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## **Secretary Newson Announces \$638,000 for Five Projects to Train Apprentices for Green Economy Jobs, Conserve Energy in Process**

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today announced five grants totaling \$638,216 to improve apprenticeship training, preparing workers for “green jobs,” such as building solar panels and wind turbines, and conserving energy during the training itself.

“Under Governor Walker’s leadership, we are working to empower individuals and create employment opportunities,” Secretary Newson said. “As more homeowners, businesses and utilities opt for renewable energy sources, we will need skilled workers to build, install and maintain renewable energy systems. These grants will also help meet the need for welders. In addition, we are taking steps to make the training programs themselves more energy efficient, safe and environmentally friendly.”

The U.S. Department of Labor awarded Wisconsin \$6 million in 2010 to fund its Wisconsin Sector Alliance for the Green Economy / SAGE project. The \$638,216 represents the latest round of funding. In all, the three-year SAGE initiative will provide training to approximately 4,500 new and existing apprentices for “green” energy jobs. In addition, over 1,000 journey workers will receive green skills training.

The five grants fund training in six of the 29 trades served by the SAGE projects: Carpenter, Construction Craft Laborer, Construction Electrician, Ironworker, Sheet Metal, and Steamfitter. Grant contracts authorize funding for curriculum, equipment and supplies, as well as training that instructors for either the technical colleges or independent training agencies need.

A grant of \$326,420 was awarded to apprenticeship and training trust of the Associated Builders & Contractors of Wisconsin, Inc. Of that amount, \$264,000 will be used to purchase heavy equipment and welding simulators. Apprentices will undergo virtual training, rather than use the far more costly, heavy equipment in the field. The simulators will reduce fuel costs and let apprentices safely learn basic operations before using heavy equipment at excavation worksite.

The grants support welding apprenticeship training for five of the six trades, and apprentices in those trades will learn how to weld new sustainable materials, such as green-rated light gauge steel. Skilled welders have been in demand throughout the manufacturing sector, including manufacturers of solar panels and wind turbine structures.

The remaining grants are:

- \$186,770 to Plumbers, Steamfitters, Refrigeration Workers and Service Technicians Local 434;
- \$67,900 to Ironworkers Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee Local 8;
- \$49,126 to Moraine Park Technical College, and
- \$8,000 to Mid-State Technical College.

For more information: Wisconsin Apprenticeship Program, <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/>