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## PRESS RELEASE

### **MDI Shines Spotlight on Value of Inclusive Work Environments *Supporting National Disability Employment Awareness Month***

MINNEAPOLIS, Oct. 3, 2017 – Nearly 12 percent of the U.S. population lives with a disability, but people with disabilities are employed at just half the rate of those without. In observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, MDI aims to help change that. A plastics manufacturer, production services provider and social enterprise, MDI provides an inclusive, supportive environment to employees with and without disabilities. To further the cause, MDI employees are sharing their experiences on [the company's website](#) about working in an inclusive environment.

Enacted by Congress in 1988, National Disability Employment Awareness Month shines a spotlight on the value of integrated work environments and the contributions of workers with disabilities. Employing people with disabilities increases their self-sufficiency and reduces dependence on community services – benefiting the employee, colleagues, businesses and the community at-large.

MDI's employees with disabilities are held to similar standards as their colleagues without disabilities. Everyone works to their own capabilities with accommodations and makes important contributions to the organization.

“People with disabilities can do productive work if given the opportunity,” said Peter McDermott, CEO and president of MDI. “Rather than be defined by their disability, our employees with disabilities are the sum of their many life roles, including working in a job they love. I encourage Minnesota businesses to hire more people with disabilities and create more inclusive work environments.”

Workers with disabilities may require accommodations, which can often be provided at little to no cost as well as benefit the other employees. When needed, the fixes are usually simple things: adjusting schedules, allowing stools on the assembly line, breaking down assembly process or modifying work stations.

Individuals with disabilities are also helping businesses grow amid workforce shortages. As businesses across industries look to fill jobs left by retiring baby boomers, people with disabilities are an underutilized resource.

“We still encounter the misconceptions and biases that people with disability can't fulfill steady employment and be productive,” said Jeanne Eglinton, director of Employment Services at MDI. “Executives and hiring managers should take a closer look at what people with disabilities are already accomplishing in their communities, and consider hiring practices that will allow their organizations to share in the same success. Like they would with any potential employees, they should challenge people with disabilities to find out what they can do.”

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Businesses interested in hiring individuals with disabilities can take a few initial steps, including getting support from management, ensuring easy physical access to company facilities, communicating clearly to potential hires about expectations, offering equal pay and benefits, and providing reasonable accommodations.

“It is important for people with disabilities to have a job, so they are able to gain the empowerment of employment,” said Mike Blaisdell, an extrusion process technician at MDI. “I like being part of a team as an individual and feeling good about being part of that team.”

To learn more about MDI’s employment of people with disabilities and read employee stories, visit <https://www.mdi.org/work-all>.

### About MDI

[MDI](#) is a leader in manufacturing standard and custom, corrugated-plastic packaging solutions, production assembly and environmental services. Through a social enterprise model, MDI creates self-sufficiency by providing meaningful work in an inclusive environment, with nearly half of the workforce comprised of people with disabilities. Headquartered in the Twin Cities – with additional locations in Hibbing, Grand Rapids and Cohasset, Minnesota – MDI offers an unparalleled customer experience while providing high-quality products and services to businesses and organizations.

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