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Governor and Cabinet Recognize October as Disability Employment Awareness Month

TALLAHASSEE, FL - Gov. Charlie Crist and the Florida Cabinet today adopted a resolution in support of providing employment opportunities to Floridians with disabilities. The resolution, introduced by Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink, recognizes October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and October 1 through 15 as Disability History and Awareness Weeks in Florida.

During today's cabinet meeting, Jane Johnson, director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), spoke to the Governor and Cabinet about the importance of employment in the lives of people with disabilities. She was joined by Bill Palmer, director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR); Sharon Griffith, executive director of the Able Trust; and Renee Llewellyn, who has a developmental disability.

Johnson stressed that people with disabilities make very dependable employees---a fact underscored by Llewellyn's remarks. Llewellyn has been employed at the Leon County Supervisor of Elections Office for over 15 years.

In 2006, APD assisted more than 4,500 Floridians with disabilities in maintaining gainful employment, while VR assisted 11,089 Floridians with disabilities to achieve their employment goals and helped 1,767 injured workers to return to their jobs. The Able Trust has enabled more than 2,000 people with disabilities to enter Florida's workforce through its grant programs.

APD supports people with developmental disabilities to live, learn, and work in their communities. For more information about the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, visit apd.myflorida.com or call toll-free 1-866-APD-CARES (1-866-273-2273).

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REMINDER FOR MEDIA---When reporting on stories about people with disabilities, remember to use language that puts the person first, rather than the disability. For example, use phrases such as "persons with disabilities" (instead of "the disabled") and "person who uses a wheelchair" (rather than "wheelchair bound").

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