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1. Partnership results in win-win situation for DNR, disabled employees

PARTNERSHIP RESULTS IN WIN-WIN SITUATION FOR DNR, DISABLED EMPLOYEES

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DES MOINES – A partnership between two State of Iowa agencies has resulted in an award, but even more importantly, resulted in employment opportunities for disabled Iowans in protecting natural resources.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) awarded its “Employer of the Year” award for Polk County to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for its work in providing customized training and employment opportunities to people with disabilities through a partnership with IVRS.

Last summer IVRS and DNR began to explore customized training for individuals who had the potential to become skilled candidates for state employment. As a part of the program, IVRS provided DNR hiring managers with pre-screened referrals and also acted as a consultant in the development of a training plan.

The goal of the training was threefold: to teach the trainee specific skills of a job that would help them obtain employment; to help DNR develop a potential pool of qualified candidates; and to help IVRS rehabilitation counselors assess the trainee’s ability to perform certain work.

“As a vocational rehabilitation counselor with IVRS, I have found our partnership with Iowa’s Department of Natural Resources to be extremely rewarding for the qualified clients we serve,” said Monty South, an IVRS counselor who helped three people find opportunities at DNR through the interagency partnership.

“The Customized Training partnership has helped with measuring my client’s soft skills, identifying vocational strengths and weaknesses, providing on-the-job skills training, and improving their confidence level to help maintain a suitable job. I have three very successful candidates in training with DNR. One has been hired and the other two are strong candidates for future hiring. I think this partnership is a win-win-win for IVRS clients, IVRS and DNR,” said South.

The partnership has also been a benefit to the DNR in providing quality training to gain qualified employees for its needs.

“A partnership with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services seemed to be advantageous to both the DNR and IVRS, but I really didn’t understand how valuable it would be to my programs. Through the support and guidance of IVRS counselors, DNR bureau supervisors completed the customized training agreements and the trainees began working,” said Jane Mild, DNR workforce planning coordinator.