

IVRS and Iowa Employers speak at the Governor's Press Conference

Heather Link and Lorene Grubbs of Owner Revolution and Kim Deskin of Wells Fargo joined Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) at the Governor's Press Conference on March 30.

"Owner Revolution is a strong advocate leveraging the skills and talents of individuals with disabilities in the workforce," Iowa Governor Terry Branstad said at the Press Conference.

Link, the Human Resources Manager of Owner Revolution in Atlantic, spoke about how employing individuals with disabilities has benefited their employee-owned business.

"It has improved our production and it allows us to make a positive impact in the lives of people that have a strong desire to be a part of something," Link said. "They take pride in their work, they're extremely reliable, they show up every day on time, and they want to be at work and do a good job. They really enhance our work environment. All they need is an opportunity to do so."

The partnership with IVRS and other agencies also helps to make it a solid business move.

"The costs to companies are very low," Link said. "They help with training costs, with assessments, reports after hire and accommodations costs; so it's really a great opportunity for businesses to take advantage of the under-utilized workforce there is with people with disabilities."

Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds said that in 2013, 45 percent of persons with disabilities were employed. That number grew slightly in 2014 to 47 percent.

Iowa was named the third best state in the nation for empowering individuals with disabilities through employment in the 2015 Disability Statistics Annual Report (http://www.disabilitycompendium.org/docs/default-source/2015-compendium/annualreport_2015_final.pdf). In the last several years Iowa has moved from seventh to third in the nation for workforce participation by persons with Disabilities.

David Mitchell, Administrator of IVRS, said he is excited about the opportunity to continue to improve those numbers. He



Above: Heather Link (right) was a speaker at the Governor's Press Conference on March 30 who spoke about hiring persons with disabilities. She is pictured with (from left to right)

Governor Terry Branstad, Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds and Jeff James of Altoona.



Left to Right: Kim Deskin of Wells Fargo, Administrator of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services David Mitchell, Department of the Blind Director Richard Sorey and Heather Link and Lorene Grubbs of Owner Revolution in Atlantic.

described the initiatives, projects and collaborative partnerships vocational rehabilitation has developed to become a leader in the nation for employing persons with disabilities.

"We try to establish connections for individual career pathways into sectors that lead to rewarding careers," Mitchell said.

See the YouTube of the Press Conference at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSUUF-Z9Xrc>

Read the Governor Office Press Release at:

<https://governor.iowa.gov/2016/03/branstad-reynolds-highlight-iowa%E2%80%99s-leadership-in-employing-individuals-with-disabilities>