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State Services for the Blind



and

Visually Handicapped



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JT-26480-02



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**SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
AND
VISUALLY HANDICAPPED
PROGRAM SUMMARY**

1. PROGRAM ORIGATION:

M.S.248.07, Minnesota Rules Chapter 3321 and 3325, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1986, P.L. 99-506 and 93-112 S102 87 Stat. 369, and the Randolph-Sheppard Act.

2. PROGRAM PURPOSE:

Facilitate the achievement of vocational and personal independence by children and adults who are blind or visually handicapped.

3. PROGRAM DELIVERY:

Rehabilitation clients are served by approximately 38 rehabilitation counselors in 11 field offices.

4. PROGRAM RESOURCES:

Staff, 1988

80.4 Federal positions
65.5 State positions
1.0 Special Revenue position

Program Expenditures, 1988

\$9,217,000

5. CURRENT FUNDING MIX:



6. PROGRAM RESULTS

	<u>1988 Estimate</u>	<u>1988 Actual</u>	<u>1989 Estimate (7/88)</u>
Clients gainfully employed	514	624	596
Clients attaining more independent lifestyle	285	479	315
Child rehabilitation clients served	800	778	800
Business Enterprises Locations	88	82	90
Program Sales	\$7,318,800	\$7,209,756	\$7,400,000
Operational Charges	\$241,300	\$238,993	\$248,500
Average Net Profit of Operators	\$18,600	\$20,414	\$19,200
Braille pages produced	568,300	751,738	580,800
Talking Book and Radio Talking			
Book receivers distributed	16,553	17,552	18,208
Communication Center clients served	14,260	14,437	15,460

**DEPARTMENT OF JOBS AND TRAINING
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
CHANGE REQUEST: ELDERLY BLIND ACCESSIBILITY TO INDEPENDENCE**

The population of Minnesota is graying. Over the last two decades, Minnesota's population of persons age 65 and older grew over 34 percent, while the State population grew only 19 percent. Today, one Minnesotan in eight is elderly. Visual impairment is among the top ten chronic conditions in persons over age 65.

Services for the Blind has experienced a steady increase and demand for service by persons over 55. In 1982, this Agency served 3,869 persons aged 55 and over. By 1987, that figure increased to 4,259. The most significant age group increase was in the 75-84 age range, which increased from 950 served in 1982 to 1,449 in 1987.

Minnesotan's place a high value on independence, as substantiated during the Minnesota Board on Aging Statewide hearings. The purpose of this request is to provide seniors with the skills and resources necessary for them to live independently in their own community; thus, avoiding unnecessary institutionalization and dependency.

**DEPARTMENT OF JOBS AND TRAINING
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
CHANGE REQUEST: CLIENT ACCESSIBILITY TO JOBS**

The current unemployment rate among blind and visually handicapped Minnesotans is approximately 70%. One reason for this staggering statistic, is the inability of Services for the Blind to assist individuals in acquiring essential adaptive technology. This could mean the difference between accessibility or inaccessibility to information systems and thus accessibility or inaccessibility to a job.

"The mission of the Minnesota Department of Jobs and Training is to bring people and jobs together in Minnesota by helping business meet labor force needs, and to eliminate financial, physical and social barriers faced by the unemployed and underemployed in their quest for productive employment and economic self sufficiency."

To fulfill this mission and the mission of Services for the Blind of assisting blind and visually impaired Minnesotans in obtaining meaningful and productive opportunities to participate in society, funding is urgently needed.

The number of clients placed in competitive jobs has steadily increased over the past three years from 79 in 1986 to 115 in 1988. According to the Minnesota Employment Outlook to 1990 and the Minnesota Labor Market Review¹ the jobs categories experiencing the most growth are found in the managerial, professional, service, and clerical occupations. The increase in these types of jobs will require blind individuals to access information through adaptive equipment. Therefore, if we are going to continue to increase the number of competitive placements, we must increase the funding available to purchase adaptive technology.

During the past two years, the number of technology packages purchased for clients has increased by 100%. With the agency's current resources, it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet this need. Often the cost of individualized technology packages is prohibitive for the client, employer, and existing case service budgets.

Funding by the Legislature will increase competitive job placements which in turn will result in revenue and reduce burdens on other public benefit programs.

¹ Prepared by Research and Statistics Office,
Minnesota Department of Jobs and Training.

**DEPARTMENT OF JOBS AND TRAINING
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
CHANGE REQUEST: COMMUNICATION CENTER -- "THAT ALL MAY READ"**

This change request addresses the most basic need to which blind and physically handicapped citizens of Minnesota are entitled--the right to read.

