

## **October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

### **Former ARS Client Fulfills His Dream of Owning His Own Business**

A former ARS client accomplished his dream of owning a screen-printing business with the assistance of the ARS Small Business Program.

Jeff Gonzagowski of Van Buren established a reputation in high school as a talented graphic artist by creating shirt designs for the school and its athletic teams.

After he graduated high school, he served in the U.S. Army. When he returned from his duty in Iraq, he was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He found it difficult to work in many different environments because of it. This led Gonzagowski to the decision that he wanted to be his own boss and create his own work environment.

He started his screen-printing business, Broken Joe's, out of a friend's garage. After months of hard work, he was able to rent commercial space on Main Street in Van Buren for his business. Gonzagowski did not have the updated equipment needed to produce the large orders he was receiving.

He heard about Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the ARS Small Business Program. While he was doubtful that he would be approved, Gonzagowski created and submitted a small business plan. Not only was his plan approved, but it now serves as an example of a successful proposal that other clients can review as they create their own small business plans.

Thanks to the funds provided by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Gonzagowski now has the most modern screen printing equipment in town and is able to produce large orders of merchandise quickly. He designs and produces shirts for both Van Buren and Fort Smith School Districts and recently was contracted to create the shirts for the Van Buren Downtown Junk Fest. Staying true to his roots, Gonzagowski creates various shirts with an Armed Forces theme which honor our nation's disabled veterans and active military.

Broken Joe's is located at 515 Main Street Van Buren or visit [www.brokenjoes.com](http://www.brokenjoes.com).



*Jeff Gonzagowski shows off one of the t-shirt designs he produced.*