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On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

Secretary Gassman Highlights Disability Employment Awareness Month, Success in Helping Job Seekers with Disabilities

Nearly 2,800 people with disabilities gained employment this past year

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today cited successful efforts to place nearly 2,800 people with disabilities in jobs during the past year and, as part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, urged more employers to hire people with disabilities.

“Under Governor Doyle’s leadership, we in Wisconsin are doing all that we can to help businesses create jobs and provide individuals opportunities to get those jobs,” Secretary Gassman said. “That includes people with disabilities who have much to offer. We need the talents of everyone to keep moving forward.”

The theme of National Disability Employment Awareness Month this October is “Talent Has No Boundaries.” Earlier this year, the nation celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

DWD’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides employment services and counseling to people with disabilities who face substantial barriers to employment. In federal fiscal year 2010, DVR served 38,721 people, provided training to 7,200 people and placed 2,784 people in jobs.

Services included DVR’s On-the-Job Training (OJT) Hiring Initiative, launched in 2009 with more than \$2 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding. Thanks to the OJT Hiring Initiative, 601 individuals have been placed in jobs across the state. Currently, 212 former OJT participants continue working in permanent jobs.

During the month, DWD is saluting many of Wisconsin’s employers who have recognized the importance of a diversified workforce that includes people with disabilities.

Employment opportunities for people with disabilities can be the critical factor in their ability to move from a life of dependency to one of independence and inclusion in their communities. DVR, in partnership with other advocacy groups and businesses, provides various programs and services that provide choices for those needing assistance.

For information about employment and other services for people with disabilities in your area, you can 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>