As indicated in the Change Request, "explosion in demand for services" describes what has occurred in the Communication Center the last three years, and the escalation continues. In 1988, the Center served 14,437 individuals and 986 organizations. These are all-time-high figures. A few years ago we produced 200,000 pages of braille. In 1988 we produced 751,738 pages.

Also, the request once implemented has substantial direct service impact at a very minimal cost. Additional staff, of course, produce more but they also make possible the recruitment and employment of many more volunteers. The Center's 400 plus volunteers provided over 100,000 hours of labor during 1988 valued at a potential cost of \$1,200,000. However, certain job functions can only be performed by staff and it is not possible to add large numbers of volunteers without adding staff. Volunteers to be effective must relate to and work with staff.

**DEPARTMENT OF JOBS AND TRAINING
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
CHANGE REQUEST: REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION AND MIS CONVERSION**

Should Services for the Blind's Change Request for Reasonable Accommodation and Management Information System Conversion not be approved, it will considerably diminish the agency's ability to serve the blind citizens of Minnesota and adequately support our own staff members who are blind or visually handicapped. In addition, SSB would not be able to take part in the Jobs and Training's Intake, Referral and Inventory System (IRIS) that has been mandated by the Minnesota Legislature.

Services for the Blind has been experiencing repeated "system crashes" which have resulted in lengthy downtimes and, in some instances, and irretrievable loss of information critical to direct client service delivery. The downtimes experienced to date have cost the agency an estimated \$200,000. Although the system has undergone temporary "fixes" and is currently operating, management no longer has the same level of confidence in the reliability and integrity of the data and system. If this project is not funded, the "crashes" are expected to continue with greater frequency. It is anticipated that with one of these crashes the system will "die" since the life expectancy of a minicomputer is 7 years.

SSB is currently using a Texas Instrument 990 minicomputer that is six years old and becoming obsolete given new state-of-the-art developments and current/anticipated need. The Department of Jobs and Training recognizes the need for system maintenance/upgrade and has given their full endorsement and support.

In addition, if funding is not secured, expansion to include the other 5 district offices would not occur since there is no room for expansion on the existing system. Further, SSB clients or employees in the field offices would not be reasonably accommodated in their preferred mode of communication (braille/voice) since compatible adaptive equipment and translation software is not available for the existing system. This places clients and employees at a disadvantage since they are not able to simultaneously access the same information as their sighted peers in their preferred mode of communication, even in offices that currently have terminals. In addition, the current system will not enable SSB to interact/interchange data with the Jobs and Training mainframe and thus SSB would not be able to comply with the legislation mandating the Intake, Referral and Inventory System.

In summary, SSB's current system has "crashed" on several occasions causing delays in processing client maintenance checks as well as loss of case data. A significant "crash" could prevent us from getting maintenance checks to our clients who need them to participate in rehabilitation programs placing them at a severe disadvantage and SSB could have a number of our clients dropping out of training programs as result of the lack of funds.

**DEPARTMENT OF JOBS AND TRAINING
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND**

CHANGE REQUEST: MULTIPLY HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY TO INDEPENDENCE

If all Minnesotans, including the most severely involved deaf-blind children and youth, are to realize fundamental human rights, resources are needed.

Consistent with the Minnesota ethic, SSB is committed to serving this population. It has done so over the last six years with federal grant funding, supplemented by state dollars. Due to regulatory shifts at the federal level, it is anticipated that federal funding will cease September 30, 1989.

An essential element of the change request, consistent with the SSB Mission, is to maintain and increase the capacity of both our staff, as well as other facilities and organizations, to provide appropriate services to severely involved multiply handicapped persons. This element is addressed through both direct service and technical assistance activities of staff positions in this request. This element is especially critical given the increased Minnesota commitment to deinstitutionalization and quality of life for all its citizens.

Without funding this request, there will be an extreme constriction of service delivery. Outstate facilities and service-providers, including SSB staff, would no longer be provided the critical assistance needed to serve appropriately this population.

We must continue to maintain and strengthen our commitment to those Minnesotans who are in the deepest shadows of our society: Deaf-blind children and youth.

