



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 1, 2009

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OCTOBER PROCLAIMED DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH *EVENTS HIGHLIGHT ABILITIES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES SCHEDULED ACROSS STATE*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Governor Phil Bredesen is designating October as Disability Employment Awareness Month to generate awareness about the talents and abilities of Tennessee’s citizens with disabilities.

“Expectation + Opportunities = Full Participation” is the theme of the 2009 National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Disability Employment Awareness Month will recognize the vital role that expectations play in our successes as individuals *and* as a society.

“We must ensure that people with disabilities and their employers expect that they will fully participate in our workforce,” said Bredesen. “Such an expectation alone, however, is not enough. Individuals with disabilities must have opportunities. They need access to a complete range of employment choices to contribute their often untapped talents and abilities. With both the expectation and opportunity, persons with disabilities will become full participants in our economy.”

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) within the Department of Human Services provides vocational rehabilitation services to Tennesseans with disabilities to help them maximize their contribution to the workforce. Approximately 1,700 individuals with the most significant disabilities were employed after completing rehabilitation programs last year. Some of the challenges faced by these individuals include: traumatic brain injury, blindness and mental retardation.

“Disability Employment Awareness month is an opportune time to recognize the incredible efforts and contributions that persons with disabilities bring to our economy,” said Human Services Commissioner Gina Lodge. “It is also a helpful reminder that we need to raise the employment opportunity bar even higher.”

Vocational rehabilitation offices across the state, as well as seventeen Tennessee Rehabilitation Centers located in rural communities and the residential comprehensive Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Smyrna, provide numerous services to clients, including vocational training, physical or occupational therapy and transitional living skills. For more information on the centers, visit <http://state.tn.us/humanserv/rehab/vrs.html>

DRS staff are working with businesses and agencies across Tennessee on activities recognizing Disability Employment Awareness Month. Attached is a partial list of scheduled events.

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CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR
400 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TN 37243
615.313.4700

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH SCHEDULE

October 3	Go! Fest Sponsored by the City of Chattanooga, area industry and agencies strives to eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Contact: Carol Martin (423) 634-6725	Chattanooga Zoo at Warner Park Chattanooga, TN
October 6	Joint City and County signing of Proclamation for Disability Employment Awareness Month at 9 a.m. Contact: Lisa Kinkade (731) 423-5620, ext. 328	Jackson City Hall 101 East Main Street Jackson, TN
October 8	Disability Employment Awareness Month Community Open House and Assistive Technology Presentation at TN Rehabilitation Center of Murfreesboro from 10 a.m. to noon Contact: Jan Hampton (615) 898-8088	TN Rehabilitation Center of Murfreesboro 1132 Haley Road Murfreesboro, TN
October 9	Disability Employment Awareness Month Community Open House from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. Contact: Sharon Logan (931) 380-2550	TN Rehabilitation Center of Columbia 206 Wayne Street Columbia, TN
October 13	Disability Employment Awareness Month Community Open House and Ribbon Cutting at 1 p.m. Contact: Virginia Talley (931) 648-5560, ext. 121	TN Rehabilitation Center of Clarksville 1575 Corporate Parkway Blvd. Clarksville, TN
October 15	“Ready, Set, Work – What You Need to Know” Resources and seminars for individuals with disabilities at the TN Career Center from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Contact: Harvey Buchanan (731) 668-2040	TN Career Center 362 Carriage House Drive Jackson, TN
October 16	Area Recognition Awards Luncheon at noon at TN Rehabilitation Center of Dyersburg Contact: Ronda Baker (731) 286-8315	TN Rehabilitation Center of Dyersburg 1365 Morgan Road

October 20	Chamber of Commerce Disabilities Awareness Coffee at 9 a.m. Contact Elizabeth Strode (931) 685-5017	TN Rehabilitation Center at Shelbyville 1618 Railroad Avenue Shelbyville, TN
October 21	Disability Employment Awareness Month Open House from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Contact: Delwyn Smith (423) 478-0332, ext. 27	TN Rehabilitation Center at Cleveland 3069 Overlook Drive, Suite B Cleveland, TN
October 21	Disability Mentoring Day Contact: Regena Burrow (615) 313-4893	Statewide
October 22	TRC Disability Employment Awareness Day Contact: Gale Demick (615) 459-6811, ext. 246	TN Rehabilitation Center 460 Ninth Avenue Smyrna, TN
October 22	Mayor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities Recognition Awards at 5:30 p.m. Contact: Jerry Hall (615) 862-8960	Frist Center for Visual Arts 919 Broadway Nashville, TN
October 22	"Strength through Ability" featuring the Access Express technology exhibit from the STAR Center from 9 a.m. to noon Contact: Lisa Kinkade (731) 423-5620, ext. 328	TN Career Center of Jackson 362 Carriage House Drive Jackson, TN
October 23	Disability Employment Awareness Month Community Open House from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Contact: Debbie Michael (931) 723-5070	TN Rehabilitation Center of Manchester 91 Volunteer Parkway Manchester, TN
October 26	Area Recognition Consortium Awards Luncheon from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Contact: Marci Hess (615) 948-3464	Millennium Maxwell House Hotel 2025 Rosa L. Parks Blvd. Nashville, TN
October 27	Work Incentive Seminar (WISE) at 10 a.m. General public will have opportunity to explore available work incentives from speaker, Jami Brown Contact: Kim Hasty (931) 962-1162 ext. 104	TN Rehabilitation Center at Winchester 135 Baxter Lane Winchester, TN