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## **Governor's Small Business Summit to Highlight Vocational Rehabilitation**

*Governor also declares October Disability Employment Awareness Month in Wisconsin*

MADISON – The Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) will be a key area of focus in Governor Scott Walker's upcoming Small Business Summit on September 25 in Stevens Point. The state's DVR program helped more than 3,200 consumers overcome barriers and reach their employment goals in 2012.

"Governor Walker is committed to ensuring that all Wisconsin job seekers have access to resources to find employment," DWD Secretary Reggie Newson said. "Through our successful Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, working in close collaboration with workforce partners and employers, we are helping workers pursue their employment goals and achieve independence."

The DVR program will be featured at Governor Walker's Small Business Summit. The summit provides a forum for state government leaders and small business owners to discuss strategies to promote private-sector job creation. Staff from the Division will provide attendees with information on the benefits of hiring a DVR consumer. In addition, Walgreens Chief Diversity Officer Steve Pemberton will speak about the Walgreens Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI), which operates in concert with the DVR program to train and place individuals with disabilities at Walgreens stores throughout Wisconsin and many other states.

Governor Walker will also proclaim the month of October Disability Employment Awareness Month in Wisconsin. During the month, DWD will highlight programs and employers that have benefited from hiring individuals with disabilities.

This year, more than 3,700 individuals with disabilities have become employed through a multitude of programs such as REDI, On-the-Job Training and Project SEARCH, a program that trains youth with disabilities while still in school to perform critical health care jobs. Annual earnings from DVR consumers are estimated to exceed \$63 million, representing a 205 percent return on investment for Wisconsin taxpayers.

Governor's Proclamation: [http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/newsreleases/2013/130924\\_deam.pdf](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/newsreleases/2013/130924_deam.pdf)

Small Business Summit website: <http://www.wheda.com/root/SmallBizSummit/>