



*A quarterly letter to friends of the Breaking New Ground Outreach Program*

## BNG receives New Freedom Initiative Award

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao recently presented Breaking New Ground with a New Freedom Initiative Award for the program's service to people with disabilities for more than 25 years. This award recognizes exemplary and innovative efforts to train, recruit, and hire people with disabilities and to incorporate the principles of President George W. Bush's New Freedom Initiative.

During the presentation ceremony, numerous BNG program achievements were noted, including its provision of services and resources to an estimated 30,000 farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers seeking to remain productively engaged in some aspect of agriculture. These efforts have included over 1,200 on-site technical consultations in over 20 states since 1990; responses to over 17,500 calls on the Breaking New Ground toll-free helpline; the development of over 50 technical and edu-

cational resources related to disability and agriculture; and the distribution of approximately one million pieces of literature throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Attending the ceremony at the Department of Labor were Professor and BNG founder Bill Field, BNG Resource Center Manager Paul Jones, Rural Rehabilitation Specialist Steve Swain, BNG Administrative Assistant Denise Heath, Head of the Purdue Department of Agricultural Education and Youth Development Roger Tormoehlen, farmer and BNG consultant Ed Bell, and Life Essentials owner Hubert Von Holten.



*U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao (fourth from left), Assistant Secretary W. Roy Grizzard (fifth from left), Dr. Bill Field (far right) and other recipients of the 2005 New Freedom Initiative Award*

New Freedom Initiative Awards are given to individuals, nonprofit organizations, and corporations. Other winners have included IBM, Hewlett Packard, Merck Pharmaceuticals, Courage Center, Cingular Wireless, and Manpower, Inc.

## New worksite assessment resources released

A prompt, thorough worksite assessment is one of the most important steps in assisting an agricultural worker with a recently-acquired disability. In order to best evaluate workplace barriers and potential solutions,

there is no substitute for an on-site visit by a trained, well-equipped rehabilitation professional.

However, this task can be overwhelming, especially for new professionals. The multitude of agribusiness, technology, and disability issues—along with the unique needs of each family—call for specialized skills, knowledge, and protocol that aren't easily acquired.

Therefore, BNG recently produced *Conducting Agricultural Worksite Assessments: A User's Guide for Professionals Assisting Farmers and Ranchers with Physical Disabilities, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. This 125-page manual contains step-by-step direction for conducting assessments, as well as guidance for identifying potential clients, preparing for assessments, and

maintaining client confidentiality. A 24-page assessment form can be reproduced, taken to onsite assessments, and used for guiding the assessor and recording information.

In addition, BNG has developed an electronic version of the assessment form in Microsoft Access format. Using this tool, assessors can record and store data on their clients, print reports, and perform data queries. BNG is also working on a version of the tool that can be installed on handheld PDAs, enabling assessors to enter data electronically as they examine worksites instead of entering information after making handwritten notes.

The written worksite assessment manual is \$30, the electronic version is \$75, and both purchased together are \$100. Contact BNG at 800-825-4264 for more information.



BNG Project Leader: Bill Field

Program Manager: Paul Jones

Rural Rehab Specialist: Steve Swain

## Bells are named Indiana Farm Family of the Year

BNG consultant Ed Bell, his wife Debbie, and their daughter Nellie were recently named the Indiana Farm Family of the Year. The award was presented at the Fort Wayne Farm Show by Andy Miller, director of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, and is sponsored by Indiana AgriNews and Beck's Hybrids. It honors an outstanding Hoosier family for their contributions on and off the farm and is aimed at increasing awareness of the valiant efforts of farm families in Indiana.

In addition to his work with BNG, Ed and his family raise strawberries, black raspberries, blackberries, and asparagus, as well as purebred Doberman dogs.

Ed is also a motivational speaker and an account representative for the Standing Wheelchair Company. He previously served as the executive director of the Eastern Indiana Center for Independent Living and was a member of the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities.

Debbie has had several leadership roles at Psi Iota Xi, a national philan-



*James Henry of Indiana AgriNews, Scott Beck of Beck's Hybrids, Ed Bell, Nellie Bell, Debbie Bell, and Indiana Department of Agriculture Director Andy Miller*

thropic society, and is a member of the Indiana State Nurses Association. Nellie is active in several 4-H clubs, the Hagerstown FFA, and a local soccer league. In addition, both Debbie and Nellie will be going to Guatemala in March serving on a medical mission team. To learn more about the Bells, visit their Website [www.EatMoreStrawberries.com](http://www.EatMoreStrawberries.com).

"When we think of all of the fine farm families in Indiana, we are truly honored to be chosen," Ed Bell said. "We try to practice what we preach by working hard to love God and serve our neighbors. We see our farm as another opportunity to put this belief into practice."

## Life Essentials develops new flatbed pickup-mounted lift

Life Essentials of Brookston, Indiana recently developed a new model of their pickup truck-mounted tractor lift. This version mounts on a Hydra Bed® self-contained flatbed bale handler that can be used to load, transport, and feed round or square bales. The lift design allows the user to access not only other pieces of agricultural equipment but the cab of the flatbed pickup as well.

The lift folds into a small space behind the cab, leaving room on the

flatbed for bales or other materials and allowing the truck to be stored in a garage or barn. The lift uses hydraulic and electric motors and can be operated by a remote control. Several seat/chair options are available.

For more information on the lift, call Life Essentials at 765-742-6707 or visit [www.life-essentials.net](http://www.life-essentials.net). The Hydra Bed® is manufactured by Triple-C, Inc. at 1-800-530-5624 or [www.triple-c-inc.com](http://www.triple-c-inc.com).



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