

## Worksite modification success story: property manager

by Heather Grogan

### Worker disability

John worked as a property manager for 13 years when he injured his left shoulder. After the injury, John had permanent limitations that precluded him from doing many of his previous job tasks, and some of his current job tasks resulted in increased shoulder pain. John's restrictions included not lifting his left arm above waist level. He is also occasionally limited in not lifting more than 10 pounds, not pushing or pulling more than 20 pounds, and not carrying more than 15 pounds with both hands.

### Work setting and obstacles

John's employer is in California and did not want to lose John as an employee. The employer was pleasantly surprised when he learned the Preferred Worker Program could provide modifications that would allow John to continue to work.

John manages 48 senior rental units located on approximately 15 acres of property. John mows and edges the lawn

areas, sprays the lawn and bushes with weed killer, and mulches grass clippings. The mower John used did not have power steering, and he found his left-shoulder pain kept him from being able to mow for more than an hour at a time. John used a backpack weed sprayer that weighed more than 10 pounds, and he had a lot of difficulty spraying weeds with the backpack because his shoulder would quickly become fatigued and painful. This meant he was unable to spray weeds for more than 30 minutes at a time. Also, John was unable to perform lawn-edging duties, so his employer had to hire a contractor to do it. Furthermore, John could not lift the mower basket with lawn clippings because it weighed more than 20 pounds. However, the employer removed all other job tasks that were beyond John's limitations, and he even hired contractors to do that work.

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## Programa para el Trabajador Preferido de Oregon

por Delmi Hernandez

*This article provides basic Preferred Worker Program information to Spanish-speaking preferred workers.*

El Programa para el Trabajador Preferido fomenta el re-empelo de trabajadores con incapacidades permanentes que surgieron debido a lesiones o accidentes en el trabajo en Oregon, y que no pueden regresar a su trabajo regular como resultado de dichas lesiones. Los trabajadores preferidos poseen una tarjeta para demostrar al empleador que son elegibles para la asistencia que ofrece el programa.

Usted está recibiendo este boletín por que se ha determinado que usted es elegible para el Programa para el Trabajador Preferido. Esto significa que usted es un trabajador con una incapacidad permanente debido a una lesión o enfermedad de trabajo en Oregon y usted no puede regresar a su trabajo regular por causa de dicha lesión. La División de Compensación para Trabajadores entrega a cada trabajador preferido una tarjeta de identificación. Esta tarjeta le indica al empleador que el Trabajador Preferido está participando en un programa del estado que le ayudará a regresar al trabajo.

El Programa para el Trabajador Preferido puede ayudar al trabajador a conseguir trabajo por medio de

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## Worksite modification success story: property manager, continued

John had a preferred worker card and had read about worksite modifications in the *Adviser* newsletter, so he contacted the Preferred Worker Program for assistance. John believed that if he had a mower with power steering, he'd be able to spend more time mowing without having pain after a long day of work. A Preferred Worker Program consultant met with John at his worksite and analyzed all his job tasks.

### Modifications

After reviewing the job tasks with John and his employer, they agreed that a mower with power steering would eliminate John having to lift his

arm above waist level to control the manual steering. A mulching device would make it possible to empty the grass clippings and eliminate having to lift more than 20 pounds. A spray attachment was added to the mower to enable John to spray weeds without carrying the backpack sprayer that was causing pain to his shoulder. A self-propelled walk-behind edger enabled John to perform edging tasks and saved the employer the cost of contracting the edging to someone else.

John has used his worksite modification equipment for nearly three months. He said he is much more productive with

the mowing, spraying, and edging tasks and is able to work without frequent rest breaks, decreasing soreness at the end of his work week.

### Cost

The total cost of this worksite modification was \$8,353. The employer also benefited from the 50 percent wage subsidy for six months and premium exemption, and doesn't have to pay workers' compensation premiums for three years.

Both John and his employer are very happy with the benefits provided by the Preferred Worker Program. ■

## Programa para el Trabajador Preferido de Oregon, continued

incentivos financieros que el programa otorga a los empleadores de Oregon que contratan a trabajadores preferidos. El Programa para el Trabajador Preferido puede exonerar a su empleador del pago de las primas de compensación para trabajadores hasta por tres años. Si usted sufre una nueva lesión en el trabajo durante ese tiempo, el Programa para el Trabajador Preferido pagará los costos de su reclamación. El programa también puede pagar al empleador la mitad de su salario durante un periodo de seis meses. Esto le ahorra dinero a su empleador. Esto incentiva a los empleadores para que contraten a empleados que califican

para el Programa del Trabajador Preferido. Para poner en uso los beneficios del programa usted debe presentar su tarjeta de trabajador preferido a su empleador. El empleador puede ser el empleador original (donde se lastimó) o un futuro empleador. Usted debe presentar la tarjeta para que el empleador sepa que usted es un trabajador preferido. Su tarjeta de trabajador preferido no se vence.

El Programa para el Trabajador Preferido también ofrece los siguientes beneficios: una cierta cantidad de dinero para herramientas que necesite para su trabajo; dinero para ropa para el trabajo; servicio de mudanza si es necesario que se mude

más cerca del lugar de empleo. Su área de trabajo y el equipo que utiliza pueden ser modificados para que pueda realizar su trabajo de acuerdo a las restricciones de su lesión. El programa puede pagar hasta \$25,000 por estas modificaciones del lugar de trabajo.

