

Scott Walker
Governor

Gary H. Hamblin
Secretary



Mailing Address

3099 E. Washington Ave.
Post Office Box 7925
Madison, WI 53707-7925
Telephone (608) 240-5000
Fax (608) 240-3300

State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections

August 15, 2012
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Linda Eggert or Tim Le Monds
DOC Media Line (608) 240-3737

Redgranite Correctional Inmates Refurbish Wheelchairs

Inmates Earn Certifications While Refurbishing Medical Equipment for Nonprofit

REDGRANITE, Wis. – Hundreds of wheelchairs, scooters and other medical equipment are being refurbished and provided to the nonprofit Wheelchair Recycling Program thanks to an inmate work program at Redgranite Correctional Institution (RCCI).

Since last October, Industries Specialist for Badger State Industries (BSI) Christine Trinrud reports that over 700 wheelchairs, power scooters, bath equipment, strollers, walkers, and battery chargers have been refurbished for the Wheelchair Recycling Program.

The nonprofit organization is able to sell the refurbished equipment at a reduced cost to those in need. Badger State Industries at RCCI also repairs state owned manual wheelchairs. So far in 2012, inmates have refurbished 90 manual wheelchairs from state institutional Health Services Units.

There have been a total of seven inmates since November that have obtained two separate wheelchair work technical certifications through Invacare, a manufacturer of mobility equipment. The specific certifications they received are Power Mobility Repair and Basic Programming and MK6i Rehab Programming and Powered Seating. Trinrud said that there are no technical or college programs that offer these certifications.

In April, three inmates were certified and last November four inmates earned certification.

Trinrud said power wheelchair equipment is very complex and that the inmates are able to completely dismantle, clean and reassemble wheelchairs, scooters and other durable medical equipment (both manual and power). "This certification is a huge acknowledgement of the skills the inmates have learned in the past several years," she said.

"It is our hope that this ongoing certification process coupled with the Transition Program that BSI offers will help inmates in the future by assisting them in obtaining meaningful employment upon release," said Trinrud. "Giving inmates these skills reduces recidivism and additional victims while supporting the reentry initiative."

Trinrud said this program helps build job skills, work ethic and also gives something back to the community. "The inmates involved take their jobs and this opportunity for certification very seriously. They have been very appreciative and engaged in the process."

Another training session will be held this fall and Trinrud hopes to train up to four inmates every quarter.

###