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DWD Deputy Secretary Highlights Wisconsin Apprenticeship as Employer-Focused Training Program to Meet Skills Gap

Deputy Secretary Barry visits Trane Inc. as part of statewide initiative to raise awareness of program

LA CROSSE – During a visit today to Trane Inc., Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Deputy Secretary Jonathan Barry urged employers and job seekers to consider taking part in Wisconsin's Apprenticeship program, which has produced skilled workers to meet employers' needs for more than a century. The Deputy Secretary's visit is part of a statewide education and outreach effort to boost employer and job seeker participation in apprenticeship.

"For more than a century, Wisconsin's apprenticeship program has provided employer-sponsored training opportunities that produce highly-skilled workers," Deputy Secretary Barry said. "I encourage Wisconsinites making a decision on a good-paying career in Wisconsin to consider apprenticeship. Apprentices who graduate from Wisconsin's apprenticeship program have developed the skills that employers need to be successful, which supports job creation and economic growth across the state."

As part of DWD's new apprenticeship outreach effort, a variety of materials have been designed to engage employers and potential apprentices. Highlights include:

- A "toolkit" of updated brochures, folders and educational materials for regional representatives to provide directly to employers explaining how apprenticeship can provide them with well-trained and loyal workers, which can make their businesses more productive.
- An educational video that speaks directly to employers about the benefits of apprenticeship with a brochure titled *The Top 10 Reasons to Train Apprentices*. A companion public service announcement (PSA) is also available at DWD's YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/wiworkforce.
- Postcards, display ads for online and print that convey the value of Apprenticeship to employers.
- A new PSA encouraging individuals to consider apprenticeship, along with outdoor billboards in the Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, and Wausau areas that will be seen by motorists an estimated 4.5 million times during the month of May.

Brad Tacheny, Trane's Manager for La Crosse Manufacturing Operations, joined Deputy Secretary Barry at today's announcement. Mr. Tacheny noted that Trane has benefited since the company began training apprentices.

"Working with Wisconsin's apprenticeship program and Western Technical College, Trane's La Crosse Operations Maintenance and Tool Room Departments are shining examples of achieving outstanding education, with a proper balance of on-the-job training," added Tacheny. "These programs have been an integral part of La Crosse Operations' success for the more than 30 years I have been with the Company. As Trane begins its second 100 years in business in the La Crosse area, the apprenticeship program will continue to be a vital part of our business, predominantly because the program keeps pace with the training and educational needs of the manufacturing industry."

(more)

Also joining Deputy Secretary Barry was Dr. Lee Rasch, President of Western Technical College, which provides classroom instruction. Apprenticeship training combines on-the-job training with a journeyworker tailored to employers' specific skills needs, and classroom instruction, typically at a local 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.

Wisconsin's apprenticeship program was the first in the nation when it was signed into law in 1911. Since that time, Wisconsin has trained thousands of apprentices in a wide variety of occupations. In 2012, Wisconsin had 9,608 apprentices training in over 200 occupations, including 4,832 working in construction, 1,689 in industrial and manufacturing trades, and 3,087 in the service industry.

Even so, Deputy Secretary Barry noted that the outreach initiative is designed to engage even more individuals to take advantage of the program and to help turn around a decline in employer participation that has been seen nationally and in Wisconsin over the past decade.

As part of Governor Walker's commitment to Wisconsin Apprenticeship, his 2013–15 budget proposal includes permanent state funding for Wisconsin's apprenticeship program.

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, visit www.WisconsinApprenticeship.org.