

Firm to open job training center in Menomonie

By Liam Marlaire
Leader-Telegram staff

An organization that provides vocational programs for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment is extending its reach in the Chippewa Valley.

Chippewa River Industries, a non-profit company based in Chippewa Falls, announced the opening of an office at 700 Wolske Bay Drive in

Menomonie. The location will help CRI provide such services as job coaching, job-search assistance and vocational assessments in the area.

CRI also offers community skill development services, such as teaching shopping skills, for about 35 people in Dunn County.

"The decision to create a physical presence in Menomonie was due to untapped need in Dunn County for unique community support services," said Dave Lemanski, CRI president and CEO.

"From a business perspective, we are simply responding to what our customers want. We see this as another step in the growth stage of our organization — measured and calculated expansion that meets the needs of our customers."

CRI serves around 230 people with disabilities on any given day in a region that includes Chippewa, Eau Claire, Dunn, La Crosse, Monroe and Juneau counties. A majority reside in Chippewa County, where the organization's headquarters houses working space to serve business clients nationwide.

Visit
www.crind.org
for more information about
Chippewa River
Industries.

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CRI/Organization previously owned by Chippewa County

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"CRI provides sub-contract packaging, assembly, printing drop-shipping and other manufacturing-related services," Lemanski said.

The organization was founded 41 years ago and in 2009 became a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation. It previously was owned and operated by Chippewa County.

CRI has a staff of 36, six of whom recently were assigned to the Menomonie area. Ginger Waegli, support services manager, and Jason Rehbein, director of employment and

support services, oversee programming in Dunn County. The new office will offer more space to meet potential partners and prospective clients.

"The expansion in Menomonie will give CRI an opportunity to offer our menu of services to people living in Dunn County," Waegli said. "The supported employment and daily living skills are components that will allow individuals to live full lives and be productive members of their community."

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