



Mike Peterson, Human Technologies, fulfills uniform orders for U.S. Forest Service employees.



Sandy Shade, Human Technologies, sews a patch on a Forest Service uniform.

# AbilityOne Provides UNIFORM ITEMS TO U.S. FOREST SERVICE

BY JENNIFER BROZIC

AbilityOne® participating nonprofit agency Human Technologies of Utica, New York supplies field, dress, law enforcement and volunteer uniforms to 18,000 U.S. Forest Service workers each year.

Under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service manages and protects 154 national forests and 20 grasslands in 44 states and Puerto Rico, encompassing 193 million acres. The agency motto is “Caring for the land and serving people.” Human Technologies provides 139 uniform items to employees in the National Forest System and Law Enforcement and Investigations divisions of the agency. The program is designed to give workers a consistent appearance throughout all geographic regions of the Forest Service, making it easy for the public to identify agency employees.

To provide an easy ordering experience, Human Technologies created an online store and accounts for all employees, allowing them to order items over a secure internet portal. The website tracks and displays the balance of their annual

uniform allowance, keeping a running total of purchases and returns, to help them manage their accounts. The online store is integrated with Human Technologies’ Warehouse Management System, so orders are automatically sent to the distribution center for picking, processing and shipping.

Human Technologies works closely with the Forest Service to provide items its employees need to perform their jobs effectively. When the agency elects to add an item to the uniform program, Human Technologies researches and sources it for them.

“The Forest Service has a wide variety of uniform requirements from office apparel to back-country clothing, and we can only procure material and products from a short



Human Technologies supplies all of the uniforms, engraved nameplates and badges worn by the Forest Service employees shown here with Smokey Bear.

list of approved countries, which makes the sourcing more challenging. They appreciate our apparel expertise, as well as our supply chain management capabilities,” said Greg Frank, chief operating officer, Human Technologies.

The uniform program is always evolving. Human Technologies implements product enhancements and introduces new products to the program as the Forest Service’s needs change. The number of items Human Technologies provides has increased by 10 percent since the contract was awarded in 2007; and the uniform offering was significantly overhauled in 2012, with modifications to features, colors and materials.

“The Forest Service leans on Human Technologies to be their eyes and ears in the apparel industry. . . It’s up to Human Technologies to go out and find the actual product—or design and develop it—that will meet [the Forest Service’s specifications],” said Gary Poindexter, senior project manager, SourceAmerica®.

Human Technologies employs 16 people on the Forest Service contract, 13 of whom have significant disabilities. Employees work in customer service, warehouse operations,

shipping and receiving, sewing, embroidery, screen printing, tailoring, kitting and order fulfillment.

Every customer order is picked, personalized, kitted and sent directly to the employee. Human Technologies is required to ship orders within three business days. In 2014, the nonprofit agency shipped more than 16,500 orders, which included 80,300 individual items. The average time to ship was 1.29 days, with a picking accuracy of 99.91 percent and an overall product quality of 99.89 percent, a testament to the skills and abilities of employees.

“[The Forest Service] is very happy that they can contact one source to take care of all of their needs. Our employees take great pride in their work and go the extra mile to ensure the Forest Service employees have what they need, when they need it,” Frank said.

The success of this program has led to other large uniform management and apparel contracts, among them the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Air Force and several U.S. Department of Agriculture bureaus as well as commercial contracts with the Texas A&M and Florida Forest Services. ★