

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
Reemployment Assistance Appeals
THE CALDWELL BUILDING
107 EAST MADISON STREET
TALLAHASSEE FL 32399-4143**

PETITIONER:

Employer Account No. - 3083710
JMI CONTRACTORS INC
ATTN MELISSA VALE
15586 CAPITAL PORT DRIVE
SAN ANTONIO TX 78249-1320

RESPONDENT:

State of Florida
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY
c/o Department of Revenue

**PROTEST OF LIABILITY
DOCKET NO. 2012-117218L**

ORDER

This matter comes before me for final Department Order.

Having fully considered the Special Deputy's Recommended Order and the record of the case and in the absence of any exceptions to the Recommended Order, I adopt the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law as set forth therein. A copy of the Recommended Order is attached and incorporated in this Final Order.

In consideration thereof, it is ORDERED that the determination dated October 11, 2012, is AFFIRMED.

JUDICIAL REVIEW

Any request for judicial review must be initiated within 30 days of the date the Order was filed. Judicial review is commenced by filing one copy of a *Notice of Appeal* with the DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY at the address shown at the top of this Order and a second copy, with filing fees prescribed by law, with the appropriate District Court of Appeal. It is the responsibility of the party appealing to the Court to prepare a transcript of the record. If no court reporter was at the hearing, the transcript must be prepared from a copy of the Special Deputy's hearing recording, which may be requested from the Office of Appeals.

Cualquier solicitud para revisión judicial debe ser iniciada dentro de los 30 días a partir de la fecha en que la Orden fue registrada. La revisión judicial se comienza al registrar una copia de un *Aviso de Apelación* con la Agencia para la Innovación de la Fuerza Laboral [*DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY*] en la dirección que aparece en la parte superior de este *Orden* y una segunda copia, con los honorarios de registro prescritos por la ley, con el Tribunal Distrital de Apelaciones pertinente. Es la responsabilidad de la parte apelando al tribunal la de preparar una transcripción del registro. Si en la audiencia no se encontraba ningún estenógrafo registrado en los tribunales, la transcripción debe ser preparada de una copia de la grabación de la audiencia del Delegado Especial [*Special Deputy*], la cual puede ser solicitada de la Oficina de Apelaciones.

Nenpòt demann pou yon revizyon jiridik fèt pou l kòmanse lan yon peryòd 30 jou apati de dat ke Lòd la te depoze a. Revizyon jiridik la kòmanse avèk depo yon kopi yon *Avi Dapèl* ki voye bay DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY lan nan adrès ki parèt pi wo a, lan tèt Lòd sa a e yon dezyèm kopi, avèk frè depo ki preskri pa lalwa, bay Kou Dapèl Distrik apwopriye a. Se responsabilite pati k ap prezante apèl la bay Tribinal la pou l prepare yon kopi dosye a. Si pa te gen yon stenograf lan seyans lan, kopi a fèt pou l prepare apati de kopi anrejistreman seyans lan ke Adjwen Spesyal la te fè a, e ke w ka mande Biwo Dapèl la voye pou ou.

DONE and ORDERED at Tallahassee, Florida, this _____ day of March, 2013.



Altemese Smith,
Bureau Chief,
Reemployment Assistance Services
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

FILED ON THIS DATE PURSUANT TO § 120.52,
FLORIDA STATUTES, WITH THE DESIGNATED
DEPARTMENT CLERK, RECEIPT OF WHICH IS
HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGED.

Shanendra Y. Barnes

DEPUTY CLERK

DATE

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that true and correct copies of the foregoing Final Order have been furnished to the persons listed below in the manner described, on the _____ day of March, 2013.

Shanendra Y. Barnes

SHANEDRA Y. BARNES, Special Deputy Clerk
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY
Reemployment Assistance Appeals
107 EAST MADISON STREET
TALLAHASSEE FL 32399-4143

By U.S. Mail:

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State of Florida
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
c/o Department of Revenue

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Reemployment Assistance Appeals

MSC 347 CALDWELL BUILDING

107 EAST MADISON STREET

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**PROTEST OF LIABILITY
DOCKET NO. 2012-117218L**

RESPONDENT:

State of Florida
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY
c/o Department of Revenue

RECOMMENDED ORDER OF SPECIAL DEPUTY

TO: SECRETARY,
Bureau Chief,
Reemployment Assistance Services
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

This matter comes before the undersigned Special Deputy pursuant to the Petitioner's protest of the Respondent's determination dated October 11, 2012.

