

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

PIERRE, SD – Governor Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in South Dakota.

The Governor's goal to make South Dakota an "employment first state" continues. This means making employment the first priority and preferred outcome for all citizens with disabilities across the state. This coincides with National Disability Employment Awareness Month, a national awareness campaign that takes place each October.

This year's theme is *"My Disability is One Part of Who I am"*. The history of NDEAM traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month, known as NDEAM, is a nationwide campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the contributions of America's workers with disabilities, past and present. Each spring, the year's theme is announced to help workplaces, individuals and communities begin planning activities.

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how to participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month and ways they can promote its messages during October and the year.

Reflecting this year's theme, *"My Disability is One Part of Who I Am"*, a host of agencies and organizations will be engaging in a variety of activities designed to educate the public on disability employment issues and the role they play in fostering a disability-friendly work culture. These efforts include:

October 1st – Sioux Falls. A breakfast event will be held at 7:30 am at the Sanford Research Center (2301 E. 60th Street North). The event will feature an employer/expert panel focusing on the successes and challenges of hiring people with disabilities, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and accommodations in the workplace. For more information, contact Vicki Nelson at (605) 367-5330 or Julie Briggs at (605) 367-5260.

October 6th – Milbank. An event will be held at 5:30 pm at the Milbank Community Center (East Hwy 12). The evening will start with a meal and will include recognition of the 2015 Milbank NDEAM award recipients. Jessie Saperstein, as the keynote speaker will address disability, diversity, overcoming barriers, realizing and achieving one's potential. For more information, contact Brigett Wookey at (605) 882-5120.

October 7th – Brookings. Jessie Saperstein will present at a luncheon to be held at the Swiftel Center 11:45 am – 1:00 pm in partnership with the Brookings Area Human Resource Association (BAHRA) and Women in Leadership and Learning (WILL). Jessie will address disability, diversity, overcoming barriers, realizing and achieving one's potential. For more information, contact Sylvia Buboltz at (605) 688-4282 or Matt Simet at (605) 695-8471.

October 7th – Eagle Butte. Oun'iyekiyapi Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe is hosting an event (10:45 am – 2:00 pm) at the Old Agency Building in Eagle Butte. The event will include a walk, luncheon, speaker, and sharing of information by Tribal and state agencies on available programs and services. For more information, contact Lyle Cook at (605) 964-4400.

October 7th – Pierre/Ft. Pierre. (8:30 am – 10:00 am) Kathleen Barrow from Jackson Lewis P.C. Law Firm will present at the Capitol University Center (925 East Sioux Avenue). Kathleen will help employers learn how to focus on their employees' abilities rather than disabilities and outline employers legal obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Representatives from The Right Turn, Department of Labor and Regulation, and the Department of Human Services/Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired will share information and resources. For more information, contact Cindy Ryan at (605) 773-3315.

October 8th – Aberdeen. (7:30 am – 10:00 am) Kathleen Barrow from Jackson Lewis P.C. Law Firm will present at the AmericInn (301 Centennial Street South). Kathleen will help employers learn how to focus on their employees' abilities rather than disabilities and outline employers legal obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The program will provide employers with an explanation of the reasonable accommodation process and how to coordinate this with certain protected leaves of absences. The event will also include a showing of the video "People with Disabilities WORK" followed with a panel discussion. For more information, contact Laura Stoltenburg, at (605) 626-2398.

October 8th – Sisseton. This event will begin with dinner at 6:00 pm at the Sisseton City Hall, Community Room (406 2nd Avenue West). Sisseton is collaborating with Brookings, Madison and Milbank. It will host Jessie Saperstein, as the featured speaker. He will address disability, diversity, overcoming barriers, realizing and achieving one's potential and it will offer an opportunity to promote awareness and broaden the spectrum of creating more employment opportunities for all individuals with disabilities living in rural communities. For more information, contact Rachael Johnson at (605) 698-7445.

October 9th – Madison. (9:00 am – 10:00 am) Jesse Saperstein will present at the Madison High School (800 NE 9th Street) to students, teachers, and members of the general public. Jesse has been diagnosed with Autism spectrum disorder and advocates in schools to reduce bullying. Jesse has a unique perspective on the topic and has worked hard to overcome obstacles in his life particularly related to social interactions. He uses humor and personal experience to tell his story and how he overcame adversity in order to become successful in his career. His struggles resonate with many generations, which inspire acceptance and understanding to those who hear him speak. For more information, contact Shaun Erschens at (605) 688-4280.

October 20th – Mobridge. The *October Chamber Business After Hours* will be held at the Silver Dollar Saloon (205 North Main Street), sponsored by NDEAM collaboration partners. This event will allow information to be shared on employing individuals with disabilities and highlight services through DRS and SBVI. Local employers who have been strong supporters of employing people with disabilities will also be recognized at this event. The committee also plans to host a lunch and learn event with a date to be

determined in the near future. For more information, contact Corinna Alander at (605) 626-2398.

October 21st – Mitchell. (8:30 am – 11:30 am) Maria Flores, Program Manager, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), will present at Mitchell Technical Institute, Amphitheater (1800 E. Spruce Street). Maria Flores is a 20+ year veteran of EEOC, and she will share information on EEOC's responsibilities, employment discrimination trends, and ways for organizations to be proactive in hiring and retaining qualified individuals with disabilities. She will also discuss discrimination charge processing procedures, including mediation, new initiatives and other hot employment topics. For more information, contact Jessica Sehnert at (605) 995-8072.

October 21st - Rapid City. (7:00 am – 9:30 am) The Workforce Diversity Network team and Rapid City SHRM will host an event at the Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn (505 North Street). The morning will begin with registration and networking, having representatives from disability related organizations present to share information on available services. An employment initiative video will be shown followed by Joe Dresser and Kathleen Barrow of Jackson Lewis presenting on "Disability in the Work Place – At Work It's What People Can Do That Matters". An awards program will also be held to recognize employers who have hired qualified individuals with disabilities. For more information, contact Catie Greseth at (605) 787-2590.

October 22nd – Watertown. (11:30 am – 1:30 pm) A luncheon will be held at the County Fair Banquet Hall (14 2nd Street NE). Annette and Tyler Gamber are the keynote speakers. Annette is a business owner who has worked with vocational rehabilitation services and other providers in recruiting and hiring qualified individuals for various positions. Tyler is an individual with a disability who has employment experience and can speak to the benefits of being employed. For more information, contact Jessica Fischer at (605) 882-5150.

October 22nd – Yankton. (11:30 am – 1:30 pm) Maria Flores, Program Manager, US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), will present at Minerva's Convention Center (1607 E SD Hwy 50). Maria Flores is a 20+ year veteran of EEOC and she will share information on EEOC's responsibilities, employment discrimination trends, and ways for organizations to be proactive in hiring and retaining qualified people with

disabilities. She will also discuss discrimination charge processing procedures, including mediation, new initiatives and other hot employment topics. For more information, contact Jennifer Trenhaile at (605) 668-3050.