



SCOTT WALKER

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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Governor Scott Walker Proclaims 2014 as Year of “A Better Bottom Line”

Agency-wide effort focuses on improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities

Madison – Governor Scott Walker has declared 2014 as year of “A Better Bottom Line: Employment Opportunities for People With Disabilities” to recognize the benefits of employing people with disabilities in the workplace, to encourage increased participation by individuals and public and private employers, and to invest in programs assisting in integrating persons with disabilities into the workforce.

“This is an initiative I feel strongly about, because it is a benefit to the employees, the employers, and the community,” Governor Walker said. “This is not about charity. I often hear from employers that people with disabilities are among the most dedicated, dependable, and hard-working individuals on their staff. This year, we will focus on building these opportunities and recognizing what a great asset people with disabilities are in the workplace.”

Governor Walker issued the proclamation (attached) following a roundtable meeting with leaders of various groups and companies that work with people with disabilities.

Cindy Bentley of Milwaukee was born with an intellectual disability. At the roundtable, she told Governor Walker how important her job, as an executive with People First Wisconsin, is to her. “I’m proud to be a working woman. I feel better when I’m working, because I know that when I work, I can play. We want to work. We want to have a cause. We want to do something with our lives. I want to see other people with disabilities have a purpose, like I do.”

As part of the *Blueprint For Prosperity* outlined in Governor Walker’s State of the State speech, he announced plans to expand Project SEARCH, which is a program that helps young people with disabilities transition from high school to the workplace. The expansion would increase the number of participating business by 20 from seven over the next three years.

Governor Walker recently signed legislation to increase the number of people served by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation by 6,000. This will allow the state to reduce or eliminate the waiting list of persons with disabilities, who are seeking assistance with jobs skills training and advocacy, so they can enter the workforce.

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 and organizations improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including veterans and students.

Priorities for the Year of A Better Bottom Line include overcoming barriers to employment for people with disabilities which may include; transportation issues, employer participation, adaptable workplace challenges, costs relating to the launch of opportunities within a company, retention, and general awareness and knowledge of advantages.

The Year of A Better Bottom Line is inspired by the 2012-13 National Governor's Association initiative promoted by former NGA Chair, Delaware Governor Jack Markell.

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