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Secretary Gassman Announces \$85,000 in Training Grants, Governor Doyle's Latest Investments to Lead in Manufacturing

Grants to train 135 individuals for rigorous Manufacturing Skill Standards Certification

RHINELANDER – On behalf of Governor Jim Doyle, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today announced \$85,000 in worker training grants to help 135 individuals statewide reach the highest level of manufacturing skills and maintain Wisconsin's lead in manufacturing.

"Governor Doyle wants Wisconsin to remain the number one state in modern manufacturing," Secretary Gassman said. "Job creation is among the top priorities for the remainder of his term. These grants, one of his many investments in worker training, will help solidify Wisconsin's lead in advanced manufacturing. As the national recession ends, Wisconsin will come back strong, competing at the high end."

As part of the Governor's annual Northern Tour, Secretary Gassman announced four training grants to help more production workers earn Manufacturing Skill Standards Certification (MSSC). Governor Doyle included the \$85,000 in additional MSSC funding in the nearly \$6 million worker training package he announced in March. The four grants will leverage nearly \$31,000 in matching funds from the applicants.

Three years ago, Wisconsin became the first state to formally embrace the national MSSC program. In his Grow Wisconsin plan, Governor Doyle set a goal of having 40 percent of Wisconsin's production workers achieve MSSC standing by 2016. He launched the effort in 2007 with \$250,000 grants to local workforce development boards, enabling them to partner with technical colleges and develop a manufacturing skill certification system throughout the state.

At Nicolet Technical College, Secretary Gassman awarded a \$21,250 grant to the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board. The grant will leverage more than \$7,400 locally. A total of 40 individuals, dislocated workers and employees of the region's manufacturers, will receive training at Nicolet College in all four MSSC modules: safety, quality, manufacturing processes, and maintenance awareness. After one year of training, the project goal is for all 40 individuals to achieve standing as Certified Production Technicians, the top MSSC credential.

Besides Nicolet College, the board's partners in the project are the Grow North Regional Economic Development Corporation and members of Nicolet's Manufacturing Steering Committee. Committee members include Tomahawk Mill and Harley-Davidson Motor Company in Tomahawk; Advanced Barrier Extrusions, Northstar Steel, and Wausau Paper in Rhineland, and 20 other manufacturers in the region.

Secretary Gassman also announced the following MSSC training grants:

- **\$21,250 to the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Platteville** – The grant will leverage more than \$6,800. Blackhawk Technical College and Southwest Wisconsin Technical College will partner with the board to train 24 individuals – 12 at each campus – in all four MSSC modules with a goal achieving the Certified Production Technician credential.

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- **\$21,250 to the Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Workforce Development, Inc., Waukesha.** – The grant will leverage more than \$8,700 to train 47 individuals with a goal of earning the MSSC Safety credential, as a first step in the certification process. Other goals include recruiting more individuals, current production workers and dislocated workers, for MSSC training, and encouraging more employers to participate. Partners include the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, and the Southeastern Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, as well as the four technical colleges in the Milwaukee 7 region: Gateway, Milwaukee, Moraine Park and Waukesha.
- **\$21,250 to Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Inc., La Crosse** – The grant will leverage nearly \$7,900 to train at least 24 job seekers and dislocated workers. Western Technical College will provide the training. Among the goals of the one year project is to have each individual successfully complete one MSSC training module, earning either the Safety or Quality credential.

For more information about Wisconsin's MSSC training initiative, visit: <http://mssc.wi.gov>.