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Secretary Newson Appoints Scott Jansen Director of New Office of Skills Development, Part of Governor Walker's Wisconsin Fast Forward Initiative

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today announced the appointment of Scott Jansen as director of the new Office of Skills Development, as DWD moves to implement Governor Walker's Wisconsin Fast Forward initiative and meet a pressing need for skilled workers. He begins his new position on Monday, May 6.

At Governor Walker's urging, the Legislature approved Wisconsin Fast Forward with overwhelming bipartisan support, and the Governor signed the bill in early March. The initiative includes a new state-funded \$15 million grant program to address the skills gap by helping employers train new and incumbent workers. The new DWD Office of Skills Development (OSD) will administer the grant program.

"When the Legislature approved Wisconsin Fast Forward, we hit the ground running, and we are pleased to welcome Scott Jansen to our team," Secretary Newson said. "He brings a combination of private-sector leadership, community engagement and talent development experience, most recently as the Greater Milwaukee Committee's Talent Dividend Director, to the new Office of Skills Development. Under his leadership, key tenets of Wisconsin Fast Forward will launch quickly and thrive in the months to come."

Jansen became Talent Dividend Director for the Greater Milwaukee Committee in May 2011. Prior to that, he spent 27 years with AT&T, retiring as regional vice president of external affairs. As Talent Dividend Director, he led community efforts to increase educational attainment in the region and help returning adults earn degrees and training certificates. A Milwaukee native, he earned an economics degree from the University of Chicago in 1980.

"I am honored to serve the State of Wisconsin and am ready to direct initiatives within the Office of Skills Development to assist employers, educators and training organizations to grow our skilled and educated workforce," Jansen said. "Wisconsin employers continue to shape and define their demand for specific skill sets and competencies. We have an opportunity to partner with post-secondary institutions, workforce agencies, training organizations, economic development initiatives and even the K-12 system to respond with targeted supply-side strategies to meet demand and connect individuals to Wisconsin's workforce."

Secretary Newson today also announced the recent submission of language to create administrative rules governing the grant program. The language will cover application, criteria for consideration and outcomes that will help gauge the grants' success in developing the workforce. Public hearings will be held this year as part of the rule-making process. Training grants could be made available for application by the end of 2013.

In addition to the office and grant program, Wisconsin Fast Forward includes funding for a new, cutting-edge Labor Market Information System to track job vacancies and link unemployed workers to openings they are qualified to fill or to training to help them become qualified. DWD is reviewing proposals recently submitted by potential vendors.

Wisconsin Fast Forward is the first step in \$100 million in state-funded workforce reforms that Governor Walker offered to advance Wisconsin's economy and create employment opportunities.