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Effort to link jobs in imaging, people with disabilities

The Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal - February 17, 2006 by [Ellen P. Gabler](#) Staff Writer The Governor's Council on Development Disabilities wants to save companies time and money as they enter the digital age. It's urging firms to hire people with disabilities to help convert paper documents into electronic records.

Document imaging is a good job for people with developmental disabilities, said Colleen Wieck, the council's executive director.

The council is holding programs for employers around the state to explain the perks of using digital imaging and filling those jobs with people who have developmental disabilities.

In 2000, people with disabilities scanned tens of thousands of documents for the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Wieck said. Other places have followed suit including Blue Earth and Olmsted counties, as well as private companies such as banks and law firms.

Many nonprofits coordinate such programs, but the council wants more businesses to buy in. The process not only helps employ people with disabilities, but is good for business, the council stresses.

Trendex Inc. is just one example.

Staff at the \$8.5 million St. Paul firm spent too much time searching for documents, said owner Thomas Polacek.

So this fall the binding and binding supply company hired three people with developmental disabilities to digitize its paper documents.

In two months, a year's worth of customer records were digitally recorded into the computer system. Employees can now scour documents via their computers. Polacek estimates the project will annually save him the salaries of two or three full-time workers.

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