



# Challenge Unlimited, Inc.

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## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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### CHALLENGE UNLIMITED, INC. HONORED AS GREATER ST. LOUIS TOP 50 AWARD WINNER

**Alton, Ill.** – The St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA) in collaboration with the St. Louis office of Deloitte have named Challenge Unlimited, Inc. one of the Top 50 companies in the Greater St. Louis area for the year 2007. Awardees were chosen for their commitment to making the St. Louis region strong economically and civically.

The criteria for the prestigious award include: growth in number of employees, enhancement of the community, revenue growth, acquisitions, and the expansion or development of facilities. The RCGA and Deloitte will recognize the winners personally on December 17<sup>th</sup>, in an awards presentation dinner at the Hyatt Regency, Union Station. Companies in the Top 50 receiving the award have had their name and background information published in the December 2007 issue of St. Louis Commerce Magazine.

As one of the larger employers in the Metro East, and one the most successful agencies in South Central Illinois providing services to individuals with disabilities, Tom Moehn, President and CEO, his Senior Executive Committee and Board Members have seen major growth

throughout the years. Because of this growth, Challenge Unlimited has created a significant impact on the economy due to the large number of job opportunities offered to individuals with and without disabilities. Since many of the individuals with disabilities receive premium pay and full health benefits as part of their employment or vocational training, many are able to decrease their reliance on government assistance and become tax paying citizens. As well, these individuals are empowered with greater buying and purchasing power and more personal independence.

Though Challenge Unlimited has provided a large number of job opportunities for individuals with disabilities through the years, the current unemployment rate among this demographic is 63 percent, which the organization believes is too high.

“We believe it’s an outrage that such a large number of individuals with disabilities remain unemployed,” Moehn said. “We have found that the majority of individuals with disabilities prefer to work in productive jobs when given the opportunities. Challenge Unlimited has many success stories of individuals who, with varied supports, have become valuable contributors to local and regional businesses.

“The challenge ahead is to continue to develop working relationships with business owners who are willing to provide these opportunities to individuals with disabilities,” he said.

Challenge Unlimited was founded in 1960 to establish, maintain and operate vocational and training programs, and be a sheltered workshop for individuals with mental, developmental and physical disabilities. Through the years, the organization has come to be nationally renowned for its progressive philosophy of community integration and increased independence for individuals with disabilities.

“We cannot rely on past successes,” Moehn said. “Our organization is poised to discover its next successful course of operations. We are reviewing multiple new growth opportunities.”