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## **DWD Secretary Newson Visits Tailored Label Products, Learns about Vocational Rehabilitation Success Story**

MENOMONEE FALLS – As part of the Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today visited Tailored Label Products in Menomonee Falls. There he met Patrick Young, a former DWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) client whose story illustrates the success of the DVR program in helping individuals reach their employment goals.

"Wisconsin's workforce is stronger when people with disabilities work in the community," said Newson. "The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation plays an important role in connecting people with disabilities to Wisconsin's workforce. By helping individuals reach their employment goals, we are fulfilling Governor Walker's vision of greater independence."

The Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign coordinates visits to workplaces between public officials and individuals with disabilities, including those who receive assistance through DVR. The campaign is sponsored by the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD).

Secretary Newson spent the morning with Patrick, a former DVR client who has worked at Tailored Label Products for 8 years. Patrick shared with Secretary Newson his experiences as a finishing assistant at the company, where he assembles boxes for shipments and works about twice as fast as the average box assembler. Patrick is just one of thousands of consumers that the DVR program helps each year.

"I want to thank Secretary Newson for participating in the Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign," said Beth Swedeen, Executive Director for the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities. "As the leader of the Department of Workforce Development, Secretary Newson can lead the way in ensuring that all state efforts to improve employment outcomes and the economy include people with disabilities. DWD is critical in sharing the message with employers that hiring people with disabilities makes good business sense."

The Secretary's visit follows Governor Walker's recent signing of 2013 Act 58, which will increase funding to Wisconsin's vocational rehabilitation program by nearly \$20 million over the 2013-15 biennium. The funds will enable DVR to serve an additional 6,000 individuals with disabilities over the same time period, reducing wait lists and expediting services to those seeking work.

DVR is the state's premier program to provide employment services and counseling to people with disabilities who face substantial barriers to employment. In 2013, DVR served more than 17,000 Wisconsin residents with disabilities and placed 3,840 people in jobs. These newly employed individuals are projected to earn \$66.3 million annually, representing a 206 percent return on the public investment in their services. DVR's budget is 78.7% federal funded with a 21.3% state match required for each federal dollar allotted to Wisconsin.

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