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DWD, MATC Introduce Industrial Manufacturing Technician Apprenticeship

New on-the-job training opportunity helps address skills gap in vital sector

OAK CREEK – The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) today introduced a new entry-level Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT) Apprenticeship to help address the skills gap in Wisconsin's vital manufacturing sector.

"Manufacturing is leading Wisconsin's economic recovery, adding more than 12,000 jobs in the past year," said Lisa Boyd, Administrator of the DWD Division of Employment and Training. "The new apprenticeship training program will help this sector expand further by providing manufacturers the skilled workers they need. Nowhere is the need more critical than in the Milwaukee area, long considered the machine shop of the world. IMT Apprenticeship training offers a new pathway to family-supporting jobs with Milwaukee area manufacturers."

Administrator Boyd said the program provides entry-level workers an overview of manufacturing, from operating equipment to participating in continuous improvement and understanding industry trends. As entry-level workers, the IMT apprentices begin a career pathway to other industrial skilled trades, such as Machinist and Industrial Electrician. The average annual wage in manufacturing is more than \$51,000 compared to approximately \$40,600 for all occupations.

The IMT Apprenticeship is the first developed in partnership with MATC and the fifth under the federal Sector Alliance for the Green Economy (SAGE) grant. WRTP/BIG STEP also was involved in developing the comprehensive apprenticeship program to meet the production worker needs of all manufacturers, but metal and plastic manufacturers and food processors in particular. It follows a hybrid model in which apprentices are assessed on-the-job using a combination of time and competencies. The program is structured for 18 months, or 3,000 hours, including 2,736 hours on-the-job learning and 264 hours of related instruction.

"Milwaukee Area Technical College is looking forward to offering the new Industrial Manufacturing Technician Apprenticeship," said Nick Triscari, Apprenticeship Coordinator for MATC. "This eighteen month apprenticeship provides entry level manufacturing skills using nationally recognized credentials in the related classroom instruction. We believe this training will ease the skills gap reported by many employers in the industrial and manufacturing sectors."

The IMT program is the fifth of six new apprenticeship programs to be developed through the \$6 million SAGE project grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. SAGE's purpose is to employ short and long-term strategies critical to the greening of Wisconsin's workforce by forming partnerships with businesses, educators and other stakeholders to identify and address labor force needs specific to "green" or clean energy jobs in construction, manufacturing and utility industries.

For more information: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/default.htm>