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CONTACT: DWD Communications, 608-266-2722

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

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On Twitter: @WIWorkforce

DWD, Packers Radio Network Team Up to Score on Apprenticeship Outreach

Starting Aug. 9, 30-second spots promote on-the-job training program in preseason & regular season games

MADISON – The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is teaming up with the Packers Radio Network this season to urge job seekers and employers to score big with Wisconsin Apprenticeship, an on-the-job training program that provides a pathway to family supporting jobs and helps address the skills gap at the same time.

“Earlier this year, we launched a comprehensive outreach initiative urging Wisconsinites to consider apprenticeship as a means for employers fill their need for highly skilled and well trained workers, and for individuals to consider this program as a pathway to a good-paying career,” DWD Secretary Reggie Newson said. “We are encouraged by the response so far and, as part of our continuing outreach, we are pleased to convey this message through the Packer Radio Network during the 2013-14 professional football season.”

Since April, DWD’s efforts to promote apprenticeship as a path to rewarding careers have included videos on DWD website, billboard displays in major metro areas, public service announcements on TV stations, and a tool kit with informational flyers and brochures for current and future workers, primarily high school students exploring career options and pathways. Through the Packer Radio Network, DWD will reach potential apprentices and sponsoring employers during radio broadcasts of 20 games on 55 stations, starting with the Aug. 9 preseason game.

“Apprenticeship has been a solution to Wisconsin’s workforce needs for more than a century, and it has been one of our best kept secrets for far too long,” Secretary Newson said. “We need job seekers to know apprenticeship is a great opportunity to learn job skills and gain work experience, all while earning a wage. For employers, it’s a chance to recruit, sponsor and train workers to meet their specific needs.”

Wisconsin Apprenticeship combines on-the-job training with a journeyworker tailored to employers’ specific skills needs, and classroom instruction, often at a technical college. Apprentices are enrolled for four to five years, increasing their wages as their skills develop. Apprentices graduate from the apprenticeship program with a nationally-recognized credential, providing employers with a highly-skilled, loyal workforce. Apprentices who graduate can find work in good-paying jobs. The average annual wage in manufacturing occupations is over \$51,400, more than \$10,000 above the average annual wage for all occupations in Wisconsin.

Secretary Newson noted that the outreach initiative is designed to engage job seekers and employers, and to help turn around a decline in employer participation that has been seen nationally and in Wisconsin over the past decade. From Jan. 1-June 30 this year, the DWD Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards has seen a 30 percent increase in new apprentices, to 1,383, over the same period last year. From April 1-June 30, the number of participating industrial employers has increased by 67 over the same three months in 2012.

DWD partnered with Laughlin Constable, a regional advertising agency and the primary vendor for the state Department of Tourism, to invest in the comprehensive education and outreach effort to build interest in the apprenticeship program.

For more information: www.WisconsinApprenticeship.org.

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