

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Businesses honored for supporting employment of people with disabilities

BISMARCK, N.D. - The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) announced that **Touchmark at Harwood Groves of Fargo** has been named the **2017 North Dakota State DVR Employer of the Year**.

The State Rehabilitation Council and the division selected the full-service retirement community from among eight regional employer award recipients. Touchmark representatives accepted the award during a recognition luncheon hosted at the division's annual training conference held late last month in Bismarck.

The award honors North Dakota business owners and employers for their efforts to support, develop and inspire individuals with disabilities to achieve employment goals and to reach their full potential in their community.

Touchmark was selected because it provides a welcoming work environment for people with disabilities. Touchmark at Harwood Groves regularly works with vocational rehabilitation professionals to hire qualified employees and to retain existing employees. They also participate as a job shadowing site.

Regional employer award recipients include: **Big Pauly's Pizza**, Rugby; **Chartwells**, Bismarck; **Eventide Heartland Care Center**, Devils Lake; **Harris Machinery Company**, Oakes; **KFC/A&W**, Dickinson; **O' for Heaven's Cakes N' More**, Grand Forks; and **Walmart**, Williston. Award nominees and recipients have established ongoing partnerships with the division and its eight regional offices.

Acting DVR Division Director Robyn Throlson said, "I am honored to be able to recognize this year's business award recipients. They include a variety of businesses that are willing to hire individuals based on their unique strengths and abilities. By looking beyond the disability, these employers are able to meet their workforce needs. Some of these employees have become long-term employees who have been promoted within their respective businesses. DVR is looking forward to helping other employers with their recruitment and retention needs in the coming year."

Vocational rehabilitation services help people with disabilities find meaningful work and also help employers connect with a valuable, often untapped workforce, as well as retain trained workers whose abilities have changed. Rehabilitation counseling and consultation is available without charge to qualifying individuals and businesses, non-profits and government agencies.

For information, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr/index.html, or contact the division at 701-328-8950, toll-free 800-755-2745, TTY 701-328-8968 or ND Relay TTY 800-366-6888, or via email at dhsvr@nd.gov.

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