



Robert Bentley
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES



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COMMISSIONER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bentley honors businesses, employees with disabilities

MONTGOMERY – Gov. Robert Bentley will personally recognize the accomplishments of employees with disabilities and businesses from around the state at an awards reception Dec. 13 at 1:30 p.m. at the Alabama State Capitol.

The reception is being held by the Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, a program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS).

The honorees have earned top accolades in their respective categories, including Large and Small Employer of the Year; Partnership; Youth Leadership; Media; Student; Educator; Professional; and Large and Small Business Employee of the Year.

Last October, 17 local committees from around the state recognized more than 120 individuals and businesses during "National Disability Employment Awareness Month" awards ceremonies. The state winners were then selected from these local winners in 10 distinct categories following the local committee nominee submissions.

"This awards ceremony is a fitting way to cap off a great year for employment of people with disabilities in Alabama," said Peggy Anderson, ADRS coordinator for business relations. "This recognition is significant for the many businesses that create opportunities for people with disabilities and the individuals, both young and old, who overcome obstacles to positively impact their communities."

Best Buy, Mobile area; Dollar General (West Alabama); the Decatur Daily News; and the Birmingham VA Medical Center are among the businesses and organizations that will be honored.

"Hiring persons with disabilities is a great investment in our economic future," Anderson said.

ADRS has several services to assist employers that are interested in hiring people with disabilities.

Through the Business Relations Program, ADRS staff recruit qualified people with disabilities to meet the employer's needs, provide training for the individual, and provide suggestions for accommodating the individual with a disability.

ADRS also provides services to help employers retain employees who acquire disabilities because of illness, aging, or accidents by providing or suggesting accommodations for those individuals.

The mission of ADRS is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential. In fiscal year 2011, the department assisted 4,547 Alabamians with disabilities in becoming successfully employed.

The Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities was created in the late 1940s by Gov. Jim Folsom as a response to veterans with disabilities who returned home and found no work available. Since that time, many individuals with disabilities, both veterans and civilians, have received the benefit of activities of the Governor's Committee. The committee coordinates a network of local volunteer groups throughout the state and works closely with ADRS staff to develop employment opportunities and raise awareness of the needs and rights of Alabamians with disabilities.