

# Media Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **North Little Rock man regains vision and earns achievement award**



**From the left are Henry Washington, DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; Rufus Hardin, who was named the area's outstanding Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind; Trey Veasy, General Manager of Best Buy Mobile Little Rock; Dr. Eric Saunders, Assistant Commissioner for Research and Technology, and Johnny Key, Commissioner of Education, both of the Department of Education. Hardin's employers, Best Buy and the Department of Education, were recognized as outstanding business partners for their commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment. The awards presentation was made at the Arkansas Department of Education on December 4.**

Rufus Hardin of North Little Rock, who is 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 Area Field Supervisor Ginny McWilliams nominated him for the achievement award because of his determination to overcome adversity and succeed at work. Hardin holds down two jobs.

He has been employed as a Help Desk Specialist at the Arkansas

Department of Education Division of Research and Technology since the summer of 2014. He resolves technical issues and repairs computers.

He has been employed at Best Buy Mobile in Park Plaza Mall in Little Rock as a Mobile Sales Consultant since November, 2014. He makes sure customers have the right phones and service plans for their needs.

His employers were recognized as outstanding business partners for their commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment. The awards presentation was made at the Arkansas Department of Education in Little Rock on December 4.

Hardin is one of only 13 people in Arkansas who will receive an area award and was selected from the area that includes Lonoke, Prairie, Grant, Saline and part of Pulaski Counties.

Hardin reminds people of the importance of regular eye exams. When he was a teenager living in Pine Bluff, a doctor diagnosed him with glaucoma during a regular eye exam and referred him to DSB. The agency paid for surgeries to correct his vision. More recently as an adult, he was diagnosed with glaucoma and cataracts in both eyes. "DSB helped me so much. I had at least three more surgeries." DSB paid for the surgeries, which restored his sight, although he still has problems with his peripheral vision.

Hardin graduated from ITT Technical Institute in March 2002, with an Associate Degree in Computer Networking and System Training.

When he's not at work, Hardin enjoys video gaming and fixing computers. Hardin is the assistant superintendent of Sunday school at Paradise Baptist Church in North Little Rock. He also directs the video ministry for the church. His wife Danielle is a pre-K teacher.

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.