

3M Fall Protection named outstanding disability employer

Nominated by ProAct Inc., 3M Fall Protection was named an Outstanding Disability Employer by the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation, MOHR, during National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October.

"Employers who hire individuals with disabilities and work crews are important partners in our efforts to provide person-centered services that improve people's lives in Minnesota," said Julie Johnson, president of MOHR. The organization represents more than 100 disability service providers across the state.

"The 3M staff works with ProAct job coaches to bring out the highest potential in each person," said Joyann Johnson, a designated coordinator for ProAct in Red Wing. A sizable work crew assembles parts for numerous types of safety equipment used by linemen, bridge builders and other professionals.

3M Focus Factory Leader Dustin Rassier said ProAct crews provide top notch work.

"We are sending out product that ultimately has somebody's life in the balance, so we depend on quality products going out the door," Rassier said. "They fit right in with our culture."

3M Fall Protection manufactures DBI-SALA products.

Rassier said ProAct keeps up well with 3M work needs,

including big projects. Job coaches can bring more people on work crews depending on specific needs for the day. The flexibility works well, Rassier said, as about 40 percent of what the facility ships each day has been ordered within the last 24 hours.

"The higher management at 3M make a point of giving direct positive feedback on a regular basis," Johnson said. 3M Fall Protection and ProAct have had a business relationship for more than 20 years, through multiple owners. A typical ProAct crew at 3M involves three or four job coaches and 14 or more individuals with disabilities.

Excellent quality

Johnson said there are expectations to complete orders on time and with excellent quality. The business also continues to expand ProAct's involvement by adding more jobs to the crew's list of responsibilities, she explained.

For more than 75 years, at-height workers around the world have trusted DBI-SALA products to help them get the job done well and to get home safely, according to the 3M Fall Protection website. The company stresses safety and comfort, as well as a proud tradition of delivering premium quality.

"From a community standpoint, it's great to be able to

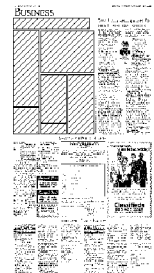
give people with disabilities a chance to gain employment ... to give them more purpose in life," Rassier said.

MOHR Treasurer and ProAct CEO Steven Ditschler will present the Outstanding Disability Employer Award 9:30 a.m. today at 3M Fall Protection, 3833 Sala Way in Red Wing. State Representative Barb Haley, R-Red Wing, plans to attend and other area dignitaries have also been invited. Light refreshments will be served.

MOHR's mission is advocate and support its nonprofit members in providing meaningful services to persons with disabilities and communities served. Members are committed to respect for each individual, a person-centered approach and expanding work opportunities.

Celebrated every October, this year's theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month is "America's Workforce: Empowering All." It celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates about the value of a workforce inclusive of their skills and talents. The national observance began under a different name in 1945.

Written by Aaron Hustedde for the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation.





Submitted Photo

From left to right: 3M Fall Protection Plant Manager Janice Neitzel, Steven Ditschler, treasurer for the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR) and ProAct CEO, Rep. Barb Haley (R-Red Wing) and ProAct Designated Coordinator Joyann Johnson.