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## **Secretary Gassman: Governor Doyle's Workforce Agenda Preparing Wisconsinites for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Labor Market**

### ***In Wisconsin Rapids, State Labor Secretary highlights efforts to assist workers***

WISCONSIN RAPIDS – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman said today that Governor Jim Doyle's workforce agenda is preparing individuals for skilled jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding he recently announced will help move this vision to reality.

"The workforce programs being carried out in Wisconsin Rapids and across Wisconsin provide opportunities for workers to build their skills and prepare for opportunities in high-growth industries," Secretary Gassman said. "Helping workers gain the skills they need to succeed in today's labor market is vital as Wisconsin continues its recovery from a deep national recession."

During a visit to the Mid-State Technical College, Secretary Gassman highlighted the \$4.55 million WIA funding that Governor Doyle announced in early July that will help thousands of workers gain skills to succeed in the future economy. The funding – along with the \$5.89 million the Governor announced last year – brings total WIA funding in Wisconsin to more than \$10 million.

WIA-funded grants supported training for approximately 33,000 workers last year, including Opportunity Grants, which provide up to \$1,000 a year for workers in low-wage jobs to receive technical college training and begin career paths in high-growth areas such as advanced manufacturing and healthcare.

During her visit, Secretary Gassman met with Debbie Gentz, one of the more than 330 Opportunity Grant recipients who have been enrolled in the program statewide, including 49 in the region who have received training in growing areas such as information technology and nursing. Debbie is a former dislocated worker who graduated from Mid-State Technical College in December 2009 with an associate's degree in business and is now employed in Marshfield at the Opportunity Development Centers Inc., an agency that provides employment assistance to adults with disabilities or other barriers to employment.

Secretary Gassman also met with several dislocated workers who have gained advanced certification through the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) system, which received a \$350,000 boost earlier this month by Governor Doyle.

Individuals who are interested in learning more about training opportunities supported through WIA funding should contact their regional Workforce Development Boards or local Job Centers. For Job Center locations, go to [JobCenterOfWisconsin.com](http://JobCenterOfWisconsin.com), or call, 888-258-9966. Contact information for the boards can be found at [http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwdwia/PDF/wda\\_list.pdf](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwdwia/PDF/wda_list.pdf).