaho, working for ICBVI and IDVR. She has been an active volunteer for over 20 years in the community and currently organizes all the ushers for shows at the Morrison Center for the Performing Arts.

Idaho Falls Commissioner is a visually impaired small business owner and also a Business Enterprise Vendor. As a teenager he attended ICBVI's Summer Work Experience Program and had training in the Assessment and Training Center.

Slide #3 - ICBVI's goal is to provide direct service training to eligible blind and visually impaired so they can become employed and contribute independently to their own well-being.

What is legally blind? 20/200 best corrected.

There are over 33,000 citizens in Idaho who experience a severe vision loss (*American Foundation for the Blind*). The term vision loss refers to individuals who reported they have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses or contact lenses, as well as those who are blind or unable to see at all.

Slide #4 – ICBVI's Programs

ICBVI's main office is in Boise and we administer several programs: Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living, Older Blind, Business Enterprise Program, Assessment and Training Center, Summer Work Experience Program, and Sight Restoration services as well as a store and a low vision clinic. The regional offices are located in Coeur d'Alene, Lewiston, Twin Falls, Pocatello and Idaho Falls.

Slide #5 - Clients served in FFY 2014 in the Independent Living, Independent Living Older Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation & Sight Restoration Programs – Total 1,359 (this number does not include an additional 463 one time services) for a total of 1,822.

Coeur d'Alene – 225; Lewiston - 198; Treasure Valley - 424; Twin Falls – 169; Pocatello – 141; and Idaho Falls – 202.

Slide #6 – Vocational Blind Rehabilitation - This ICBVI program assists people with visual impairments or blindness to establish and reach vocational goals by providing specialized blind training, guidance, assessments, counseling and assistive technology. ICBVI also provides training for current or potential employers.

Clients served in the Vocational Blind Rehabilitation program - 2011 – 475; 2012 – 506; 2013 – 496; 2014 – 515.

In CDA, ICBVI assisted a young woman who is totally Blind to obtain her social work degree and she is now working at a specialty hospital. She is no longer on SSDI and is making \$84,000 a year.

In Twin Falls, ICBVI assisted a lady who has physical impairment besides a visual impairment, she is now working as an Administrative Assistant making \$31,628 per year with full employer benefits.

In Idaho Falls, ICBVI assisted a client who suffered a stroke and lost half of his vision. He is now a Physical Therapy Assistant and makes \$19.00 an hour.

Slide #7 – Average Wage at Closure – 2010 – \$12.76; 2011 – \$13.53; 2012 - \$13.54; 2013 - \$12.05
Our blind individual rehabs earn more per hour than the national average (Rehabilitation Services

Administration – FFY 2013 State Vocational Rehabilitation Performance Chart).

Slide #8 – Cost Per Rehabilitation: The cost per rehabilitation of a VR client:

- Idaho Blind - \$5,499
- Michigan Blind - \$14,398
- Minnesota Blind - \$27,272
- Missouri Blind - \$14,078
- New Mexico Blind - \$22,185
- New York Blind - \$16,333
- Oregon Blind - \$13,108

Idaho spends less than the national blind agency average per client. (Rehabilitation Services Administration – FFY 2013 - State Vocational Rehabilitation Performance Chart)

Slide #9 - Summer Work Experience Program - A five week program providing employment experience to transition age students ages 14-21. Students from around the state held jobs at Computers for Kids, Ada County Drug Court, St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store, The Bridge Café, and YMCA here in Boise this past summer.

Slide #10 – ICBVI Store - We had \$253,000 in store sales this year, selling talking clocks and watches, magnifiers, canes, protective eyewear, cooking utensils, and other low vision aids.

Slide #11 – Independent Living/Older Blind Program - This ICBVI program has Rehabilitation Teachers who specialize in blind skills training. The Rehabilitation Teachers go into individuals' homes throughout the state to teach skills such as home management (cooking/cleaning), orientation and mobility (travel), communication and computer literacy. The program also trains family members about blindness and has peer support groups throughout the state. ICBVI assists peer support groups located in New Plymouth, Heyburn, Boise, Moscow, Pocatello, Coeur d'Alene, Twin Falls, Sandpoint, Weiser, Eagle, Blackfoot, and Jerome.

