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Secretary Newson Joins Workforce Partner, Local Employers to Tout Governor Walker's Investment in Apprenticeship

Governor's Investment in Apprenticeship Benefits Workers, Employers

CLEVELAND – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson visited Lakeshore Technical College (LTC) today to discuss with local employers and apprentices the positive impact that Governor Walker's comprehensive workforce agenda is having in Wisconsin, and ways in which the workforce system helps workers prepare for in-demand careers.

Secretary Newson toured a \$6 million expansion under way at LTC that will increase program capacity in CNC machining, welding, and maintenance technicians, which are among the most in-demand at the college. The expansion will allow increased opportunities to train workers, including apprentices.

"Apprenticeship is a tried-and-true training program that results in a highly-skilled, loyal workforce," Secretary Newson said. "Governor Walker's investment of \$1.8 million in permanent state funding for Wisconsin's apprenticeship program enables workers to learn the latest skills and begin on the path to a family-supporting career. This funding is a core part of the Governor's focus on ensuring a highly skilled, well-trained workforce for careers now and in the future."

The 2013 – 2015 biennial budget signed by Governor Walker includes approximately \$100 million in workforce investments, which includes \$1.8 million in permanent state funding for apprenticeship.

Since April, DWD has been promoting apprenticeship as a path to family-supporting jobs and as a means for employers to train workers and fill openings. The educational initiative has 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. DWD is also promoting apprenticeship on the Packer Radio Network, reaching potential apprentices and sponsoring employers during radio broadcasts of 20 games on 55 stations.

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. 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.

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. 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.

For more information: www.WisconsinApprenticeship.org.

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