



# National Disability Employment Awareness Month Celebrated By Challenge Unlimited

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**Alton, IL, October 3, 2011** – Challenge Unlimited, Incorporated, headquartered in Alton, IL, celebrates the observance of October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The company honors its federal customers as well as its own staff for helping to provide individuals with disabilities opportunities for employment with competitive wages and benefits.

Challenge Unlimited is a proud member of the AbilityOne Program, which is a federal initiative that helps people who are blind or have severe disabilities find employment and gain independence. Challenge Unlimited is one of 600 nonprofit agencies that provide a wide variety of quality products and services at a fair market price to federal customers.

Employing tens of thousands of people with disabilities, the AbilityOne Program is the single largest employer in the United States for such individuals. Through the AbilityOne's large network of nonprofit agencies, people with disabilities are working on projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam.

“Integrating people with disabilities into mainstream society is an important approach to helping the American workforce meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy,” said Challenge Unlimited President and CEO, Tom Moehn. “This helps the American economy by reducing the number of people on government assistance and helps more people become taxpaying members of society. Individually, this helps give someone a

chance to work and change their life. Everyday we see individuals with disabilities prove to themselves and others that they are able to fulfill their potential and work toward independence.”

Currently, Challenge Unlimited has federal contracts in the following industries: food service, grounds maintenance, custodial, warehousing, commissary, recycling, and mailroom services. Federal work locations include, but are not limited to Scott Air Force Base, IL, Springfield, IL, Fort Leonard Wood, MO, Fort McCoy, WI, and Great Lakes, IL. Challenge Unlimited also partners with contractors such as the Missouri and Illinois National Guard, the U.S. General Services Administration, Southern Illinois University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

#### ABOUT THE AbilityOne PROGRAM:

In 1938, Congress passed the Wagner-O’Day Act, establishing a federal market for products made by individuals who are blind. In 1971, the Act was amended by Senator Jacob Javits to include products and services provided by people with a wide range of significant disabilities and became known as the

Javits-Wagner-O’Day Act. The AbilityOne Program is a coordinated effort on behalf of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH—Creating Employment Opportunities for People with Significant Disabilities. Through the AbilityOne Program, people who are blind or have other significant disabilities have the opportunity to enjoy full participation in their communities and can market their AbilityOne skills into other public and private sector jobs.

#### ABOUT CHALLENGE UNLIMITED, INCORPORATED:

Challenge Unlimited, Inc. is a non-profit organization that is committed to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into mainstream society. To ensure each individual reaches their highest level of independence, the organization provides educational opportunities, developmental training, vocational training, employment opportunities, and community-integrated housing.