Un representante del Programa para el Trabajador Preferido está disponible para ayudarle a determinar qué equipo califica para estas modificaciones.

Si tiene preguntas acerca del Programa para el Trabajador Preferido llámenos al: 1-800-445-3948, un representante que habla español le asistirá. ■

*Preferred Worker Adviser* is a publication of the Oregon Workers' Compensation Division. If you have comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter, contact Ana Contreras at 503-947-7523 or send e-mail to [ana.contreras@state.or.us](mailto:ana.contreras@state.or.us).

**Administrator**.....John Shilts

### Re-employment assistance

Salem office..... 800-445-3948  
Medford office .....800-696-7161  
Web site ..... [www.oregonpwp.info](http://www.oregonpwp.info)



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# PWP and vocational assistance helping injured workers get back to work quickly *by Elaine Gunc*

The number of Oregon injured workers who qualify for vocational assistance is much smaller than the number of workers found eligible for the Preferred Worker Program (PWP). However, these programs both have the same goal of returning workers to suitable employment, and when these programs work together great things can happen. As insurers become more educated on how these programs can work together, the insurer, the employer, and the worker are satisfied with the results.

SAIF recently published a great example of this on its Web site. The worker injured his back after working for his employer for 17 years. Because of his work-related injury, he was not going to be able to return to his regular work and was not sure about changing careers at this stage in his life. First, SAIF found the injured worker eligible for vocational training, which included assistance with basic skills. The injured worker enjoyed the challenge and improvement in his academic skills from the training he received. This kept the injured worker on a schedule, motivated, and busy. The employer-at-injury valued this

injured worker and did not want to lose him as an employee. The employer worked hard to find a way to modify the worker's position to make the job physically suitable and soon learned that the injured worker qualified for PWP. This was when the insurer, employer, and worker contacted the Workers' Compensation Division to find out more about PWP and how to use those benefits once the worker finished his vocational training program. Through PWP, the employer found that one of the great benefits of the program is money for worksite modification – in this case, PWP provided an overhead crane in the metal shop to help with lifting. The employer would not have been able to make these worksite modifications without the help of PWP, and the worksite modifications allowed the worker to return to his regular job.

All the parties involved gave positive feedback and said how happy they were that there was a program like this for injured workers, that it is a benefit for other employees, and how the worksite modification may have already kept other workers from getting injured.

"I love what I do," the injured worker said. "I love creating things. I've been active all my life, and being up is better than being down."

Injured workers need all the help they can get to return to employment after an injury. It is ideal for an injured worker to receive vocational assistance and then receive PWP benefits. However, a worker found ineligible for vocational assistance could possibly still be eligible for the Preferred Worker Program. The PWP benefits could be even more valuable to that injured worker because the worker may need different things to help him or her find suitable employment. An injured worker found eligible for PWP would be able to offer benefits to a potential employer, such as premium exemption from workers' compensation insurance, wage subsidy reimbursements, and other purchases to help the injured worker find suitable employment.

The Employment Services Team has a common goal in which vocational assistance and PWP can promote a seamless path to return injured workers to employment. ■

## Cool tools *by Bruce Friedrichsen*



This side roller hand truck is an excellent tool for handling panel material. It converts from a standard hand truck to roll side ways.



This panel cart makes carrying panel material, such as drywall, plywood, etc., an easier and safer task.



This hand truck has a brake control that slows travel on declines, reducing the physical demand for the operator.



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## The Preferred Worker Program (PWP) has benefits for you!

- Are you using the PWP benefits to offer incentives to an employer to hire you?
- Are you using the PWP benefits to modify a job to allow you to work within the limitations caused by your on-the-job injury?
- Are you using PWP benefits to purchase employment items such as tools and clothes?
- Did you know the PWP benefits are easy to access?

**JUST CALL AND ASK:**  
800-445-3948

## El Programa para el Trabajador Preferido (PWP) tiene beneficios para usted!

- ¿Está usted usando los beneficios que el PWP ofrece para incentivar a que un empleador le dé trabajo?
- ¿Está usted usando los beneficios del PWP para modificar su trabajo y así poder trabajar dentro de las limitaciones causadas por su lesión en el trabajo?
- ¿Está usted usando los beneficios del PWP para adquirir lo necesario para el trabajo como herramientas o ropa?
- ¿Sabía usted que es muy fácil usar los beneficios del programa?

**SOLO LLAME Y PREGUNTENOS AL:**  
800-445-3948, ext. 7584

## Программа преимущественных прав (PWP) имеет льготы для вас!

- Используете ли вы льготы программы преимущественных прав (PWP) для побуждения работодателя принять вас на работу?
- Используете ли вы льготы программы (PWP) для модификации рабочего места, чтобы облегчить ограничения, имеющиеся после травмы, полученной на производстве?
- Используете ли вы льготы программы (PWP) для покупки рабочих предметов, таких как инструменты и одежда?
- Знали ли вы, что льготы программы (PWP) могут быть легко достижимы?

**Вы можете узнать больше  
позвонив по телефону:  
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