**DEPARTMENT OF JOBS AND TRAINING
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
PROJECTED BUDGET NEEDS**

STATE FISCAL YEAR

	<u>STRAIGHT- LINE 1989</u>	<u>8% INCREASE CASE SERVICES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1990	(\$535,000)	(\$185,000)	(\$720,000)
1991	(\$643,000)	(\$190,000)	(\$833,000)
TOTAL	(\$1,178,000)	(\$375,000)	(\$1,533,000)

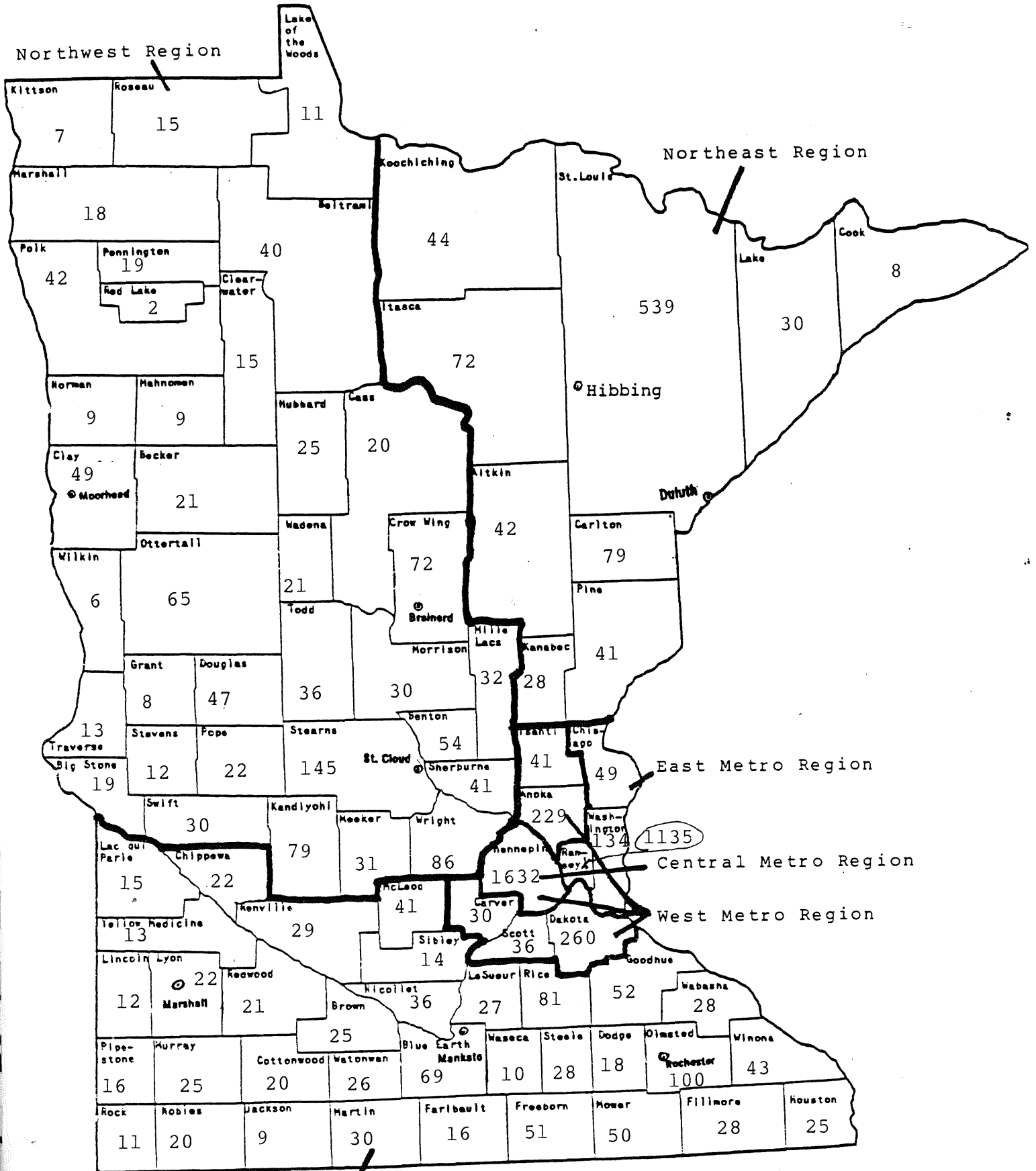
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

- **Increased demand for case service funds (Particularly Adaptive Technological Equipment)**
- **Social Security Reimbursement depleted**
- **Assumes zero funding of Change Requests**
- **Unfunded/Unanticipated new expenses**

ACTION TAKEN BY SSB:

