

SPIRIT OF THE ADA AWARDS 2018

In recognition of National Disability Awareness Month each October, the Governor's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities recognizes businesses and organizations with the "Spirit of the ADA" award to highlight those businesses who exemplify best practices in the recruitment, hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities. This year's awards included some new categories: Partner of the Year, State Agency of the Year, Retention Award and Legislator of the Year, in addition to the traditional awards to Vermont businesses and organizations.

This Year's Awards recognized the following:

PARTNER OF THE YEAR: **Project Search sites** operating at **UVM Medical Center, The EDGE Sports & Fitness, Rutland Regional Medical Center** and **Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center**. More information on Project search can be found at <https://www.projectsearch.us/>

STATE AGENCY OF THE YEAR: This year's award for the State Agency of the Year was given to the Vermont Veterans' Home in Bennington. Recognized for their willingness to recruit, hire and retain workers with disabilities, the Human Resources staff at the Veterans' Home exemplify a spirit of inclusiveness and support for employees with disabilities. The Vermont Veterans' Home was also recognized for their outstanding work supporting injured workers in their return to the workplace, including providing accommodations, flex schedules and light-duty assignments.

RETENTION AWARD: GE Aviation in North Clarendon was recognized for their ongoing support of workers who sustain injuries on the job. GE Aviation has a long history of ensuring the safety and well-being of its workforce by establishing safety protocols and ongoing ergonomic adjustments to reduce injury, and in supporting workers as they return to employment after injury or illness. In addition to their focus on prevention, GE Aviation is also unique in their support of a medical and occupational therapy capacity within the manufacturing facility itself, providing immediate and ongoing support to workers who may become injured or ill. GE Aviation is a wonderful example of a business that values all members of its workforce, providing the supports needed to effectively re-engage workers who have been injured on the job, or off.

LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR: Representative Bill Botzow was recognized by the Committee for his longstanding support of legislation and policies that recognize the value and importance of including individuals with disabilities in the Vermont economy. Representative Botzow was recognized for his support of changes to Medicaid and Social Security statutes to eliminate financial barriers faced by individuals with disabilities who want to work.

BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION AWARDS: The “Spirit of the ADA” awards were given to the following:

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| McMahon Chevrolet Buick | Trapp Family Lodge |
| McDonald’s (Rutland, Woodstock Ave) | GE Aviation |
| Allen Brothers Farm Market | Brattleboro Memorial Hospital |
| American Consulting Engineers and Surveyors | Gifford Healthcare |
| JBM Sherman Carmel | Rutland Regional Medical Center |
| White River Junction VA Medical Center | Woodstock Inn & Resort |
| The Residence at Otter Creek | |

On October 11, 2018, Governor Scott attended the award presentation of American Consulting Engineers and Surveyors in Williamstown. Eric Henderson, 25, sustained a significant injury while snowboarding at age 14; however, following remarkable efforts in rehabilitation, he regained full use of his arms and trained to work as an excavator. Eric nominated his employer, Rob Townsend, for accommodating the workplace by constructing a ramp accessible to Eric’s wheelchair. Mr. Townsend was flexible with scheduling while Eric’s truck lift, used to transfer his chair, was being repaired, and during winter weather which makes his commute more involved. Governor Phil Scott commended the diligence, resilience and hard work of Eric Henderson and the considerations made by Rob Townsend to make employment opportunities available and successful for Vermonters of all abilities.



Governor Phil Scott with,
from left to right:

Donna Curtin-Chair of the GCEPD

Eileen Casey-Vice-Chair GCEPD

Robert Townsend-Owner American Consulting Engineers and Surveyors

Eric Henderson-Employee