

Industries for the Blind (IFB) announced today the awarding of a \$4 million federal contract that will bring 21 jobs to Buncombe County. IFB is a not-for-profit organization that has won many prestigious awards over the years, most recently receiving national recognition for having the highest growth in blind jobs for an unprecedented five out of six years. The company has also received the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Sky High Growth Award for 6 out of the 7 years of the award's history.

"Industries for the Blind is proud to be a strong social, capital and economic contributor in the Asheville community," stated Randy Buckner, Director of Asheville Operations. At its 70,000 square foot facility on Sardis Road, Industries for the Blind employs over 104 blind and sighted employees in both full and part time positions. Over the past decade, IFB has not had a single lay-off for a person who was blind, and has never turned away blind or visually impaired persons seeking employment.

For the past 17 years, Asheville IFB has made 100% of all the Army and Marine Poncho Liners used around the world. It also provides over 400 household items to US Military Commissaries, packaging over 3.4 million items for this program last year. Additional projects include cutting parts for Military clothing that are sewn together by federal prison inmates at locations across the country as well as a partnership with a commercial company to manufacture the PaperPro Power Staplers to be sold to the US government.

IFB achieves its success by offering a number of programs and services to the visually impaired community through the Brighter Path Foundation (meeting the needs of school age children to seniors), and Upward Mobility (promoting people who are blind into roles of increasing responsibility). These programs provide training, adaptive technology and equipment engineering to enable IFB employees to progress to more complex and technical jobs.