



**Dallas Lighthouse
for the Blind**

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**DALLAS LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND TO MERGE WITH ENVISION, INC.
TO STRENGTHEN THE MISSION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

Wichita, Kan. – Envision announced today that it is welcoming the Dallas, Texas-based Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind into the Envision family. Operations will continue as normal in Dallas, and the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind name will be retained.

The merger will have positive benefits both in Texas and Kansas for individuals with vision loss who are looking for meaningful employment opportunities in high-tech and emerging fields.

“The Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind is a remarkable organization that has been empowering people who are blind or visually impaired to live independently since 1931. We’ve been doing the same thing at Envision since 1933,” said Envision President and CEO Michael Monteferrante. “This merger fits perfectly into both our organization’s strategic goals to expand reach, serve more people who are blind or visually impaired and extend geographic footprints.”

One advantage of the merger is it allows Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind to further increase its scope of services and employment – in addition to manufacturing – for the 150,000 individuals with vision loss it serves in 11 North Texas counties. Envision has launched several nationwide initiatives over the past few years to augment its manufacturing operations with opportunities for individuals with visual impairments to pursue professional, white-collar jobs that have the greatest demand for workers, particularly in the technology, health care, scientific and green fields.

“I look forward to being highly engaged in the transition process,” said Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind President and CEO Hugh McElroy, whose leadership led to the organization’s recent growth and product line diversification to include new partnerships with companies such as the New York-based Two Blind Brothers fashion line. “Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind is an extremely valuable asset to the area, and our goal is to build on the amazing things that have already been accomplished to bring an even greater quality of life to the people who depend on us most.”

Currently, Envision employs nearly 400 people in 10 states, with 93 percent of its direct labor workforce being blind or visually impaired. Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind, with its addition of BOLD Marketing, has more than 240 employees at six Dallas-area locations, with 75 percent of its direct labor workforce being blind or visually impaired. Envision and Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind are both associated with National Industries for the Blind, participate in their respective State Use Programs and manufacture/sell SKILCRAFT products to the federal government through the AbilityOne program, the largest source of employment opportunities for people who are blind or have a significant disability. The commonalities between the organizations are expected to help facilitate a seamless transition.

“This is a great step forward that fits within our combined mission,” said Envision Board of Directors Chair Sam Williams. “The goals we share all lead to the central objective to provide employment to people with vision loss to offset the unacceptable 70 percent unemployment rate among that segment of the population.”

Eric Kraft, Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind Board of Directors Chair, shares Williams’ excitement for the future.

“We are looking forward to engaging the Dallas-area community and employee stakeholders as we move through the transition process,” Kraft said. “The steps we are taking now will ensure that the current and future needs of the blind and visually impaired community in our area and beyond will be met for the foreseeable future.”

About Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind: Founded in 1931, Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind, the leading North Texas nonprofit employing and providing resources for visually impaired individuals, focuses on improving and enhancing the lives and opportunities of individuals in North Texas affected by blindness, and currently serves 11 counties with more than 150,000 blind and visually impaired people. Its guiding principle is the belief that with knowledge, training and motivation, people with visual impairments can succeed and thrive in any workplace, live productive and meaningful lives, and be important contributors to their communities. For more information, visit www.dallaslighthouse.org.

About Envision: Envision promotes advocacy and independence for those who are blind or low vision. Founded in 1933, Envision is one of the largest employers of individuals with vision loss in the nation. Headquartered in Wichita, Kan., Envision’s mission is to improve the quality of life and provide inspiration and opportunity for people who are blind or visually impaired through employment, outreach, rehabilitation, education and research. For more information, visit www.envisionus.com.