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Year of *A Better Bottom Line*: Governor Scott Walker Visits Mosinee Cold Storage

Mosinee – Governor Scott Walker visited Mosinee Cold Storage today to highlight the Year of *A Better Bottom Line*. Mosinee Cold Storage is a cheese storage and repackaging facility, which was established in 1955. The company employs five Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) consumers, which is one-third of its total workforce.

“It’s great to be here at Mosinee Cold Storage today to see how they are employing individuals with all abilities,” Governor Walker said. “By working together with businesses and communities, we are connecting people with the resources and training they need to find a job and use their unique skills as valuable members of the community. Companies, like Mosinee Cold Storage, understand the advantages these individuals bring to the workplace, and we commend them for taking the opportunity to hire and train workers with disabilities.”

Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson said DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has a ready, willing, and able labor pool available for employers in need of workers to support existing operations or expand and grow.

“Our DVR staff sees the great potential available in working with more than 17,000 people with disabilities,” Secretary Newson said. “As Governor Walker has said, these are people with abilities, with skills, and with knowledge that can add value to an organization, as they gain their independence through employment. The proof is in the more than 3,000 individuals who achieve their employment goals each year with anticipated earnings that double the investment in their services. The Governor's *A Better Bottom Line* initiative benefits the newly hired workers and the employers, as well as their communities and the state in general as the economy improves due to their contributions.”

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides counseling and guidance, on-the-job training, trial work, transportation, and work incentive planning to over 17,000 job seekers with disabilities. On average, the DVR receives 1,486 new applicants, completes 726 new Individualized Plans for Employment, and closes 319 cases each month. Last year, Governor Walker signed legislation increasing the number of people served by the DVR by 6,000. This will allow the state to reduce or eliminate waiting lists of people with disabilities seeking assistance with job skills training and advocacy.

Three programs at DVR in particular connect high school students with disabilities with the resources they need: Youth on the Job Training, Project SEARCH, and Let’s Get to Work. Youth on the Job Training reimburses employers through DVR for 100 percent of the costs associated with training a youth. Project

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SEARCH is a 9-12 month program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school, that provides career exploration and work experience. Let's Get to Work is a partnership between the DVR, the Department of Health Services, the Department of Public Instruction, and the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities to implement Let's Get to Work grants in nine school districts around the state.

2014 – Year of A Better Bottom Line:

- Governor Walker proclaimed 2014 as the Year of *A Better Bottom Line* to encourage and promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities. *A Better Bottom Line* is tailored after Delaware Governor Jack Markell's initiative, which also detailed the vast benefits for employers, employees, and communities.
- During the Year of *A Better Bottom Line*, Governor Walker is directing state agencies to focus on building, recognizing, and promoting public and private programs, companies, and organizations that are improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including veterans and students.
- Under Governor Walker's *Blueprint for Prosperity*, the state will expand Project SEARCH, a program helping young people with disabilities transition from high school to the workplace. The expansion would increase the number of participating businesses by 20, up from seven, over the next three years.

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