



Bob Riley
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES



Cary F. Boswell
COMMISSIONER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kathleen McGehee
334-293-7500 or 1-800-441-7607

ADRS commissioner is keynote speaker at Birmingham area luncheon

BIRMINGHAM - The Birmingham Area Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities honored local businesses and individuals with disabilities at an event on Oct. 23.

Cary Boswell, commissioner of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), was the keynote speaker. In the speech, he challenged the nation to intensify its focus on the needs of individuals with disabilities.

"It is time that we raise the priority on services for people with disabilities in this state and in this nation," he said.

The event honored businesses that provide opportunities for successful employment for people with disabilities and recognized the success and contributions of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. It was a part of Alabama's October observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This year's theme is "Expectation + Opportunity = Full Participation."

Along with the theme, Boswell discussed the need to have equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

"'Equal' opportunity does not mean the 'same,'" he says. "It means giving people with disabilities the services and supports they need in order to level the playing field to compete at the same level as people without disabilities."

He also thanked staff for successfully placing more than 6,000 workers with disabilities in employment in FY 2009. He noted that, of those:

- more than 5,300 were workers with significant disabilities;
- more than 5,800 were placed into competitive employment, at-or-above minimum wage;
- 1,283 were placed into jobs in the Birmingham area (Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, and Shelby counties) with an average wage of \$9.37 per hour; and that
- the combined earned wages of more than \$18 million paid more than \$3.6 million back into local economies.

The event was at The Club, 1 Robert S. Smith Drive in Birmingham.

The Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities is a program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.