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Secretary Newson Announces \$50,000 in Special Grants to Assist Workers Displaced by Burlington Fire, Pleasant Prairie Center Closing

Start-up Grants initiate services to Echo Lake Foods, SuperValu Distribution Center workers

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today announced two Special Response grants of \$25,000 each to assist over 400 workers displaced by business closings in Burlington and Pleasant Prairie.

“We are working closely with our regional partner, the Southeastern Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, to help these workers find new jobs,” Secretary Newson said. “With this grant, the board can initiate services, assisting these workers as they transition to new employment.”

Approximately 300 workers were displaced following a fire January 30 that destroyed Echo Lake Foods in Burlington. DWD joined the Racine County Workforce Development Center in providing rapid response services and holding a job fair.

In January, SuperValu, Inc., based in Eden Prairie, Minn., filed notice with DWD that it planned to close the center effective May 1, 2013, that approximately 117 workers would be affected and that layoffs would begin this month and continue until the closing date. DWD and the Southeastern WDB also held rapid response sessions for these workers.

At the rapid response sessions, affected workers receive instruction on how to file for Unemployment Insurance benefits as well as a description of job services available, from help searching for work to training assistance to improve existing skills or provide new job skills for a different occupation. The start-up grants will begin funding services to the affected workers.

The grants brings to \$250,000 the amount of supplemental federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding that DWD has distributed to the Southeastern WDB this year for employment and training services to dislocated workers.

Wisconsin invests nearly \$55 million annually serving approximately 35,000 dislocated workers in various programs.