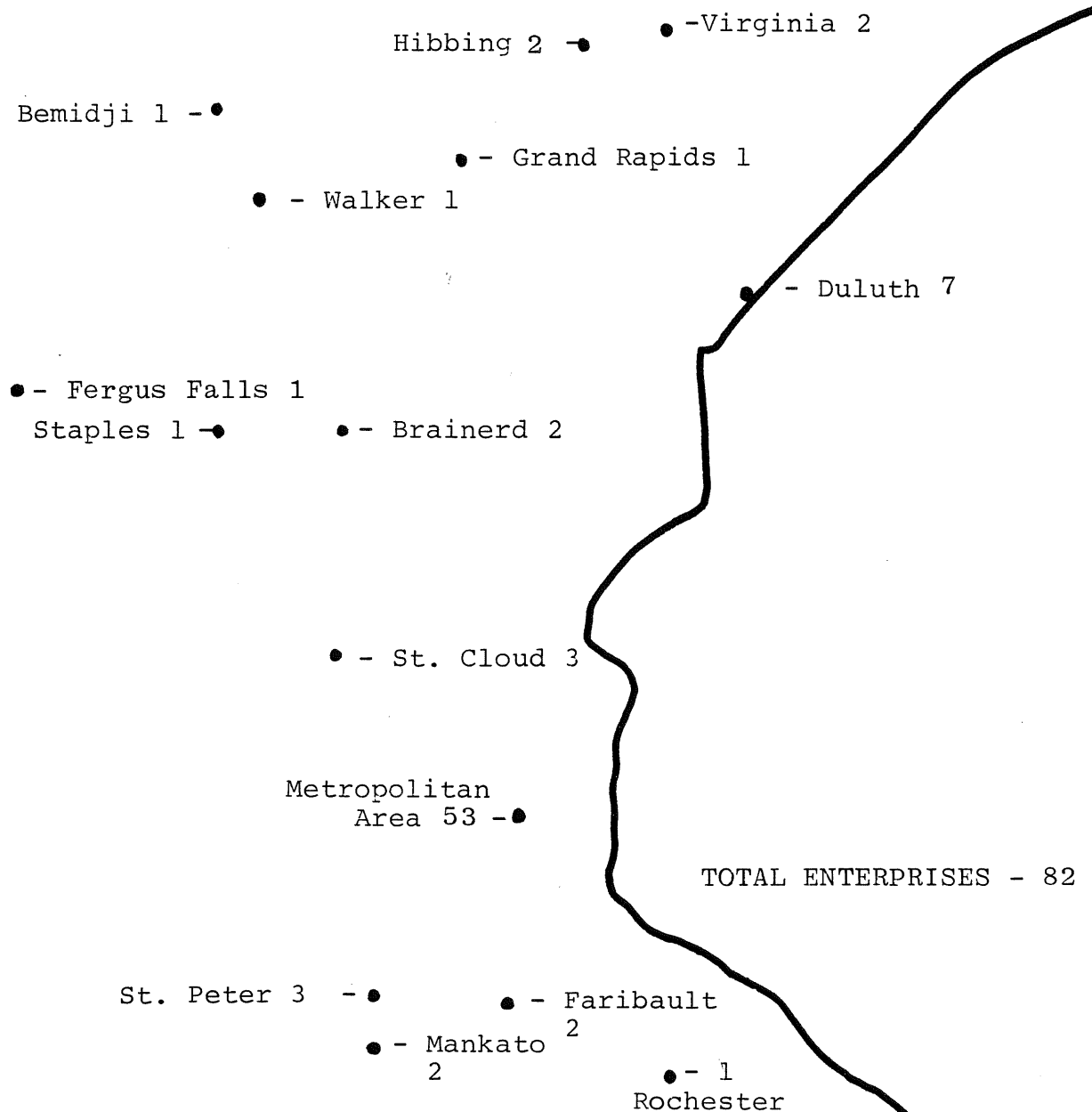
- **Cost Containment efforts by all Sections/Programs**
- **Cancelling or holding positions vacant**

Services for the Blind Caseload by County FFY 1988 (to date 9/21/88)



South Region

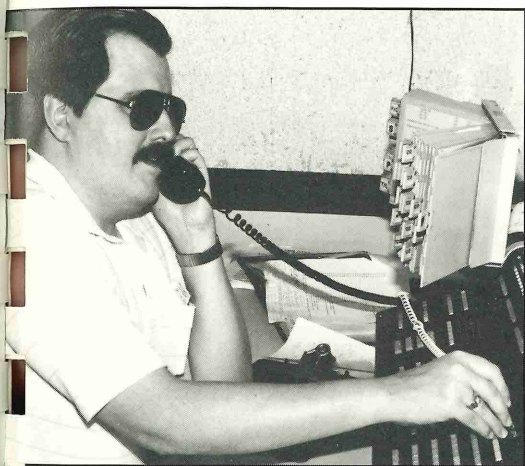
Services for the Blind Business Enterprises Locations SFY 1988



