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Lt. Governor Kleefisch, Secretary Newson Meet New Generation of Skilled Workers, Inventors at Wausau Area Career & Technical Education Month Events

WTCS President Foy joins them in CTECH, Wausau West tours

WAUSAU— During Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month events today, Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson met Wausau West High School students drawing national attention for their ingenuity in developing a computer controlled snowblower.

"Their enthusiasm for learning is evident as soon as you enter their lab," Lt. Governor Kleefisch said. "These students were so engaged in the project that they worked on it until 9 p.m. one night. Their teacher had to send them home. They built what we all hope will be a winner when they and teams from schools across the country travel to Boston in June for an invention expo. What's occurring here at Wausau West best illustrates what we hope to encourage elsewhere in Wisconsin. That's the point of our Career and Technical Education Month tour."

Wausau West is one of 15 schools nationally to receive \$10,000 grants from the Lemelson-MIT Program in Boston. Teams can use the funds to tackle a real-world problem with technology and invent a solution, in Wausau West's case, the "Autonomous snow removal device." While at Wausau West and CTECH Manufacturing, Lt. Governor Kleefisch and Secretary Newson learned about the project and other efforts to encourage students to choose a career and technical education path to family-supporting jobs in manufacturing.

Governor Walker proclaimed February as Career and Technical Education Month to highlight innovative, school-to-work programs and the career opportunities for students who decide to go on to technical school, either for short-term training or a two-year degree. Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship program is part of the collaborative effort. Last summer, Governor Walker announced \$1.86 million in Youth Apprenticeship grants, including \$225,599 to the North Central Wisconsin School-to-Career Partnership, a consortium that includes the Wausau School District.

"CTECH Manufacturing has teamed up with Wausau West to provide school-to-career opportunities for students," Secretary Newson said. "At CTECH, we met Nate Karlen, a Wausau West graduate who is now pursuing a degree in computer science because of his Youth Apprenticeship experience at CTECH. Youth Apprenticeship is a great way to engage our youth and encourage them to consider a technical education. And now, Governor Walker has signed legislation to provide an additional \$500,000 for the program so that more high school juniors and seniors can explore school-to-career opportunities."

Morna Foy, President of the Wisconsin Technical College System, also took part in the CTE events, joining Lt. Governor Kleefisch and Secretary Newson for the CTECH tour and the Technology and Engineering Education Department Open House at Wausau West High School.