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Secretary Gassman makes Governor's case for Youth Apprenticeship *Visits Rhinelander, meets Wisconsin's future workers, praises successful program*

Rhinelander – In a visit today to Northstar Steel Fabricating, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman met a student enrolled in the Youth Apprenticeship program. She praised the Rhinelander school district's successful program as an example of what Governor Doyle wants to achieve by doubling Youth Apprenticeship opportunities statewide.

"Youth Apprenticeship is a great program that lets high school students explore career options and helps us ensure a skilled workforce for tomorrow," Secretary Gassman said. "For many students, it opens doors to good jobs and career ladders. Eight out of ten youth apprentices get job offers when they complete the program and graduate. If they go on to college or technical school, they are more focused and do much better."

In the budget he offered Tuesday, the Governor said he would increase funding for Youth Apprenticeship. By the end of the biennium, funding will double to \$2.2 million per year, allowing 4,000 students each school year with opportunities to combine work and classroom instruction as they prepare for the future. More employers also could participate. Currently, about 1,300 hire students as apprentices.

"Youth Apprenticeship is a very successful program, popular with students and employers, and it has been that way since Wisconsin began the program in 1991," Secretary Gassman said. "Governor Doyle sees this as among the best investments we can make, benefiting students, employers, all of us, as we grow the economy, create quality jobs and help young workers get a good start."

Secretary Gassman met with Brant Laddusire, a welding student in the Youth Apprenticeship program at Rhinelander High School. Rhinelander High School is part of the Northwoods partnership with Nicolet Technical College which received a \$10,000 Youth Apprenticeship Grant from the Department of Workforce Development for the current school year.

For more information about the Youth Apprenticeship program, visit the department's website: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dws/programs/ya/default.htm>.