After due notice to the parties, a telephone hearing was held on January 29, 2013. The Petitioner, represented by the Director of Operations, appeared and testified. The Joined Party appeared and testified.

The record of the case, including the recording of the hearing and any exhibits submitted in evidence, is herewith transmitted. Proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law were not received.

Issue:

Whether services performed for the Petitioner by the Joined Party and other individuals working as site superintendents constitute insured employment pursuant to Sections 443.036(19), 443.036(21); 443.1216, Florida Statutes, and if so, the effective date of the liability.

Findings of Fact:

1. The Petitioner is a general contractor located in San Antonio, Texas.
2. In early 2011 the Petitioner had several projects in Florida and hired the Joined Party as a site superintendent to hire the work crews, to order supplies, and to supervise the projects.
3. The Petitioner agreed to pay the Joined Party a salary of \$56,000 per year.

4. There was no written agreement between the Petitioner and the Joined Party. There was no verbal agreement that the Joined Party would perform services as an independent contractor. The Joined Party did not have any investment in a business, did not have a contractor's license, business license or occupational license, did not advertise his services to the general public, and did not have business liability insurance. The Joined Party believed that he was an employee of the Petitioner.
5. The Petitioner paid the workers who were hired by the Joined Party. The Petitioner paid for the supplies that were ordered by the Joined Party. The Joined Party did not provide any tools or equipment with the exception of his truck. The Petitioner gave the Joined Party an allowance for use of his truck and paid for all travel expenses including fuel for the truck, hotel bills, and meals. The Joined Party did not have any unreimbursed expenses in connection with the work.
6. The Petitioner provided the Joined Party with uniform shirts bearing the Petitioner's name. The Petitioner also provided the Joined Party with business cards.
7. The Joined Party's regular hours of work were from 7 AM until 7 PM, however, he was considered to be on-call twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week. The Petitioner gave the Joined Party instructions about when to work, and how to do the work. The Petitioner provided on-the-job training for the Joined Party.
8. The Joined Party was required to keep in touch with the Petitioner by e-mail. He was required to submit a weekly report to the Petitioner and to report the progress of the jobs. The Petitioner was available to answer any questions that the Joined Party may have had.
9. The Joined Party did not believe that he had the right to perform services for a competitor. However, even if he had the right to perform services for others he would not have had the opportunity since he lived at the various job sites located in various cities and because he performed full time services for the Petitioner.
10. The Joined Party was required to personally perform the work. He was not allowed to hire and pay others to perform his duties for him.
11. The Petitioner paid the Joined Party on a weekly basis. The Joined Party received a paid vacation and paid holidays. No taxes were withheld from the pay and at the end of 2011 the Petitioner reported the Joined Party's earnings on Form 1099-MISC as nonemployee compensation.
12. Either party had the right to terminate the relationship at any time without incurring liability for breach of contract.
13. The Petitioner decided to begin paying the Joined Party as an employee effective January 1, 2012. There were no changes in the terms and conditions under which the Joined Party performed services for the Petitioner other than the Petitioner began withholding payroll taxes from the pay.
14. On May 22, 2012, the Petitioner terminated the Joined Party's employment.
15. The Joined Party filed a claim for unemployment compensation benefits, now known as reemployment assistance benefits, effective July 1, 2012. When the Joined Party received credit only for wages paid in the first quarter 2012, a *Request for Reconsideration of Monetary Determination* was filed and an investigation was assigned to the Department of Revenue to determine if the Joined Party performed services for the Petitioner as an employee or as an independent contractor.
16. On October 11, 2012, the Department of Revenue issued a determination holding that the Joined Party and other individuals performing services for the Petitioner as site superintendents are employees of the Petitioner retroactive to January 1, 2011. The Petitioner filed a timely protest by letter dated October 18, 2012.

Conclusions of Law:

