

**W** News from THE WALLACE GROUP

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**Minnesota Organization for Habilitation  
and Rehabilitation - MOHR**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MALCO PRODUCTS NAMED OUTSTANDING DISABILITY EMPLOYER  
BY MAJOR MINNESOTA STATE DISABILITY ORGANIZATION**

**Valuable partnership with Functional Industries in Buffalo recognized by Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation as model for other employers; award presentation set for 1:30 p.m. on October 4 at Malco Products, 14080 State Highway 55 NW, Annandale**

Nominated by Functional Industries, Malco Products was named an Outstanding Disability Employer by the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation, MOHR, in conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October.

“We cannot overemphasize the importance of employers in our efforts to provide meaningful services to people with disabilities in Minnesota,” said Mike Burke, president of MOHR. The organization represents more than 110 disability service providers across the state.

Malco Products Director of Operations Deb Nistler said the efforts of Functional Industries and its associates, and their quality work have been important to the company. “They have been a joy to work with. It is exciting to see their smiling faces on a daily basis,” she said.

Individuals with disabilities from Functional Industries assist with packaging and assembly of hand tool products on the company's assembly shop floor, explains Kirk Langbehn, purchasing, planning and production manager for Malco. The company makes hundreds of different tools for the construction and automotive industries.

Malco Products has been an avid supporter of the people served by Functional Industries for more than 15 years, explains Amber Oster, vice president of workforce solutions for Functional Industries, which is based in Buffalo, Minn. "Our individuals are so proud to work for them and have grown by leaps and bounds in the environment they offer on this crew site," said Oster. Malco provides both center-based and work crew jobs, and Malco is one of the best sites to learn job skills, she explained. "The company's professionalism, work ethic and role modeling say it all."

Nistler said the latest phase with Functional has brought individuals with disabilities inside Malco's facility, which has allowed the company to schedule new jobs quickly, with greater flexibility than ever before. "This allows Malco Products the ability to react to ever changing customer needs at a fast pace."

Tools are brought to Functional Industries crewmembers, who fasten them to cards for retail displays, said Langbehn. Functional also provides supervisors to oversee the work, which can involve assembly. "It's a 'win-win' for us in cost savings, too," said Langbehn. Functional Industries is part of Malco's business plan, and the company expects to involve these individuals in building more complex tools, the manager said.

Functional Industries will present the award at a special gathering scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on October 4 at Malco Products, 14080 State Highway 55 in Annandale.

The nonprofit's state association and award organizer, [MOHR](#), has a mission to advocate and support its nonprofit members in providing meaningful services to persons with disabilities and communities served. Members are committed to respect for each individual, a person-centered approach and expanding work opportunities.

Celebrated every October, this year's theme for [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) is "Inclusion Drives Innovation." It celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates about the value of a workforce inclusive of their skills and talents. The national observance began under a different name in 1945.

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