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## Secretary Gassman Announces Grant to Train 80 Workers in Janesville

### *Workforce Advancement Training Grants Help Businesses Like Freedom Plastics Expand, Train Workers for Highly-Skilled Jobs of Tomorrow*

JANESVILLE – On behalf of Governor Jim Doyle, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman announced a grant today that will help Freedom Plastics, Inc. in Janesville train 80 workers as the company positions itself to expand its manufacturing operations and product lines. The \$8,540 Workforce Advancement Training Grant from the Wisconsin Technical College System was awarded to Blackhawk Technical College, which will provide training for Freedom Plastics' workers.

"Investing in job training and workforce development is one of the smartest investments we can make for a strong Wisconsin economy in the future," Secretary Gassman said. "These grants enable our technical colleges to create a worker training program that is tailor-made for the needs of our businesses, so we can train our workers for the highly-skilled jobs of tomorrow. This training grant to Freedom Plastics will help the company upgrade its workers' skills so it can best compete within its industry and position itself for growth."

Founded in Janesville, Freedom Plastics is one of the nation's leading PVC pipe manufacturers, with production facilities in Wisconsin, Florida, and Idaho. The company is also the leading fabricator of PVC fittings in the United States, with its pipe and fittings product lines used in sewer, water, irrigation, residential and commercial plumbing, water treatment, and industrial applications.

Freedom Plastics has already begun an \$8 million expansion project, with \$6.6 million dedicated to its corporate headquarters in Janesville, and is planning an additional \$3.6 million expansion in Janesville within the next three years. The grant will enable Blackhawk Technical College to help the company train employees on new technology, equipment, and products, including over 120 hours of customized training in computer software and leadership development activities. The training is expected to improve employee proficiency in software-related business applications and reduce employee turnover by 10 percent.

Workforce Advancement Training grants are awarded to technical colleges throughout the state to work with local businesses and upgrade worker skills and productivity for Wisconsin workers and businesses – providing improved job security, increased career opportunities, and support for regional workforce and economic development efforts.

The budget Governor Doyle proposed to the Legislature quadruples investments in workforce advancement training, from \$2 million to \$8 million, to help Wisconsin's technical colleges train an additional 36,000 workers. This investment ensures that Wisconsin is creating highly-skilled workers prepared to fill the jobs of tomorrow and that the state remains competitive in the economy of the future.