

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | October 29, 2019

Vocational rehabilitation employees recognized for helping North Dakotans with disabilities reach their employment goals

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) presented performance and recognition awards to 11 individual employees at its annual training conference on Oct. 23 in Bismarck.

Division vocational rehabilitation professionals helped 579 North Dakotans with disabilities obtain competitive, integrated employment in their community last federal fiscal year.

The division presented **Tara Buck Elk** of its division office in **Bismarck** with the *Director's Award for Excellence*. Peers nominated Buck Elk for the award for demonstrating dedication, productivity and dependability while managing office operations, training new staff and providing excellent customer services to both businesses and individuals with disabilities.

Rebecca Martin from the **Fargo** regional office and **Jerry Severson** and **Tami Froelich** from the **Grand Forks** office received the *Award for Counselor Achievement*, which recognizes the top 10 percent of counselors who helped the most individuals become employed.

Minot region employee **Kendra Faa**, and **Fargo** region employee **Jacque Harder** received the *Award for Counselor Achievement - Honorable Mention* for having the second highest number of clients to achieve employment.

DVR presented **Tanya Ide** and her colleagues in the **Minot** office with the *Exemplary Service Award* for providing outstanding case service to clients through creative thinking, direct work with multiple agencies and consistent client follow-up.

The *VR Team Participation Award* was presented to the **Minot office** for their involvement in community activities on behalf of the division.

The division named **Bismarck** office employee **Betsy Hermanson** *Rookie of the Year*. This award honors a DVR employee who has less than two years of service, exceeds performance goals and displays a high level of community service and involvement.

The *Pillar Award* was presented to **Robyn Soiseth** from the **Williston** office. This award recognizes support staff who contribute to the success of individuals with disabilities to become employed.

The division also presented Career Achievement Awards, which are based on the number of people with disabilities placed into employment over the course of a vocational rehabilitation counselor's career. **Rebecca Martin** of the **Fargo** office received the *Career Achievement – 100 Club Award*. **Sheri Wilson** of the **Bismarck** office received the *Career Achievement – 200 Club Award*.

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Division staff provide assessments and counseling to help individuals with disabilities to identify strengths and goals, connect individuals to training, education, assistive technology, and supportive services, and provide job placement assistance.

To receive DVR services, individuals must have a disability that is an impediment to employment, and they must want to work and be available to work. Many of the individuals served have a physical or cognitive disability.

DVR also connects businesses to qualified prospective employees who can meet their workforce needs and can help businesses can retain employees affected by disabilities and find solutions to other disability-related issues.

Information about services is available online at www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr/index.html or by contacting the division at 1000 E Divide Ave., Bismarck, N.D., 58501, 701-328-8950, toll-free 800-755-2745, 711 (TTY) or dhsvr@nd.gov.

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