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## **PRIDE Industries: Social impact facilities solutions for a national health-focused vision care leader - by Dr. Chris Bunch**

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VSP Vision is the nation's first and only not-for-profit vision benefits company, serving more than 85 million members nationwide through a network of over 41,000 doctors.

VSP Vision selected PRIDE Industries to provide custodial services to its Rancho Cordova, CA headquarters in 2007. PRIDE Industries' CIMS-GB vendor certification qualified the company to provide the green and sustainable cleaning services needed to achieve a LEED Platinum rating for the facility—a rating that requires close partnership with a CIMS-GB service provider.

At the time, only 77 buildings in the world had reached LEED Platinum certification.

Fast-forward to 2015, when several vendors could not meet VSP Vision's cleaning and safety standards for their 35,000 s/f Ohio call center. VSP Vision turned to PRIDE Industries to expand its service to that facility as well.

"We established benchmarks modeled after the services we were already providing at VSP Vision's California locations, including a web-based contract management system," said Tim Vanover, business development director for PRIDE Industries.

The two companies have similar roots and visions. Care and compassion have led VSP Vision's growth for nearly 70 years. PRIDE Industries is a pioneering social enterprise that creates employment for people with disabilities, veterans, former foster youth, and trafficking victims, providing skilled workers for companies looking to build inclusive workforces.

Founded by doctors that wanted to provide affordable eye care, VSP continues to deliver on its purpose of empowering human potential through sight. PRIDE Industries helps individuals realize their true potential and lead more independent lives.

As the company gained experience in LEED certification practices, PRIDE Industries developed its own best practices for green cleaning: the PRIDEClean custodial process. PRIDEClean involves using its branded, EPA-recognized products and procedures.

"Our services team worked with VSP Vision to score eight points towards LEED Platinum certification," Vanover said. "A high-performance green cleaning program, waste

management/recycling protocols, sustainable purchasing methods contributed to the score.”

Since then, PRIDE Industries and VSP Vision worked together to:

- Conduct trash audits to reduce VSP Vision’s landfill waste and meet city mandates
- Deployed robotic vacuums for more sustainable floor cleaning
- Implemented decontamination procedures to comply with COVID-19 sanitation protocols.

“The team at PRIDE Industries is incredibly responsive, reliable, dependable, trustworthy, and efficient,” said Janelle Darling, facilities and support senior manager at VSP Vision. “They consistently meet VSP Vision’s high expectations, including those related to the pandemic. You can see that the PRIDE employees have a clear purpose and passion for what they do.”

Today, 56% of PRIDE Industries staff serving on VSP Vision’s campus have a documented disability. One of them is Marylyn Jackson, a custodian since 2017.

“I make the workplace feel hospitable so that VSP Vision employees feel more motivated to do well in their jobs,” Marylyn said. “That’s what I’m here for!”

The buildings that she oversees routinely score high on audits, and her supervisors report constant compliments on her friendly attitude and excellent work.

The PRIDE Industries team’s OSHA incidence rate is 30% lower than the national industry standard. A strong safety record minimizes work interruptions and lowers customer costs.

PRIDE Industries was formed in 1966 when a group of parents meeting in a church basement established a nonprofit to create brighter futures for their adult children with disabilities. Over the decades, the organization has grown to more than 3,600 employees working at 395 sites and maintaining more than 100 facilities. It is the nation’s leading employer of people with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

PRIDE Industries partners with companies of all sizes, helping them reach their inclusion goals while enjoying the benefits of hiring people with diverse abilities. Statistically speaking, employers that hire people with disabilities enjoy higher retention rates, lower absenteeism, and higher punctuality than those without disabilities.

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