

# TIBH FOCUS

ON JOBS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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## Mark Edward Kestler: Home Sweet Home at Beacon Lighthouse

When Mark Edward Kestler started working at Beacon Lighthouse in Wichita Falls in 1989 as a senior in high school, he had no idea that 22 years later, he would not only still look forward to going to work every day, but that it would also become his second family and home.

"I love working here, and I have so many friends," Kestler said. "This is really a big family to me."

Kestler worked at Beacon Lighthouse from 1989 until 2010, when he left Texas for a new adventure in Kentucky.

**"Everyone here is always looking for an opportunity to be successful."**

—Buddy Edgemon  
President and CEO,  
Beacon Lighthouse

"When we moved to Kentucky, all I could think of was Beacon Lighthouse," Kestler said. "My favorite thing about working here is the people. I was so excited to come back."

In 2012, Kestler did come back to Beacon Lighthouse and embraced his second opportunity to work there.

"I do everything. They move me around. One day I may be cutting hand-held scrubbing pads, and the next day, I may

be cutting sheets of floor cleaning pads," Kestler said. "However, it doesn't matter how difficult the job is, I will work just as hard at every position."

Beacon Lighthouse has been employing Texans with disabilities since 1974, and it now has more than 60 employees who work all sorts of jobs, including cutting and packaging hand and floor cleaning pads, bottling disinfectant cleaners and degreasers, and manufacturing recycled toner cartridges.

"Maybe it is because we are small and have a small, family-like atmosphere, but everyone is so grateful to be productive," Buddy Edgemon, president and chief executive officer of Beacon Lighthouse, said. "Our focus is that we are in the people business. It's not just about jobs, it's about people."

Edgemon's purpose for the past 42 years has been to ensure all of his employees are just as happy and fulfilled at Beacon Lighthouse as Mark Edward Kestler is at his job.

"This is a real job where our employees make good, quality products," Edgemon said. "We pay competitive wages, provide insurance and we are lucky that our employees choose to work with us. Our hope is to give them the skills that are necessary to have a financially stable life."

Edgemon works closely with TIBH and the *WorksWonders* program to ensure all of Beacon Lighthouse's clients are happy with the products they provide. Having a solid relationship with TIBH and the State Use



*Mark Edward Kestler, dedicated employee of Beacon Lighthouse.*

Program has allowed Edgemon to be able to grow his business to incorporate new products, which allows him the opportunity to provide employment for even more individuals with disabilities.

"People have choices, and these people choose to work for us," Edgemon said. "We are lucky our employees choose to work with us. The employees see this as their business. It's not mine or someone else's."

Kestler feels just as lucky to work at Beacon Lighthouse, and he hopes to continue to do so for another 22 years.

"I want people to know we can still do everything they can do," Kestler said. "I really appreciate my job, and I am happier than I have ever been anywhere else."



Jobs for People with Disabilities



# Carol Williams, Director of Supply Services at HHSC, Explains Passion for State Use Program



Carol Williams, pictured right, was recognized with the 2015 Spirit of State Use Award for her commitment to the State Use Program and its mission.

**F**or Carol Williams, procurement through the Texas State Use *WorksWonders* program is about more than providing for the needs of state hospitals and state supported living centers. It's about doing the right thing.

Throughout her 27 years with the State of Texas—and her various roles as a clerk, purchaser and now director of supply services for the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) in Mexia, Texas—Williams has watched TIBH and the *WorksWonders* program grow into what it is today.

“By using the State Use program, not only do I get what people need at state hospitals and state supported living centers, but I also assist in making real jobs for people through TIBH and its community rehabilitation programs (CRPs),” Williams said.

Although use of the *WorksWonders* program is mandatory, if it were optional, TIBH would still be Williams' first choice.

“You can get a good product at a good price and make jobs for Texans who need them,” she said. “It's good for Texas, it's good for Texans, it's good for the economy, and it's good for everybody. So why not?”

In 2015, Williams was awarded the Spirit of State Use Award by TIBH for her commitment to the program and its mission, and she feels humbled to have been recognized for something she was trained to do through state procurement

policies and felt compelled to do. It has become a personal mission, as opportunities present themselves.

Williams' younger sister is developmentally delayed, and she is currently employed doing work that is tailored to her skills.

“To me, she's living in the least restraining environment for her and she is thriving partly because of her real job,” Williams said. “Not only are people making real money and having real jobs, they're building their self-esteem. It's about their self-worth.”

Over the years, Williams has spent time explaining the impact of working with TIBH in helping to build individuals' self-worth to her staff, and her team is now excited to welcome CRP representatives into the warehouse.

Many of the products Williams assures her department purchases through TIBH are for daily use, such as toilet tissue, trash bags and cleaning products. Additionally, she is working with her representatives to procure other items, such as gloves, that meet her facility's needs.

“We don't have to settle for something and we don't have to be unhappy with something because TIBH wants to meet our needs,”

Williams said. “TIBH wants to provide a good product at a good price for the State of Texas, and that is good for everybody.”

Williams hopes that more companies will see the work TIBH does to provide a better quality of life for Texans with disabilities, as well as the passion of the CRPs' employees. It's a passion she says is hard to find.