Rehabilitation services that provide competent, productive employees



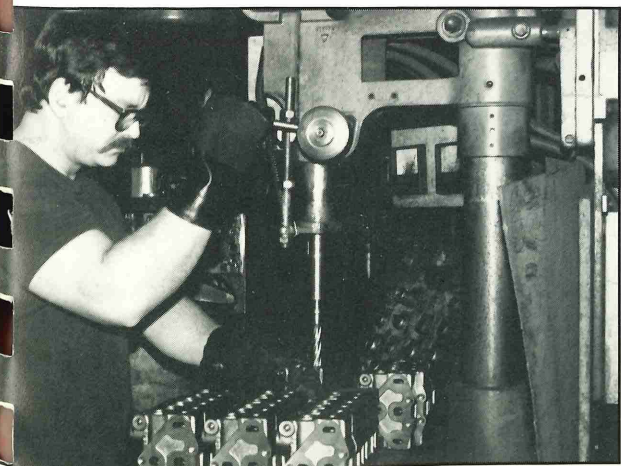
Sue Seefeld has worked for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for five years. In her secretarial position, Sue types investigative reports, operates the word processor and completes general office tasks.



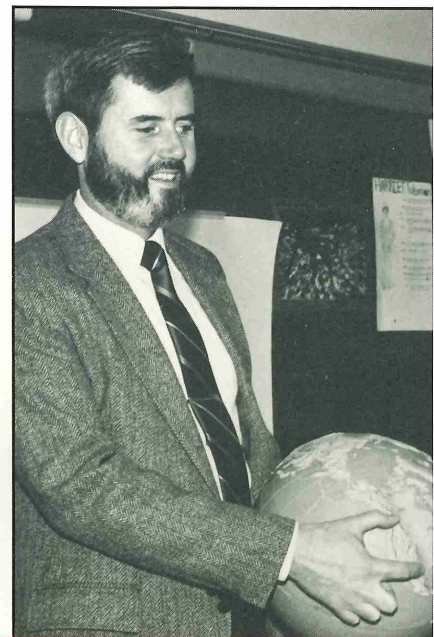
Greg Anderson supervises the Telecommunications Office at the Air Force Reserve Base and acts as a backup telephone operator, handling national and international calls for the base.



Rick Battaglia, a production project analyst at Honeywell, conducts performance measurements on production contracts and provides budget tracking and management support.

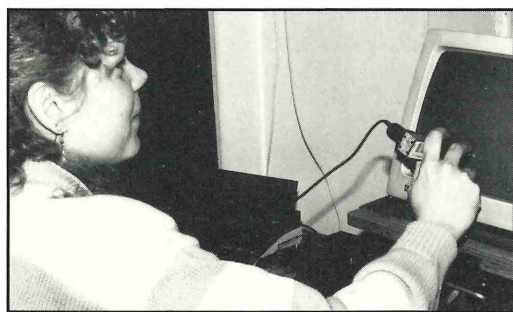
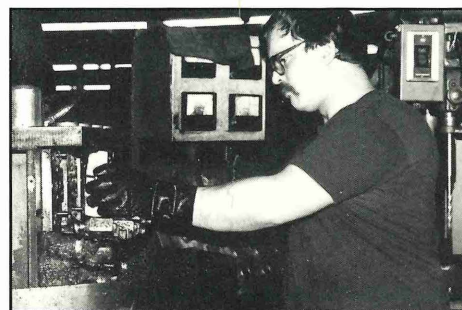
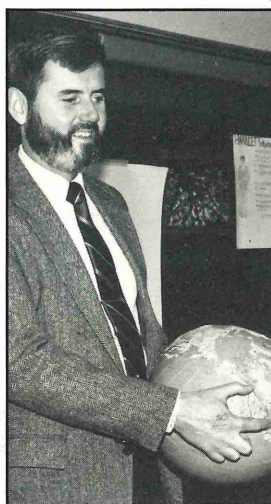
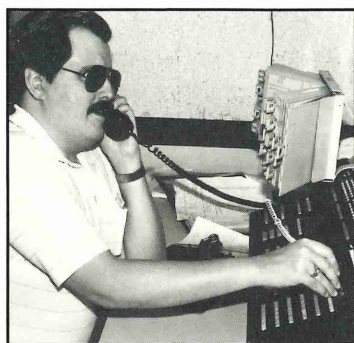


Cliff Bangert works as a machinist at Gresen/Dana Corp. where, although legally blind, he operates a variety of machines. After three years with the company, his record on safety and production is exemplary.



Todd Kelly, who is totally blind, has been an elementary school teacher for 17 years. He teaches social studies, history, geography, computer literacy and religion at St. Thomas the Apostle School.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (SSB)



Services and Programs 1987-1988