Slide #12 – Independent Living/Older Blind Program – continued - ICBVI also served an additional 431 people in the Low Vision clinic located in Boise and through rural clinics held in Twin Falls, Lewiston, and Coeur d'Alene.

Through this specialized training seniors acquire skills that delay the need for assisted living or nursing home care which can save \$36,000-\$60,000 per person per year. Again our goal is to teach them to help themselves and remain independent.

Increase in clients is due to Macular Degeneration, which is the leading cause of blindness for those over the age of 55.

Independent Living Served numbers for last 10 years:

2005 – 465; 2006 – 485; 2007 – 516; 2008 – 644; 2009 – 714; 2010 – 804; 2011 – 799; 2012 – 780; 2013 – 670; 2014 – 780.

Slide #13 – IL Success Stories

In the Pocatello region, staff opened an Independent Living case on a local resident who lives with total vision loss due to a congenital condition. This client requested support for reading mail, and downloading Braille books, and repair of her braille writer and replacing her computer (both had been damaged in a house fire). Staff were able to use a combination of resources from donation funds to purchase a Braille display and used Mac Laptop for downloading and reading Braille materials from the National Library Service. The Boise office donated a talking scanner with optical character reading for use to read her mail. The ICBVI/State Prison Braille Program was able to repair the fire damaged Braille Writer.

In the Twin Falls region, staff assisted an 83-year-old client with decreased vision due to macular degeneration gain independence in using his electronic tablet that his son gave him. ICBVI worked with this client in the past and he receives Veteran's low vision services. He was given instruction on the magnifier accessibility setting for his tablet. The client was then able to Skype with family, email, search the internet, and play games. He no longer drives but his wife does and they deliver Meals On Wheels. He comes across many people with low vision when he delivers meals and refers them to ICBVI.

Slide #14 – Assessment and Training Center - This ICBVI program is an intense course of classes where students learn Braille, computers, travel skills, home maintenance, activities of daily living, job readiness, social skills, and wood shop along with other activities related to confidence, employment, and independent living goals.

Full time students live in the ICBVI dorm rooms and have training in all of these classes, seven hours a day, five days a week. The length of training is anywhere between three – nine months with the primary goal to assist individuals in adapting and adjusting to blindness so they can return to work.

The Assessment and Training Center is funded by VR, so we are unable to serve our increased numbers in the Independent Living Program and Older Blind Program in the training center.

Assessment and Training Center served – 2011 – 44; 2012 – 55; 2013 – 48; 2014 – 32.

Slide#15 – Sight Restoration - ICBVI's Sight Restoration is designed to assist with medical expenses related to procedures which preserve, stabilize, and restore vision. The purpose of these services is to allow individuals to retain their independence at home or to maintain employment. Examples would include cataract extraction, treatment for diabetic retinopathy, or any procedure expected to prevent the onset of legal blindness or make a significant improvement in functional vision.

In the Lewiston Region, ICBVI assisted with bilateral cataract extraction and restored this gentleman's vision to 20/20 so that he could maintain his employment as a heavy equipment operator with Salmon River Rock Company earning \$14.00 per hour to support his family and be productive in his community.

In the Twin Falls Region, ICBVI assisted a client in saving her job with bilateral cataract surgery as she had no medical benefits. The client works 40 hours weekly as a head cashier at Winco Foods, making \$9.55 hourly.

In the Pocatello Region, ICBVI helped a client with bilateral cataract surgeries. He was married and had five children. He worked as a forklift operator, for Idahoan Foods and was in danger of losing his job if he didn't have the cataract surgeries done. He had no private insurance of any kind and would not have been able to have the cataract surgeries done if ICBVI didn't help him with the cost of the surgeries. The surgeries were successful and his vision was restored to 20/25, O.U. and he was able to continue working making \$12.60 an hour.

Slide #16 – Business Enterprise Program - ICBVI currently has 12 licensed vendors in the State of Idaho, running vending and cafeteria locations. These 12 vendors employ 39 individuals.

ICBVI added 7 new sites last fiscal year most notably Job Corps, Idaho State Police, and a freight trucking company (SAIA).

