

# **Gov. Walker: Celebrates Chippewa River industries' 50 year commitment to helping Wisconsinites with disabilities gain vocational skills and find employment**

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**CHIPPEWA FALLS** - Governor Scott Walker today joined Chippewa River Industries (CRI) to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. CRI is a private, non-profit company offering subcontract packaging and assembly services for businesses across the United States. The company provides vocational and life skills services to people with disabilities, and, by partnering with employers across Wisconsin, helps place individuals with disabilities into jobs both in their own facility and outside. "Wisconsin is recognized nationally as a leader in helping people with disabilities find work, and it is in part because of organizations like Chippewa River Industries," said Governor Walker. "CRI is an incredible organization that helps individuals with disabilities not only gain vocational skills, but they help place these individuals with businesses across Wisconsin. With CRI and our state's continued workforce development initiatives, we can make sure that anyone who wants a job, can find a job. This year our state hit our lowest unemployment rate in state history, which makes it all the more important to provide opportunities for everyone to gain skills needed to join our workforce."

CRI started in 1968 in Cadott, Wisconsin in the basement of St. Rose of Lima Church. Today, the organization employs 75 people and provides services in six counties including: La Crosse, Monroe, Dunn, Eau Claire, Chippewa, and Baron. CRI provides services and programs to more than 500 people each year who are faced with barriers to employment including intellectual/developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, chronic mental health issues, homeless veterans, FoodShare recipients, and work-release inmates. The organization also partners with more than 100 employers across Wisconsin to help place individuals in jobs outside of CRI's facilities.

During the ceremony, Governor Walker presented a certificate to CRI in celebration of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. [A copy of the certificate is available here.](#)

Another program to help individuals with disabilities find employment is Project SEARCH, which is a state supported, business led collaboration that helps prepare high school aged students with disabilities to enter the workforce. Since taking office, Governor Walker has expanded Project SEARCH in Wisconsin from one program to 27. Wisconsin is recognized as a national leader in Project SEARCH for connecting hundreds of youth with disabilities with employment during the 2015-2016 school year. Wisconsin also tied Pennsylvania for the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number of project SEARCH sites recognized.