

Media Release

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Marion man who's visually impaired earns achievement award

Joseph Moss of Marion, who's visually impaired, has been named the area's outstanding Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB).

DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Karsten Everett nominated him for the achievement award because of his determination to overcome adversity and

succeed at work.

Moss is employed as a Facility Manager with Alliance Inspection Management, a California based company with operations in Arkansas. Moss uses the company's customized software and digital imaging to inspect railroad cars for quality, maintenance needs, theft and vandalism. In addition, he investigates damage claims.

"I felt honored when I was told I'd been nominated," said Moss. He is one of only 13 people in Arkansas who will receive an area award and was selected from the area that includes Crittenden, Mississippi, Cross, St. Francis, Lee, Phillips, and Monroe Counties.

His employer, Alliance Inspection Management, was recognized as an outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.

The awards were presented to Moss and his employer on August 26, at the noon meeting of the Rotary Club of Marion, held at the Marion United Methodist Church.



From the left are Corneal Knighten, DSB Rehabilitation Tech; Mike Demster, Marion Rotary Club President; Joseph Moss, area Consumer of the Year; and Karsten Everett, DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

Moss, 43, said he started having eye problems in 2010, and started having thyroid problems about two years before that. At the time, he didn't know the two conditions were related. He lost his job because of his deteriorating vision and consequently lost his health insurance as well.

He applied for Medicaid, but wasn't eligible. However, the Medicaid worker took him down the hall and introduced him to a DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Moss said he was very appreciative of this, because he did not know about DSB and did not have insurance to pay for needed eye surgeries and medical treatment. "DSB has been a real blessing for me."

He said he was later diagnosed with an autoimmune disease, Grave's Disease, which can cause problems with the thyroid and eyes. He has had two surgeries and may need more. "I may need radioactive iodine therapy to destroy my thyroid gland. This may keep my vision problems from recurring."

"Mr. Moss was unable to drive at night with this condition, and found it difficult to maintain employment," said Everett. "In the beginning Mr. Moss was very concerned about his double vision, but after several medical procedures he was able to maintain employment."

Moss said he wears a prism on his eyeglasses, which corrects his vision so he can drive and do other tasks. Moss now has a good salary with health, dental and vision benefits in addition to a 401(k) retirement plan.

"People really take their eyesight for granted," said Moss.

In addition to surgeries and medical treatment, DSB provided Moss with job readiness skills training and job placement services.

This is the eighth year that DSB has given Consumer of the Year awards to recognize individuals who have managed their rehabilitation plans, gained marketable skills, secured good jobs, and become role models for others. An overall state winner will be selected at the end of the year.

DSB provides vocational rehabilitation services to adults who are blind or severely visually impaired and whose goal is successful employment. The division also serves youth and older blind individuals. For information about DSB's programs and services, visit the DSB website at <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx> or call 1-800-960-9270, 501-682-5463, or TDD 501-682-0093.