

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
Secretary



State of Wisconsin

Department of Workforce Development

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-3131
Fax: (608) 266-1784
<http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/>
e-mail: dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 26, 2009

CONTACT: Dick Jones, Agency Liaison, 608-267-4780

Secretary Gassman Cites Apprenticeship as Pathway to Good Jobs, Skilled Labor Source as Trades Help Rebuild America

Labor Secretary outlines Governor Doyle's next steps to economic recovery

GREEN BAY – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman said today Wisconsin's model apprenticeship program can help dislocated workers and others get good jobs and provide skilled workers for infrastructure projects in the federal economic recovery package now before Congress.

"Wisconsin was the first state with an apprenticeship program and even now, in the midst of our nation's worst economic crisis in years, this model program is one proven way to help struggling families get back on their feet," Secretary Gassman said in addressing the 24th Biennial Apprenticeship Conference in Green Bay.

"The recession has left many workers in the skilled trades without work," Secretary Gassman said. "But Governor Doyle has a list of infrastructure projects ready to go, and he is working closely with Wisconsin Congressman Dave Obey and other members of our delegation on the recovery and reinvestment package that President Obama has prescribed for our troubled economy. These projects will put people to work, and the apprenticeship program will help provide the skilled workers we need in our nation's economic recovery."

Secretary Gassman cited Governor Doyle's leading role among the nation's governors in urging a stimulus package that helps states facing substantial budget shortfalls due to the country's economic crisis. In testimony before Congress last week, Governor Doyle said the stimulus package should include infrastructure projects that meet the nation's long neglected need for modern passenger rail service. Last Friday, he created a new Office of Recovery and Reinvestment to see that Wisconsin moves quickly on infrastructure projects and turns federal stimulus money into paychecks.

Secretary Gassman delivered opening remarks for the two-day conference with advance registration of nearly 300. The conference at the KI Convention Center featured an apprenticeship expo with 44 exhibitors. On the opening day, between 400 and 450 high school students visited the booths and learned about careers in skilled trades.

Information about the apprenticeship program can be found at <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/>. Job seekers can find employment opportunities at <https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/>.

-30-