“If you set your mind to do something, you see an opportunity and take it, really focus on it, do the right thing by following the law, I think the outcome is always going to be great,” Williams said. “And I think, for me, looking back on my work with TIBH and the State Use Program, it's been more satisfying than I'd ever dreamed of just because you realize the difference that you've made in many people's lives. At the end of the day, that's a legacy one can feel good about. I have been truly blessed for the opportunity to work with TIBH and the great State of Texas.”

“Not only are people making real money and having real jobs, they're building their self-esteem. It's about their self-worth.”

—Carol Williams,  
Health and Human  
Services Commission

# Purchasing from People with Disabilities Advisory Committee Announces Membership Appointments and Holds First Meeting

The newly established Purchasing from People with Disabilities Advisory Committee held its first meeting on January 22, 2016, in Austin.

Established by the adoption of Senate Bill 212 during the 2015 legislative session, the committee's primary function will be to act as a consulting body to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) in matters concerning the Texas Purchasing from People with Disabilities program.

As required by rules set forth by TWC, the committee is comprised of the following individuals with varying degrees of involvement within the disability community in Texas:

- Ms. Jean Langendorf, Chair, Disability Rights Texas
- Mr. Kevin Jackson, Greater Austin Chapter of the Blinded Veterans Association
- Mr. Dave Wells, West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Mr. Russell Capers, Pride Industries
- Ms. Linda Logan, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
- Ms. Michelle Wilkinson, Easter Seals Central Texas
- Ms. Brandye Lacy, Travis Association for the Blind
- Mr. Larry Johnson, Advocate
- Mr. Sean Quigley, On Our Own Services
- Mr. Nicky Ooi, South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Ms. Judy Zavala, Brazoria County Children's Protective Services Board of Directors
- Mr. Brook Hohfield, Texas Advocates
- Mr. Ron Pigott, Texas Department of Health and Human Services, Statutory Appointment

TIBH looks forward to continuing a positive relationship with both the Texas Workforce Commission and the Purchasing from People with Disabilities Advisory Committee as we expand our efforts to provide Texans with disabilities even more employment opportunities.



Members of the Purchasing from People with Disabilities Advisory Committee attended the committee's inaugural meeting on Friday, January 22, 2016, in Austin, Texas. Pictured, left to right, are Kevin Jackson, Brandye Lacy, Larry Johnson, Sean Quigley, Dave Wells, Russell Capers, Nicky Ooi, Chair Jean Langendorf, Linda Logan, Ron Pigott, Michelle Wilkinson. Not pictured: Judy Zavala and Brook Hohfield.

## A Message from President and CEO Fred M. Weber, Jr.

Last September, administrative duties of the State Use *WorksWonders* Program transitioned from the Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities (TCPPD) to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). In the months since that transition, TIBH and TWC have worked together to create a relationship that will ensure this new chapter in *WorksWonders* Program history will continue to open up opportunities for Texans with disabilities.



In January 2016, the Purchasing from People with Disabilities Advisory Committee, which was established by the adoption of Senate Bill 212 during the 2015 legislative session, held its inaugural meeting in Austin, Texas. Comprised of 13 members with different experiences and expertise in their respective fields, the committee will provide recommendations to TWC in matters regarding how the Texas Purchasing from People with Disabilities program can better function in an effort to benefit Texans with disabilities. TIBH would like to thank TWC and the advisory committee for allowing us to be a part of this and future meetings—and for their willingness to work alongside us as the State Use Program continues to move forward with new opportunities.

TIBH employees have already begun preparing for the upcoming 9th Annual Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner and 28th Annual Products and Services Expo. The dinner will take place the evening of September 21, 2016 and is a celebration of the hard-working community rehabilitation program (CRP) employees' efforts to provide state agencies, municipalities and political subdivisions with quality products and services, as well as a way for us to show our appreciation to the purchasers who utilize those products and services. The expo, which will take place the following Thursday (September 22), is a way to raise awareness of the State Use *WorksWonders* Program, and it allows CRPs and the customers who purchase their products and services to interact with each other in an effort to familiarize those customers with how certain products work, new products that are being introduced to the program and all the services available to them. We encourage you to attend these celebrations and see how influential the *WorksWonders* Program is in keeping individuals with disabilities employed. Visit our website or call our office for more information.

As always, TIBH would like to thank you for your support and your partnership in providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Fred M. Weber, Jr.



Jobs for People with Disabilities

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## Upcoming Events

**Texas Workforce Commission-Purchasing from  
People with Disabilities Advisory Committee Meeting**  
May 13, 2016, 1:00 p.m.

**CRP New Product and Price Revision  
Submission Deadlines**  
Tuesday, May 10, 2016  
Tuesday, June 21, 2016  
Tuesday, August 9, 2016

**Texas Workforce Commission Meetings  
Where State Use Items Will Be Presented**  
Tuesday, May 17, 2016  
Tuesday, June 28, 2016  
Tuesday, August 9, 2016

Please contact TIBH if with inquiries  
regarding any of these dates

**9th Annual Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner**  
Wednesday, September 21, 2016

**28th Annual TIBH Products & Services Expo**  
Thursday, September 22, 2016

**VIEW THE TIBH ONLINE  
CATALOG AT [WWW.TIBH.ORG](http://WWW.TIBH.ORG)**