



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

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- CONTACT: Dave Druker
or
- CONTACT: Randy Nehrt

White to Award Contract with Rockford Abilities Center

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State Jesse White announced today an agreement with the Abilities Center in Rockford to input vehicle registration information for the Secretary of State's office, a function that was previously handled by Illinois Department of Corrections inmates.

"We are pleased to be able to obtain the services of the Abilities Center to help our office with data entry work," said White. "They have a tremendous record with other agencies and I'm certain our office will be very pleased with their work."

"This is a win-win situation for the state," added White. "Taxpayers will receive prompt service from the agency and the employees will receive the training and job skills they need to become independent, productive citizens."

The Abilities Center is a nonprofit corporation that provides education, training and employment for residents of northern Illinois. The center hires both disabled and non-disabled persons to staff their programs. Their clients are 60 percent female and 40 percent minority. Half of the participants are vocational rehabilitation referrals.

Currently, the Abilities Center does data entry work for the Department of Revenue and CompDent, the dental program for State of Illinois employees. They also enter Police reports for the Rockford Police Department and provide secondary machining, inspection and assembly services for more than two dozen manufacturers in northern Illinois.

Department of Corrections inmates began inputting the

vehicle registration information in 1985. The General Assembly passed legislation (HB 70) last year halting that practice. White said the new arrangement creates more positive situation for the state.

"Through this contact we are able to give work that had been done previously by prisoners to law abiding citizens that just needed a chance to succeed," said White. "There is no question this is a better situation for the state."

In addition to the contract with the Abilities Center, the Secretary of State has a contract with Macon Resources, Inc., a not-for-profit workshop for disabled persons in Decatur, to produce the state's license plates.