

NEWS RELEASE

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Commissioners proclaim Disability Employment Awareness Month

(Mansfield, OH) - The Richland County Commissioners have proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness Month. This year's theme is "Profit by Investing in Workers with Disabilities." The theme honors the contributions of workers with disabilities and serves to inform the public that they represent a highly skilled talent pool that can help employers compete in today's global economy.

In 2011, less than one in five individuals with disabilities held jobs, according to a report from the U.S. Department of Labor. The jobless rate for those with disabilities was 16.1 percent. Meanwhile, about 80 percent of those with disabilities were not considered to be in the labor force, meaning that they were not employed and were not looking for work. Just 30 percent of people in the general population fell into this same category

"It is important for everyone to earn money and learn the value of money. I have learned that customer service is very important," said David Nead. Nead currently holds four jobs and was one of the 2010 Employees of the Year at Richland Newhope Industries, Inc. (RNI).

As part of the local observance, RNI will hold its annual Employer Recognition Breakfast where businesses in the community that employ individuals with developmental disabilities as well as those that contract with RNI will be honored. The Employer of the Year along with the facility-based and community-based Employees of the Year will also be recognized.

The reservation-only breakfast will be held Wed., Oct. 26 at 7:30 a.m. at the Holiday Inn in Mansfield. This year's featured speaker will be Bill Hosket. Hosket was the Ohio High School Basketball Player of the Year in 1964 and went on to play at The Ohio State University where he was All-Big 10 and All-American, as well as Academic All-American. He was on the Gold Medal winning team for the United States at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. Hosket played in the NBA and was on the 1970 New York Knicks World Championship team. He has served on the USA Olympic Basketball Committee, is a member of The Ohio State University Athletic Hall of Fame, and was the first President of the Ohio High School Athletic Association Foundation Board. A former vice-president of a large paper company, Hosket still serves as a consultant to the paper industry and is an insurance executive. For many years, he has been a television analyst for Big Ten basketball.

Also during October, Nead and Ryan Ulmer, who were both 2010 Employees of the Year at RNI, are being featured on billboards in the Mansfield area. In addition, RNI will host its 6th Annual Dress for Achievement Fashion Show on Oct. 14.

Established in 1963, Richland Newhope Industries, Inc. provides services and supports for community employment, industrial services at three production sites, personal and social services, recreational services, and options for seniors.

Richland Newhope (Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities) currently supports about 1,500 individuals through early intervention, preschool, adult, residential, therapy, transportation and other family support programs.

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(Media are invited to attend the Oct. 26 breakfast. RSVP requested. Contact Jane Imbody, Richland Newhope Director of Community Relations, at 419-774-4215 or jimbody@rnewhope.org.)