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## **VERC Enterprises helps to find work for residents**

June 27, 2013 - Retail

VERC Enterprises has outdone itself again in its efforts to help the surrounding community. The locally-based retailer teamed with the Massachusetts Department of Career Services to help find work for formerly incarcerated residents.

VERC originally set a goal to have 5% of its workforce comprised of this population, and it surpassed that goal to reach 6%, president and CEO Leo Vercollone confirmed.

Vercollone said his company now has 13 employees who have come through the re-entry program. These individuals work at different locations within the company's 26 convenience stores, in roles that include cleaning and stocking, as well as car wash attendants. One of the employees who completed this program is now an assistant manager at a VERC location, the company added.

VERC began working with the Massachusetts Department of Career Services after Vercollone became involved in prison ministry through his church and ministered to inmates at the Plymouth County House of Correction.

"We believe that work provides dignity and meaning to life, and our mission at VERC Enterprises has been to help those in need where we can," he said. "These new employees have fit in wonderfully and we're looking to continue our work to increase our numbers."

Vercollone said the program comes attached with some additional payroll expenses, but he feels that the investment is well worth it.

"We believe that businesses should be leaders in the communities. We understand that people can fall upon hard times and providing employment can make a real difference in a person's life. We look to make a difference in the communities we serve," Vercollone said.

Barry Ahern, director of operations and human resources at VERC Enterprises, explained that each week the company sends an e-mail message to its employees about open positions throughout the company and also copies David Sullivan, director of re-entry and employment at the Massachusetts Department of Career Services.

"We are very pleased that VERC Enterprises has become such a great partner in our effort to help people who have been rehabilitated find meaningful employment in the workplace," said Massachusetts Department of Career Services director Alice Sweeney. "We are always looking for companies in the private sector to help in this quest, and VERC has consistently shown its commitment to help those in need."

This is not VERC's only employment initiative. Currently, more than 20% of the retailer's workforce is comprised of individuals who have developmental or intellectual disabilities. In recognition of its efforts to hire individuals with disabilities, VERC was honored on May 13 with a 2013 Accommodation Award by the MetroWest Work Opportunities Coalition. The coalition, an association of agencies that provide job placement services to those with disabilities, annually recognizes companies that provide opportunities for disabled men and women who are willing and

able to work, as CSNews Online previously reported.

VERC Enterprises is an independent convenience store and gas station chain with 26 locations throughout Mass. and N.H.

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