New to the Business Enterprise program are micro markets and we have 5 machines set up in Idaho

Slide #17 – Legislative Budget Book & Audit - The Governor's recommendation for SFY 2016 on page 6-63 of the Legislative Budget Book is:

\$1,325,100 – General; \$326,400 – Dedicated; \$2,983,400 – Federal

ICBVI has 39.12 FTPs

Line item request 1, Legislative Budget book page 6-66, is a one time request to continue to utilize the generous donation received during fiscal year 2011. \$10,000 Operating and \$40,000 Trustee & Benefit

Legislative Audit - ICBVI had three audit findings during the fiscal year 2013 audit that are still open. The fiscal year 2014 audit will begin next week; it is anticipated these findings will be closed at the completion of the current audit.

Slide #18 - At ICBVI our goals are to train Idahoans who have become blind or visually impaired by teaching them skills for employment and independence in the State of Idaho. Thank you.

I am now open for questions.

After returning to ICBVI for the remainder of the Board meeting, Nancy reported that things have been very busy at the Boise office over the last couple of weeks. We have had a few position vacancies, Steve Achabal has taken a management position at the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Lisa Baker is temporarily filling that position to see if it is something she would like to transfer to. We have hired Allison Stevenson to work in the ADL for Lisa. Sandra Marquis has left the Low Vision Clinic as she needed full time work and we have a temporary person in there until we post the position.

We will be experiencing changes due to the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act, which will affect us financially as well as with client services, we do not have anything official as the regulations have not come out yet. We do know that we will have to show that 15% of the VR Grant is being used for Transition Services. We will also have to use half of the \$3,000 Supported Employment Grant on transition and also show that we have a match towards this \$1,500. Commissioner Payne asked if we could lump our totals with the General Agency (IDVR) on the transition count towards the 15% requirement. Trina Ayres replied to this and said we will not know until the regulations come out.

The staff in the ATC, Rehab Teachers for IL, and the VRAs have all started time tracking of any transition cases they are working on since October 1, 2014, which is the beginning of the new federal fiscal year.

Consumer Input:

Melissa is a student in the ATC and has been here for three weeks. Her husband is a professor at Idaho State University, she has Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) and has worked with Heidi Gainan from the Idaho Falls office on mobility and now has had the chance to come to the ATC. She initially felt like coming to the ATC was a last resort and that she was giving up. But she now feels coming here has given her more vision than she ever had. She feels like attending a week long training would be beneficial for those struggling to come to the ATC for a full term of training.

Jed is originally from Virginia and attended the Virginia Blind Commission for six years, which was a lot of cane travel and employment seminars, unlike the one on one training he is getting here at the ATC, which has helped him so much more.

John is in his first week here at ATC and, although he had a lot of anxiety about coming here, he feels very safe and secure here. He is from McCall but was born and raised in Boise.

Lois is working with Larry Henrie in the ATC to improve her assistive technology skills. Before she took mobility here at the ATC she was afraid to navigate stairs, but she is not afraid anymore.

Allissa is from Marsing and has been blind since she was 18 years old. She has not been able to travel independently travel. But since attending the ATC, she has learned to use her cane more efficiently to walk and travel on her own.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Update – Greg Metsker for Bruce Christopherson:

Federal Reporting - The RSA-113 was completed and successfully submitted on January 13th. The RSA - 911 was corrected and submitted to RSA.

Staff Training: The VR Counselor in Lewiston (Shane) completed his Master’s Degree on 12/19/2014. He will sit for the CRC in February 2015.

The Rehabilitation Services Chief and Fiscal Manager attended a meeting on the Work Opportunity Investment Act (WIOA) in December in Portland. It was a valuable meeting in trying to figure out the requirements of WIOA. There will be more discussion at CSAVR in April. TACE paid for the airfare for us to attend the meeting.

One counselor attended leadership training through the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. There was no cost to the agency for this training. Two counselors attended an AER conference in Chico Hot Springs, and one counselor attended training on CIS.

Assistive Technology/Social Media: Laine was nominated to the position of Vice-Chair on the Idaho Assistive Technology Advisory Board.

