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Secretary Newson: 2013-15 State Budget Supports Apprenticeship, Other Investments to Advance Governor's Workforce Development Agenda

Biennial plan includes \$1.8 million in permanent state funding to maintain Apprenticeship program

APPLETON – During a visit today to Fox Valley Technical College's Appleton campus, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson highlighted Governor Walker's ongoing commitment to equip workers with the skills needed to fill jobs in the 21st century economy.

The state budget Governor Walker recently signed includes investments in programs spanning DWD, the Wisconsin Technical College System, and the University of Wisconsin system to develop Wisconsin's workforce. Included is \$1.8 million in permanent state funding to continue Wisconsin's apprenticeship program.

"Since 1911, Wisconsin Apprenticeship has prepared thousands of Wisconsinites to succeed in family-supporting jobs in the trades," Secretary Newson said. "In recent years, federal dollars supported the program, but those funds dwindled and put the program's future at risk. The 2013-15 budget that Governor Walker recently signed has restored state funding for apprenticeship. The program is a key component of the Governor's comprehensive, \$100 million agenda to develop Wisconsin's workforce."

Wisconsin's apprenticeship program is the oldest of its kind in the United States, created in 1911. Wisconsin currently has more than 7,000 active apprentices, including 3,545 in construction and 1,286 in manufacturing. Technical colleges play a key role in providing classroom instruction to apprentices in conjunction with on-the-job training they receive at an employer.

Fox Valley Technical College is currently training approximately 700 apprentices in a variety of occupations, such as electricians and plumbers.

Examples of Governor Walker's other workforce development investments include:

- \$15 million in worker training grants as part of the Wisconsin Fast Forward initiative which passed earlier this year outside of the budget process.
- New, cutting-edge Labor Market Information System providing real-time data, focused on skills to better match job seekers to jobs.
- \$12.1 million over the biennium for the ACT, WorkKeys and the precursor Explore and Plan tests to help parents and teachers advise youth in choosing career pathways.
- \$5 million in increased state aid to Wisconsin technical colleges.