



**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE ARTS
DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DRS Announces Disability Celebration and Awareness Forum

PRINCETON, W.Va. (Oct. 9, 2009) – The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services' (DRS) Princeton Branch Office will commemorate National Disability Employment Awareness Month by taking part in the Disability Celebration and Awareness Forum on October 21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Mercer Mall.

The event is a collaboration involving DRS and eight other agencies and organizations, including Bluefield State College, Bluefield State College People First, Concord University, Friends Unlimited, Mercer County Public Schools, Special Olympics and the U.S. Forest Service's Northern Research Service. The goal of the event is to promote disability awareness in the community and to showcase employment opportunities for people with disabilities through the sharing of resources, networking and education.

"We hope to encourage people to come find out what is available for them or someone they know who has a disability, while celebrating the contributions of persons with disabilities in our community," DRS Princeton Branch Office Manager Carol Brewster said.

Forum activities will consist of workshops, displays, exhibits and presentations. The activities will focus on education and training opportunities, employment advice for people with disabilities, use of assistive technology and information for employers about hiring and retaining employees with a disability. Separate presentations have been arranged to assist those still in high school transition into college and the workforce.

The educational workshops featured throughout the day are free to the general public. For people interested in receiving continuing education credits for social work or licensed professional counseling, four continuing education units (CEU's) will be offered for \$50, or \$7.50 per half credit hour.

The workshop schedule is as follows:

- 9:30 a.m. – Registration
- 10:15 a.m. – Medicaid Work Incentive Network (MWIN)
- 10:45 a.m. – Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)
- 1:15 p.m. – Autism
- 3 p.m. – Developmental Disabilities *or* Assistive Technology in the Workplace

Center Court activities will take place at 11:45 a.m., where poster contest winners will be announced and door prizes will be given away. A military speaker for veterans and color guard presentation will also take place.

For more information about this event, contact Carol Brewster at (304) 425-1256, ext. 141, Melody Cochran at (304) 431-2706, Debbie Pittman at (304) 327-4129, or visit the event's Web site at www.celebrate-ability.org.

DRS operates the comprehensive state and federal rehabilitation program and is a division of the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts. DRS provides work-related counseling, training, job placement and other vocational rehabilitation services.

If you have a physical or mental condition that is preventing you from getting or keeping a job, call 1-800-642-8207 (V/TDD) to see if you qualify for vocational rehabilitation from DRS. For more information, visit the Division's Web site at www.wvdrs.org.

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