



515 N. 51st Avenue – Suite 130  
Phoenix, AZ 85043  
602.771.9100 [www.azifb.com](http://www.azifb.com)

# MEDIA RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 11, 2018**

**Contact: Roberta Bonaski, 602-686-8743**

## **AZ Industries for the Blind Highlights Successes**

*October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month*

**Phoenix Ariz.** ---Arizona Industries for the Blind (AIB) is among hundreds of organizations nationwide joining in a month-long observance this October to raise awareness of the many types of capabilities and jobs held by employees who are disabled in the workforce.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a nationwide campaign that celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities throughout America and emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all Americans have access to the services and support to enable them to work. This year's NDEAM theme is "Empower All".

Observed each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month is led by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, but its true spirit lies in the many observances held at the grassroots level across the nation every year.

"Misperceptions about the workplace capabilities of people who are blind still exist and often hinder their employment through traditional channels," said AIB's CEO Richard Monaco. "Our particular focus during the 2018 NDEAM campaign is aimed at raising awareness about the diverse competencies, abilities and skills of people who are blind and help level the playing field."

According to Monaco, the empowerment of people with disabilities is at the heart of AIB's workplace innovation. It not only enhances their employees' competitiveness in the marketplace, it contributes to their personal and economic independence.

"Our employees who are blind consistently demonstrate their dedication to advancing in the workforce and delivering high-quality services and products," said Monaco. "Through the empowerment of people who are blind and the advancement of technology and innovation, today more than ever, AIB's steadfast commitment to creating and protecting jobs for people who are blind is stronger than ever, aligned with the needs of today's marketplace and leading the way to a more inclusive and diversified workforce of the future."

Since 1952, AIB has helped to create employment opportunities for people who are blind. It's employees, more than half of whom are blind, deliver a variety of products and services, including a full-service Warehousing and Distribution Center, confidential Digital Data Scan (DDS) services for private businesses and government and the operation of Base Supply Centers located at each of Arizona's three military bases under the umbrella of the U.S. Department of Labor's AbilityOne Program.

###

## **Background:**

### **About Arizona Industries for the Blind**

[www.azifb.com](http://www.azifb.com)

Arizona Industries for the Blind (AIB) provides employment and training opportunities for Arizonans who are blind. AIB was established in 1952 with a mission to inspire individuals who are blind to pursue their maximum potential through creating, sustaining and improving employment and career advancement. United by a unique mission, the employees of AIB are committed to delivering superior quality and 100% customer satisfaction. Today, as a private nonprofit organization, AIB is market-driven, technology-enabled and provides quality products and services to commercial, military and government customers. AIB operates under the AbilityOne Program and is an affiliate of National Industries for the Blind. Created in 1938, AbilityOne is a unique federal program employing nearly 48,000 Americans who are blind or have other severe disabilities, enabling them to lead more productive and independent lives.

### **AIB Business Lines**

- ***Warehousing and Distribution*** –Provides a diverse range of fulfillment, inventory management and supply chain solutions. Approximately 250,000 orders picked and shipped annually to destinations worldwide from the 175,000 sq.-ft. Phoenix Distribution Center.
- ***Digital Data Scan (DDS)*** –Wide-range of reliable, confidential document conversion services for government and private clients.
- ***Base Supply Centers*** – Operation of AbilityOne Base Supply Centers located at Luke Air Force Base in Glendale, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson and Yuma Marine Corp Air Station in Yuma. Product offerings include office supplies, tools and cleaning supplies.

### **About National Disability Employee Awareness Month**

[www.dol.gov/ndeam](http://www.dol.gov/ndeam)

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

*"Americans of all abilities must have access to good, safe jobs," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta. "Smart employers know that including different perspectives in problem-solving situations leads to better solutions. Hiring employees with diverse abilities strengthens their business, increases competition and drives innovation."*

*"... A workforce that empowers everyone is good for job seekers as well as job creators," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta. "Over the past year, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities has significantly declined. Continued steady job creation will provide even more opportunities for all Americans to get hired and provide for their families."*