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CONTACT: DWD: Communications Office, 608-266-2722

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Governor Walker Declares October Disability Employment Awareness Month

Secretary Newson: Strong workforce is inclusive, diverse, tapping talents, skills of all

MADISON— With October designated as Disability Employment Awareness Month, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today urged employers with job openings to consider the talents, skills and abilities of people with disabilities.

“A strong workforce is inclusive, diverse, drawing on the skills and talents of all who want to work, people with disabilities in particular,” Secretary Newson said. “Given the opportunity, people with disabilities have demonstrated they have much to offer employers in search of skilled workers. Our nationally regarded Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, in partnership with Easter Seals, Goodwill Industries and others, has many more who can make valuable contributions in advancing our economy. We all win in the process.”

On behalf of Governor Walker, Secretary Newson announced the proclamation, which coincides with National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This year’s theme is, “A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can You Do?” Secretary Newson said the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) offers incentives to employers hiring people with disabilities. Employers who participate in its On-the-Job Training initiative are reimbursed for 50 percent of a trainee’s salary and fringe benefits for up to 90 days.

DVR provides employment services and counseling to people with disabilities who face substantial barriers to employment. Last year, DVR served 40,383 Wisconsin residents with disabilities and placed nearly 3,000 consumers in jobs. DVR’s budget is 78.7 percent federally funded with a 21.3 percent state match for every federal dollar allocated. There are several indicators of the positive return on the state’s investment:

- In the past 3 federal fiscal years, more than \$119 million in DVR purchase of employment plan services and products were invested in Wisconsin’s economy, with an impact of over 1,500 jobs. Of these totals, nearly \$93 million were federal funds drawn down by state match with an economic impact of 1,240 jobs.
- Taxable earnings by DVR consumers who completed employment plans, when divided by the amount of federal and state funds invested in their DVR services, yielded a 211 percent return on investment in federal fiscal year 2012. When the state match is broken out, the ratio is \$8 in return for each \$1 in state revenue invested. One study suggested the return on investment for that \$1 grows to an \$18 yield in the third year.

For more information: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/>.

Governor Walker’s proclamation:

http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/newsreleases/2012/121002_wdeam_proclamation.pdf