17. The issue in this case, whether services performed for the Petitioner by the Joined Party and other individuals as site superintendents constitute employment subject to the Florida Reemployment Assistance Program Law, is governed by Chapter 443, Florida Statutes. Section 443.1216(1)(a)2., Florida Statutes, provides that employment subject to the chapter includes service performed by individuals under the usual common law rules applicable in determining an employer-employee relationship.
18. The Supreme Court of the United States held that the term "usual common law rules" is to be used in a generic sense to mean the "standards developed by the courts through the years of adjudication." United States v. W.M. Webb, Inc., 397 U.S. 179 (1970).
19. The Supreme Court of Florida adopted and approved the tests in 1 Restatement of Law, Agency 2d Section 220 (1958), for use to determine if an employment relationship exists. See Cantor v. Cochran, 184 So.2d 173 (Fla. 1966); Miami Herald Publishing Co. v. Kendall, 88 So.2d 276 (Fla. 1956); Magarian v. Southern Fruit Distributors, 1 So.2d 858 (Fla. 1941); see also Kane Furniture Corp. v. R. Miranda, 506 So.2d 1061 (Fla. 2d DCA 1987). In Brayshaw v. Agency for Workforce Innovation, et al; 58 So.3d 301 (Fla. 1st DCA 2011) the court stated that the statute does not refer to other rules or factors for determining the employment relationship and, therefore, the Department is limited to applying only Florida common law in determining the nature of an employment relationship.
20. Restatement of Law is a publication, prepared under the auspices of the American Law Institute, which explains the meaning of the law with regard to various court rulings. The Restatement sets forth a nonexclusive list of factors that are to be considered when judging whether a relationship is an employment relationship or an independent contractor relationship.
21. 1 Restatement of Law, Agency 2d Section 220 (1958) provides:
 - (1) A servant is a person employed to perform services for another and who, in the performance of the services, is subject to the other's control or right of control.
 - (2) The following matters of fact, among others, are to be considered:
 - (a) the extent of control which, by the agreement, the business may exercise over the details of the work;
 - (b) whether or not the one employed is engaged in a distinct occupation or business;
 - (c) the kind of occupation, with reference to whether, in the locality, the work is usually done under the direction of the employer or by a specialist without supervision;
 - (d) the skill required in the particular occupation;
 - (e) whether the employer or the worker supplies the instrumentalities, tools, and the place of work for the person doing the work;
 - (f) the length of time for which the person is employed;
 - (g) the method of payment, whether by the time or by the job;
 - (h) whether or not the work is a part of the regular business of the employer;
 - (i) whether or not the parties believe they are creating the relation of master and servant;
 - (j) whether the principal is or is not in business.
22. Comments in the Restatement explain that the word "servant" does not exclusively connote manual labor, and the word "employee" has largely replaced "servant" in statutes dealing with various aspects of the working relationship between two parties.

23. In Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services v. Department of Labor & Employment Security, 472 So.2d 1284 (Fla. 1st DCA 1985) the court confirmed that the factors listed in the Restatement are the proper factors to be considered in determining whether an employer-employee relationship exists. However, in citing La Grande v. B&L Services, Inc., 432 So.2d 1364, 1366 (Fla. 1st DCA 1983), the court acknowledged that the question of whether a person is properly classified an employee or an independent contractor often can not be answered by reference to "hard and fast" rules, but rather must be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
24. There was no written contract or agreement between the Petitioner and the Joined Party. No evidence was presented to show the existence of any verbal agreement that the Joined Party would perform services for the Petitioner as an independent contractor. In Keith v. News & Sun Sentinel Co., 667 So.2d 167 (Fla. 1995) the Court held that in determining the status of a working relationship, the agreement between the parties should be examined if there is one. In providing guidance on how to proceed absent an express agreement the Court stated "In the event that there is no express agreement and the intent of the parties can not be otherwise determined, courts must resort to a fact specific analysis under the Restatement based on the actual practice of the parties."
25. The Petitioner is a general contractor which operated several job sites in Florida. The Joined Party was engaged to supervise those jobs for the Petitioner. The work performed for the Petitioner by the Joined Party was not separate and distinct from the Petitioner's business but was an integral and necessary part of the Petitioner's business.
26. The Petitioner provided everything that was needed to perform the work. The Joined Party provided his own truck for transportation but the Petitioner paid the Joined Party an allowance for use of the truck and paid for the fuel. The Petitioner reimbursed the Joined Party for travel expenses including reimbursements for meals and lodging. The Joined Party did not have significant unreimbursed expenses in connection with the work and was not at risk of suffering a financial loss from performing services.
27. No evidence was adduced concerning the level of skill required to perform the work. The Petitioner provided on-the-job training, answered any questions the Joined Party had concerning the work, and told the Joined Party how to perform the work. Although the humblest labor can be independently contracted and the most highly trained artisan can be an employee, see Farmers and Merchants Bank v. Vocelle, 106 So.2d 92 (Fla. 1st DCA 1958), the greater the skill or special knowledge required to perform the work, the more likely the relationship will be found to be one of independent contractor. Florida Gulf Coast Symphony v. Florida Department of Labor & Employment Sec., 386 So.2d 259 (Fla. 2d DCA 1980)
28. The Petitioner paid the Joined Party an annual salary. Thus, the Joined Party was paid based on time worked rather than on production or by the job. The fact that the Petitioner chose not to withhold payroll taxes from the pay does not, standing alone, establish an independent contractor relationship. Section 443.1217(1), Florida Statutes, provides that the wages subject to the Reemployment Assistance Program Law include all remuneration for employment including commissions, bonuses, back pay awards, and the cash value of all remuneration in any medium other than cash.
29. The Petitioner provided the Joined Party with paid time off from work, including a paid vacation. In addition to the factors enumerated in the Restatement of Law, the provision of employee benefits has been recognized as a factor militating in favor of a conclusion that an employee relationship exists. Harper ex rel. Daley v. Toler, 884 So.2d 1124 (Fla. 2nd DCA 2004).

