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NEWS RELEASE

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The Lighthouse honors employees at annual Christmas Banquet

TYLER, Texas – On December 16th, two of East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind employees were recognized as National Industries for the Blind (NIB) Award nominees at the company's Annual Christmas Banquet held at the Holiday Inn – South Broadway.

Mitchell Erwin, Human Resource/Safety Administrator for East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind, was selected as the 2017 Indirect Labor Employee of the Year and will be the nominee representing The Lighthouse for the National Milton J. Samuelson Career Achievement Award in Washington, D.C., later in the year. The Samuelson Award is presented to an individual who demonstrates career advancement at an NIB associated agency or in the private sector. The award was named for the late Milton J. Samuelson, who championed upward mobility and placement programs for people who are blind.

Erwin started at East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind in August of 2015, overseeing the Safety Program for the organization. Mitch has a Bachelor of Science from East Texas Baptist University and has recently finished his Master Certificate in Human Resources through Cornell University. He is an American Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED Instructor and has completed the OSHA 30 Hr

General Industry Training, allowing him to fully embrace his position in safety for the organization. Mitch also participates in a job showing program for blind and visually impaired youth through The Lighthouse Client Services and spends time volunteering in the Children's Ministry at church. Mitch and his wife have three children together and reside in Tyler, Texas.

“Mitch is a professional who is dedicated and focused on achieving his goals. He also has a natural ability toward leadership and training and mentoring staff.” says Pat Spenla, Director of Human Resources, East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind. “He has demonstrated this in numerous ways including being an advocate for our staff with visual impairments, developing and executing training sessions, leadership initiatives, and acting outside of his day-to-day duties to identify areas of improvement for the organization.”

William Bishop, Production Worker II, was selected as the 2017 Direct Labor Employee of the Year and will also represent East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind in Washington D.C. as the nominee for the National Peter J. Salmon Direct Labor Employee of the Year. The Peter J. Salmon Direct Labor Employee of the Year Award was established in 1968 by the Board of Directors of National Industries for the Blind (NIB) in cooperation with The General Council of Industries for the Blind (GCIB), now known as The National Association for Employment of People Who are Blind (NAEPB). It is named after the late Dr. Peter J. Salmon, one of the nation's outstanding advocates for people who are blind, who was instrumental in the passage of the Wagner-O'Day Act in 1938 and who served on the Board of Directors of NIB in its early years.

William first began working at East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind in March of 1997 as a production worker for Horizon Industries. He has worked in various position within Horizon Industries production floor including banding, palletizing and a packer on the assembly line. William volunteers for School is Cool, packing backpacks for kids in need in the local community. In his spare time, he

enjoys fishing and taking care of his three dogs and relaxing on his front porch. He and his wife reside in Tyler, Texas.

“William does not back away from any challenge, no matter how big or small. He embraces and conquers them one by one.” Says Ruth Dickson, Production Manager, Horizon Industries. “He uses his visual challenges as a stepping stone on his own journey of success.”