Special Projects:

Type	VR hours	IL/OB hours
Job site training	8	

Job site assessment/consultation	4	
Training/assessments in Boise office	3	8
In-home training	12	

Social Media:

Type	Description	Number
Total number of fans	Number of people who have “liked” our page	198 (17 since last report)
Average Daily Reach	The # of people, each day, who see content from ICBVI	43.39 (was 24.1)
Negative comments	Meaning that a viewer hid a post, or marked it as spam	.04

Program Development: A Quality Assurance Review was completed of the CDA Office December 4th. A summary from this review was sent to the Administrator for her approval. Findings will then be shared with the rest of the VR staff.

Dana retired at the end of December. Rocio Gil was hired to take her place. She began work on December 29th. She worked at IDVR, and has almost 7 years of experience in vocational rehabilitation. She will be spending 6 weeks in the ATC learning blind skills training.

Program Statistics: Statistically the VR Program is on track with its projections. Through January 16th listed below are the performance statistics for the VR Program;

New applications – 61; Eligibilities – 53; New IPEs – 48; Successful Closures – 19; Rehabilitation Rate – 70.29%

Assessment and Training Center Update – Greg Metsker:

The ATC is much busier this term than it has been for a while. We currently have 12 students and one staff member taking classes. Of the 12 students, 7 of them are full time and 5 are part time. There are 7 students living in the dorms. We have students from all over the state right now, including; Coeur d’ Alene, Pocatello, Marsing, Boise, Moscow, and McCall. Two of our students will be completing their training around February 20th, but we have a couple more clients who are ready to step into those slots at that time so our numbers should remain fairly constant through March.

Lisa Baker is going to be working with Nancy and her team for the next couple of months. She will be filling the position left open by Steve Achabal when he accepted a job at IDVR. Lisa is not certain if she wants to switch jobs permanently, so she will be trying the RT job through March to see if it is

something she might want to do on a permanent basis. In the meantime, Alison Steven is filling in for Lisa in ADL. As you may remember, Alison has helped us out in the past, in ADL, Computers and Braille, so it is an easy transition for her and our clients.

The SWEP 2015 information letter and application forms were sent out to the Counselors on Thursday January 8th. We received our first application a week later on the 15th. If that quick response is any indication, we may have plenty of interest in SWEP once again. We are in the early stages of SWEP planning already. Greg will be meeting with Sonya from Boise Parks and Recreation soon to schedule some of our evening and weekend activities. They always give us first shot when it comes to selecting dates for activities. Greg also spoke recently to Leanne, who was our Assistant SWEP Coordinator last summer and she is interested in working for us again this year. Having her return for a second year will be a tremendous help as we go through the planning phase of the program and once the kids arrive as well. Leanne did a super job last summer.

We will be offering a one-week intensive workshop in the ATC the week of March 16th, for clients who for whatever reason aren't able to come in for training for longer periods of time. Workshop participants will be able to take ATC classes, and get an idea of what the place is like and how training could impact their lives. We are patterning this after a similar workshop that the Orientation and Training Center in Seattle does once or twice a year. Julie Brannon, the Director of the center at the Department of Services for the Blind in Seattle, indicated that their student numbers increased noticeably after they started offering the workshops. It has been a great service to clients, and it has been a good marketing tool for their center. Greg hopes to have the agenda pretty well laid out and an application form created for our March workshop by January 26th.

With the help of the folks at CCER, we have started having quarterly conference calls with the Training Center Managers from Alaska, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. The first call last November was excellent, and a lot of information was shared, including discussion of the workshop idea. Greg enjoyed the opportunity to visit with those folks, and still had a few questions he wanted to ask of the other managers when we ran out of time. Our next call is in February. Eva, from the CCER office is also scheduling calls for AT Instructors and Mobility Instructors, so they can confer quarterly to discuss ideas, trends, new products or anything else that might come up. Larry, Scott, Mel and Kevin will be participating in those calls sometime in the next month. Greg has found over the years that conferring with our peers in other agencies is a great way to learn about new and different methods that people are using to make training more effective and relevant. In addition to those calls, Larry and Scott are making arrangements to confer via telephone with their counterpart, Nikki Jackson, at the Blind Industries and Services of Maryland training center to discuss her unique, project oriented approach to teaching assistive technology. Greg talked to Nikki while he was visiting their center in Baltimore last spring, and liked some of the things she was doing with her curriculum.

Business Enterprise Program Update – Gina Washburn:

Vendor Updates - Bhavani Jorgens has become our most recently licensed vendor. She worked diligently throughout her training and is sure to be a valuable and successful member of the team!

