

News Release

ODEP News Release: [04/28/2011]

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Release Number: 11-0609-NAT

US Labor Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy announces 2011 theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy today announced the official theme for October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month: "Profit by Investing in Workers with Disabilities." The theme honors the contributions of workers with disabilities and serves to inform the public that they represent a highly skilled talent pool that can help employers compete in today's global economy.

"Return on investment means hiring the right talent," said Kathy Martinez, assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy. "Workers with disabilities represent all skill sets and are ready to get the job done. This year's theme focuses on improving employment opportunities that lead to good jobs and a secure economic future for people with disabilities and the nation as a whole."

Early announcement of the theme helps communities nationwide plan a series of announcements, events and meetings to begin in October, some of which will continue throughout the year. Such activities include proclamations, public awareness programs and job fairs that showcase the assets of workers with disabilities.

As background, Public Law 176, enacted by Congress in 1945, designated the first week in October each year as "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." President Harry S. Truman designated the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities to carry out the observance. In 1962, the word "physically" was removed from the week's name to acknowledge the employment needs of all Americans with disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed its name to "National Disability Awareness Month," which eventually evolved to its current name. The Labor Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy took over responsibility for National Disability Employment Awareness Month in 2001.

Members of the public with questions related to the 2011 theme should contact Carol Dunlap in ODEP at [202-693-7902](tel:2026937902). Members of the media should contact the individuals named above.

ODEP's mission is to provide national leadership by developing and influencing disability-related policies and practices to increase and enhance the employment of people with disabilities.