

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Nicole Ducouer  
[nducouer@ifbsolutions.org](mailto:nducouer@ifbsolutions.org), M 304-685-2393

**IFB Solutions honors Employees of the Year, City of Winston-Salem, Allegacy Federal Credit Union and DC Holdings for Contributions to Non-Profit's Success**

WINSTON-SALEM, NC (July 22, 2020) – IFB Solutions, the largest employer of people who are blind or visually impaired in the country, recently recognized its Employees of the Year, volunteers and partners who continue to play such vital roles in the non-profit's mission of employment, training and services. IFB operates manufacturing facilities in Winston-Salem, Asheville and Little Rock, Ark., and provides a range of services through its Community Low Vision Centers, Tracy's Little Red Schoolhouse, and SEE (Student Enrichment Experience) after-school and summer camp programs for children who are blind.



**Scott Smith** of Winston-Salem was named the overall IFB Solutions **Employee of the Year**. Scott, formerly a technician in IFB's optical lab and working now on our helmet pad production line, plays a major role advocating for jobs for the blind. He has joined IFB executives in meeting with Congressional representatives in Washington, D.C. and has spoken extensively with local organizations and the media in support of legislative efforts aimed at sustaining and growing job opportunities for people who are blind. Scott, who is visually impaired, also is a U.S. Navy

veteran.



**Denise McKinnon Drake** was named the IFB Solutions **Employee of the Year for the Asheville** facility. Denise has worked for IFB Solutions for nearly three years in almost area of the facility including sewing operator, Community Low Vision Center staff member and her current job with the Impulse Merchandising (IMP) team. She came to IFB having lost her sight in an automobile accident – a life-changing event that also has led her to speak out about the importance of wearing seatbelts. Through IFB, Denise has gained meaningful employment and a renewed purpose for her life in addition to meeting and marrying the love of her life.



**Andre Johnson** was named the IFB Solutions **Employee of the Year for the Little Rock** facility. Andre has lived with very limited vision his entire life having been diagnosed with optic nerve atrophy at just one-month-old. He joined IFB three years ago to work on the T-shirt production line and now serves as the team's material handler. He is especially appreciative to work for an organization that produces vital products for the military and serves the members of Arkansas' blind community through employment, training and programs.



**Faith Harding** received the IFB Solutions **Overall Career Achiever Award**. Faith initially lost sight in her left eye as a young child and then lost vision in her right eye at 25 years of age. She joined IFB in 2015 as a sewing machine operator and progressed through the organization to her current role on the Base Supply Center team. Faith has taken advantage of numerous training and educational opportunities in customer service and business to further build her skills. She also is an active IFB volunteer with the SEE program, writer for the “IFB Insider” employee publication and winner of Toastmaster awards. In her free time, Faith is a yoga instructor.



**Garry Rippy** of Winston-Salem received the IFB Solutions **Delmer Wall Outstanding Service Award**. Garry, who joined IFB in 2009, works across all of IFB’s manufacturing facilities setting up production lines and modifying operations so they can be performed by individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Through his dedication, many of IFB’s employees who are blind are now able to work in areas previously limited as sighted positions.



**Allegacy Federal Credit Union** received the IFB Solutions **Kathryn W. Garner Volunteer of the Year Award**. For more than 20 years, Allegacy and its team of dedicated employees has supported the mission of IFB Solutions. Allegacy employees have provided vital volunteer support for community events and fundraisers. The company also has helped build awareness of IFB’s programs and services through its employee publications and by encouraging its team members to attend tours of the IFB facilities.



**Winston-Salem**

**The City of Winston-Salem** received the IFB Solutions **Commodore Funderburk Visionary Award**. The award is named for the late Commodore Funderburk who was blind, deaf and mute, and who worked at IFB for 40 years without missing a day of work. The City has been an integral partner with IFB Solutions since the nonprofit opened its doors in 1936. Financial support from the city through various grants also has been instrumental in growing and expanding jobs for people who are blind or visually impaired in the Winston-Salem community. Mayor Allen Joines submitted letters of support regarding IFB’s optical lab and the jobs it created in Winston-Salem, and he also participated in numerous IFB events including groundbreaking and ribbon-cutting ceremonies for new facilities, milestone celebrations and recognitions. View the presentation of this award by IFB Solutions employee Anastasia Powell to Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joines [here](#).



**DC Holdings** received the IFB Solutions **Partner of the Year Award**. DC Holdings has worked alongside IFB Solutions for more than eight years helping to create business development strategies specifically to grow job opportunities for people who are blind. DC Holdings is a professional management team with a wealth of experience in the military requirements, logistics and acquisition process representing a combined nearly 80 years of government experience in the Military R&D industry.

That experience has enabled IFB to successfully foresee potential in new and innovative projects, build supply chain connections and navigate the complexities of the Federal Government procurement process.

## **ABOUT IFB SOLUTIONS**

[IFB Solutions](#) is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1936 that provides employment, training and services for people who are blind or visually impaired. As the largest employer of people who are blind in the United States, IFB operates manufacturing facilities in Winston-Salem, N.C., Asheville, N.C., and Little Rock, Ark., in addition to operating nearly 20 office supply stores across the country and producing mattresses. IFB produces eyewear under its [Twenty200](#) brand at its Winston-Salem lab and operates a retail location in Winston-Salem. IFB Solutions funds employee training and services as well as community programs through grants and private donations, making possible summer camps, afterschool programs and activities for children who are blind, and Community Low Vision services through its low-vision Centers across North Carolina and in Little Rock, Ark. [ifbsolutions.org](http://ifbsolutions.org)