**Commission for the Blind**

**Business Enterprise Annual Meeting**

**April 14th & 15th 2023**

**Registration: 8:00 – 9:00 am**

**BEP Annual Meeting Commences on Friday April 14th 2023 @ 9:00 am.**

**Welcome and Greeting 9:00 – 10:00 am**

**BEP Committee Representatives: Janice Smith Chair; Karen Jones Vice Chair; Tiffany Mitchell Columbia District #2; Kevin Carney Florence District; Lonnie Hart Columbia #1 District; George Martin Greenville Spartanburg District; Sec M. Lawrence**

**Opening Prayer**

**Introductions: Committee Chair Janice Smith**

**South Carolina Commissioner – Darlene Graham; Commissioner Graham sends her regrets about her absence as she is scheduled for a National Council of Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Conference.**

**BEP Director – Ryan Skinner; Ryan speaks on current BEP operations for the upcoming 2023 Calendar year.**

**Operations Director Matt Daugherty; Business Enterprise Program Annual Financial Report for the Calendar Year 2022.**

**Zoom Attendees: Shan’t Connock – Business Opportunities for the Blind Nominee Agency that manages the Virginia Business Enterprise Program. What is a Nominee Agency and how they work? In 1957 the agency decided the BEP could operate more successfully with a ‘Nominee Agency.’ At times it is beneficial for the BEP to have a ‘Nominee Agency’ to help within the Randolph Sheppard in order to enhance opportunities for trained, licensed blind vendors in operating their facilities. In Virginia we are a 5013C Non-profit Corporation that has an agreement with the Department of the Blind and Visually Impaired to manage the Randolph Sheppard Program. We have a total of 9 employees that reports to a board of directors 4 times a year. We have a contract with the state agency that covers a lot of the components of the Randolph Sheppard where we provide financial forecasts, Randolph Sheppard information, equipment purchases and issues, Renovation to facilities, designs of new facilities, new business growth, site tours and educational and training support for vendors. We also support the vendors annual meetings in many ways. Our goal is to guide, support and alleviate the everyday tasks and components of the Randolph Sheppard program and blind licensed vendor.**

**Break Out Session: Lauren Jackson – Food Safety**

**Food safety is highly important we want to do our best job to keep people and our businesses safe in the handling of food. These are the practices that are observed during the handling, processing and distribution of food to ensure that the contaminants that cause food borne illnesses are not present. The World Health Organization has recently released and estimated that at least six hundred million people all over the world become inflicted with food borne illnesses. Of these people at least 420,000 will die every year.**

**Unsafe food is usually the result of contamination and presence of harmful substances in the food. Some may be biological, chemical, or physical hazards. For example to prevent E Coli, we must cook foods like ground beef to a minimal internal temperature and purchase foods through approved reputable suppliers and prevent cross contamination between raw meets and ready to eat meat.**

**Wash your hands, wash your hands, and wash your hands for food safety.**

**Break Out Session: Terry Smith**

**“Active Participation” and the benefits.**

**1. The term Active Participation is used in the Randolph Sheppard Act to describe the role of the BEP Committee and the Agency.**

**2. Congress made is very clear that they wanted the Committee of Blind Vendors to be partners in the way the programs are to be managed within The Randolph Sheppard Act.**

**3. There is no term of Active Participation defined in the Regulations.**

**4. RSA has now provided technical assistance guidance on what Active Participation is and how it should be implemented.**

**5. Active Participation is only a requirement that applies to the BEP Committee of Blind Licensed Vendors.**

**6. The Active Participation requirement has been around since the 1974 Amendments.**

**7. When the BEP Representative has been elected to the Committee they are agreeing that they are going to actively participate in all major administrative decisions.**

**8. Administration is to operate and manage a program in leu of developing policies according to the guidelines.**

**9. Many states are developing and using a directive on policy Active Participation.**

**10. Trust your Agency.**

**Blessing of the Food**

**Lunch**

**Guest Speaker: Chris Ingram – Training and Technology**

**Consult for the Blind**

**Chris speaks about training and technology within the BEP and the importance and accessibility of Micro Markets.**

**Expos:**

**Blind Merchants**

**State Farm**

**National Federation for the Blind – Columbia Chapter**

**Vendor Supply**

**Southeastern Vending**

**Pepsi**

**Coke**

**Independent Insurance Agent – Lorrain**

**Low Vision**

**Assistive Technology**

**Meeting Adjourned Saturday April 15th @ 3:10 pm Sec M. Lawrence.**