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## **Secretary Gassman Applauds Success of People with Disabilities as State, Nation Observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

### ***Labor Secretary cites employer survey, benefits for all in hiring people with disabilities***

MADISON – In observing National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today applauded the success of people with disabilities and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in helping them gain employment and become self sufficient.

“Wisconsin joins America in observing October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month by celebrating the abilities and achievements of these talented individuals,” Secretary Gassman said. “We need the talent and contributions of everyone to help grow our economy. People with disabilities have much to offer, and I encourage employers in search of dependable, dedicated workers to consider hiring them.”

Secretary Gassman cited a Harris poll of over 900 managers and noted 19 of 20 gave people with disabilities a good to excellent rating in job performance. She said the survey also found little if any additional expense in hiring people with disabilities and that they had as good or better records of attendance and punctuality than their co-workers.

“Many Wisconsin employers already know what these individuals have to offer,” Secretary Gassman said. “Last year, DVR and its partners helped 3,165 people with disabilities gain employment. The estimated annual earnings of these individuals exceed \$53 million, more than double the cost of serving them. When we help them succeed, we all benefit.”

During the month, DWD will feature DVR consumers who have made strides in achieving their employment goals.

“National Disability Employment Awareness Month is an opportunity for us to highlight the talents and skills of job seekers with disabilities,” Secretary Gassman said. “It also gives us a forum to draw attention to the many challenges people with disabilities face in gaining employment and achieving economic self-sufficiency.”

For information about employment and other services for people with disabilities in your area, contact your local DVR office or independent living center:

DVR Offices: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/locations/default.htm>  
Independent Living Centers: <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/Disabilities/Physical/ILCs.htm>