Development & Changes -

The North Idaho Route - This route combines the vending sites in Coeur D'Alene, Lewiston, and Moscow; it has been operated as a contract by a 3rd party for the past year. In December it was put out to bid and

our newest licensee, Bhavani Jorgens, was the sole qualified bidder. She will be moving to North Idaho soon in order to begin her new business as of April 1st. We will be working closely with her over the next few months to make sure she gets off to a fantastic start!

Micro Market Boom - We are in the process of installing 4 new micro market locations in the Boise area. One has already been installed just outside of The Galley in the LBJ Building and is fully operational. The other 3 will be located at City Hall West, City Hall, and the Federal Building. Once the installs are complete we will have a total of 8 in the program.

Square Register Systems - In the next few months we will be transitioning from talking registers to Square iPad registers in at least 3 of our 4 food service locations in the area. These new registers will lower credit card processing fees, provide a complete POS backend software system for total business management, and will allow the user to take advantage of all of iPad's accessibility features.

Gowen Field - The Idaho Blind Merchant's Committee has voted to use all set-aside revenue from Gowen Field as part of their retirement/ health insurance fund rather than as general set-aside funds. This change in allocation will begin with the set-aside payment received this month.

On February 2nd, we will be taking over the Coffee Kiosk at the Federal Building here in Boise. This site will be added to The Galley as they already do the vending in this building.

The RSA 15 Federal Report -

For the second year in a row the achievement markers for the program have gone up as follows:

	2012	2013	2014
Gross Sales	\$1,108,770	\$1,708,509	\$1,929,501
Average Earnings	\$28,186	\$34,973	\$38,133
Median Earnings	\$20,829	\$25,850	\$27,063

The federal arbitration on the past BEP administrative review case has been scheduled for March 10-11, 2015 in the Idaho Falls area. Gina and our Attorney General will be attending this.

Independent Living & Sight Restoration Program Updates – Nancy Wise:

April Mills the Rehabilitation Teacher in Pocatello is working closely with the Brigham Young University of Idaho ADA office to ensure students have access to online curriculum.

Heidi Gainan in the Idaho Falls region has been busier than ever with a record number of ILOB clients. The expected Christmas slow-down never occurred and, thanks to relatively good travel weather, we are out and about seeing new people every day, even up to Challis and Salmon. It seems that word-of-mouth is the primary source of referrals, which means satisfied clients are spreading the word to others, as well as the eye doctors who are referring regularly.

Guyla Tiede was out for 4 weeks on medical leave and is now back to work, working 6 hours a day until she is fully recovered. Special thanks to Marge Coulter for helping cover this workload while Guyla was out.

The next ICBVI Low Vision Clinic is schedule for February 11th and 12th.

Fiscal Update – Trina Ayres:

The state fiscal year 2015 appropriations are as follows; 58.33% of the year has elapsed:

			Expended:	Percentage:	
Personnel	-	General Fund	\$ 659,300	\$ 350,077.74	53.09%
		Federal Fund	1,836,300	968,682.93	52.75%
		Adaptive A & A	18,600	10,134.13	54.48%
Operating	-	General Fund	\$ 48,500	44,734.30	92.23%
		Randolph-Sheppard	27,600	8,301.54	30.07%
		Rehab Revenue (SSA)	34,300	1,136.36	3.31%
		Miscellaneous	28,100	7,872.51	28.01%
		Adaptive A & A	47,900	22,534.91	47.04%
		Federal Fund	576,200	337,589.05	58.58%
Trustee/Benefit	-	General Fund	\$ 599,200	262,048.56	43.73%
		Randolph-Sheppard	100,100	43,419.09	43.37%
		Rehab Revenue	13,000	12,683.77	97.56%
		Miscellaneous	56,300	30,279.28	53.78%
		Federal Fund	541,500	316,447.37	58.43%
Total	-		4,586,900		

The one-time 1% increases were distributed in December. The audit started on Tuesday January 20th and should be done in 2 weeks.

New Business:

The next ICBVI Board meeting has been scheduled for April 9, 2015, held at the Boise Office.

The ICBVI Board Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m. Minutes respectfully submitted by Raelene Thomas on February 9, 2015.