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On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

Secretary Perez Announces Start of First Class in Veterans in Piping Initiative, Which Trains Veterans for Good Jobs in Piping Trades

Initiative is first of its kind in Midwest; jobs guaranteed for participants

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Manny Perez announced 16 veterans will begin free training today in welding at Camp Williams in Juneau County, representing the first class of the new Veterans in Piping (VIP) initiative to create job opportunities for veterans.

“These veterans are guaranteed to have good jobs in the piping trades at the end of their training,” Secretary Perez said. “On behalf of Governor Walker, we thank these men and women for their service to our country, and we are happy to provide them with training that leads to sustainable, good-paying jobs in the private sector.”

The VIP initiative, the first in the Midwest, is a collaborative effort involving DWD, the Wisconsin National Guard and the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing, Pipefitting and Sprinkler Fitting Industry. The United Association (UA) is providing the instructors and training at no cost.

Participants receive 20 weeks of pre-apprenticeship training in welding. All who successfully complete the course and earn a welding and rigging certificate will achieve second-year standing in the Wisconsin apprenticeship program. In addition, the association is guaranteeing jobs to course graduates as they continue apprenticeship training and work to achieve journeyworker status.

The DWD Office of Veterans Services recruited the 16 participants for the first class and is taking applications for future classes. The next training session is expected to begin in early June. In addition to veterans, the training at Camp Williams is being offered to National Guard and Reserve military personnel in Wisconsin and from other Midwest states.

Wisconsin’s plumbing, steamfitter and sprinklerfitter apprenticeships require five years of training to achieve journeyworker status. During that time, apprentices earn a wage while learning skills. With experience, the average journeyworker wage is about \$33 per hour or more than \$68,000 per year.

The United Association launched the first Veterans in Piping program in Washington State under a 2008 agreement with the state National Guard. The only other Veterans In Piping program is at Camp Pendleton Marine Corps base in California.

For more information about the initiative:

http://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=150074728376759&id=161646387213473#!/pages/Veterans-in-Piping-Wisconsin/161646387213473 or <http://www.uavip.org/>

About other DWD services for veterans: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/veterans/>

About the apprenticeship program: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/>