



August 25, 2009

## Grant to expand vocational rehabilitation services

*Submitted story*

FREMONT -- A Sandco Industries project to expand vocational rehabilitation services will receive an Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission grant.

The project begins in October and will focus on serving students with disabilities transitioning from school to work.

The commission offers grants to match federal dollars for vocational rehabilitation services.

"The project will be able to draw down over \$900,000 into the county," project manager Jill Simpson said. The funds will be used to help people with disabilities find and maintain employment.

Simpson said the project will hire counselors to help schools identify students who would benefit from services. The counselors will receive vocational rehabilitation training and will help students develop plans to reach employment goals.

Counselors also will be able to use grant funds to buy individualized rehabilitation services designed to identify participants' interests and skills, remove barriers to employment, assist with resume writing and job searches and provide on-site job coaching.

"People with disabilities generally experience a higher unemployment rate than those without disabilities," Simpson said. "In today's economic situation, they are over 50 percent more likely to be unemployed than individuals without a disability. These services will provide young people entering the work force with the support they need to overcome these statistics and gain employment."

Project partners include Bellevue City Schools, Clyde/Green Springs Schools, Fremont City Schools, Gibsonburg Exempted Village Schools, Lakota Local Schools, Margaretta Local Schools, North Central Ohio Educational Service Center, Sandusky County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Sandusky County Council for Persons with Mental Retardation, Sandusky County Family & Children First Council, School of Hope, Terra Community College, Vanguard Vocational School and Woodmore Local Schools.