30. The Joined Party performed services exclusively for the Petitioner for a period of over one year. Either party could terminate the relationship at any time without incurring liability for breach of contract. These facts reveal the existence of an at-will relationship of relative permanence. In Cantor v. Cochran, 184 So.2d 173 (Fla. 1966), the court in quoting 1 Larson, Workmens' Compensation Law, Section 44.35 stated: "The power to fire is the power to control. The absolute right to terminate the relationship without liability is not consistent with the concept of independent contractor, under which the contractor should have the legal right to complete the project contracted for and to treat any attempt to prevent completion as a breach of contract."
31. The evidence reveals that the Petitioner controlled who performed the work, what work was performed and how the work was performed. In Adams v. Department of Labor and Employment Security, 458 So.2d 1161 (Fla. 1st DCA 1984), the Court held that if the person serving is merely subject to the control of the person being served as to the results to be obtained, he is an independent contractor. If the person serving is subject to the control of the person being served as to the means to be used, he is not an independent contractor. It is the right of control, not actual control or interference with the work which is significant in distinguishing between an independent contractor and a servant. The Court also determined that the Department had authority to make a determination applicable not only to the worker whose unemployment benefit application initiated the investigation, but to all similarly situated workers.
32. It is concluded that the services performed for the Petitioner by the Joined Party and other individuals as site superintendents constitute insured employment.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the determination dated October 11, 2012, be AFFIRMED.

Respectfully submitted on February 21, 2013.



R. O. SMITH, Special Deputy
Office of Appeals

A party aggrieved by the *Recommended Order* may file written exceptions to the Director at the address shown above within fifteen days of the mailing date of the *Recommended Order*. Any opposing party may file counter exceptions within ten days of the mailing of the original exceptions. A brief in opposition to counter exceptions may be filed within ten days of the mailing of the counter exceptions. Any party initiating such correspondence must send a copy of the correspondence to each party of record and indicate that copies were sent.

Una parte que se vea perjudicada por la *Orden Recomendada* puede registrar excepciones por escrito al Director Designado en la dirección que aparece arriba dentro de quince días a partir de la fecha del envío por correo de la *Orden Recomendada*. Cualquier contraparte puede registrar contra-excepciones dentro de los diez días a partir de la fecha de envío por correo de las excepciones originales. Un sumario en oposición a contra-excepciones puede ser registrado dentro de los diez días a partir de la fecha de envío por correo de las contra-excepciones. Cualquier parte que dé inicio a tal correspondencia debe enviarle una copia de tal correspondencia a cada parte contenida en el registro y señalar que copias fueron remitidas.

Yon pati ke Lòd Rekòmande a afekte ka prezante de eksklizyon alekri bay Direktè Adjwen an lan adrès ki parèt anlè a lan yon peryòd kenz jou apati de dat ke Lòd Rekòmande a te poste a. Nenpòt pati ki fè opozisyon ka prezante objeksyon a eksklizyon yo lan yon peryòd dis jou apati de lè ke objeksyon a eksklizyon orijinal yo te poste. Yon dosye ki prezante ann opozisyon a objeksyon a eksklizyon yo, ka prezante lan yon peryòd dis jou apati de dat ke objeksyon a eksklizyon yo te poste. Nenpòt pati ki angaje yon korespondans konsa dwe voye yon kopi kourye a bay chak pati ki enplike lan dosye a e endike ke yo te voye kopi yo.

Shanendra Y. Barnes

SHANEDRA Y. BARNES, Special Deputy Clerk

**Date Mailed:
February 21, 2013**

Copies mailed to:

Petitioner
Respondent
Joined Party

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