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## **Secretary Gassman: State Must Double Youth Apprenticeship to Ensure Skilled Workforce**

### *Stresses More High School Math & Science in Visit to High-Tech Manufacturer*

PLOVER – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman said Thursday that Wisconsin can ensure a skilled workforce and sustained economic growth for years to come by increasing Youth Apprenticeship funding as Governor Doyle has proposed.

“Youth Apprenticeship is one of the best investments we can make to grow our economy, create family-supporting jobs, and maintain our quality of life,” Secretary Gassman said. “This popular school-to-work program not only helps students explore career options while gaining skills and work experience, it helps employers recruit and train workers. Yet it remains under funded, and that could put us at a big disadvantage in today’s global economy.”

Secretary Gassman said Governor Doyle wants to double Youth Apprenticeship funding to \$2.2 million next year, creating school-to-work opportunities for 4,000 high school students a year. Eight of 10 apprenticeship students get job offers when they graduate, and those who continue their education do better than other students.

Secretary Gassman made the comments during a visit to Pointe Precision, Inc. in Plover – a high-tech manufacturer of critical components for aircraft engines, medical devices, industrial generators, and high performance vehicles. She met with three students receiving training as high precision lathe operators and machinists and six graduates employed by the firm while they continue their education at Mid-State Technical College.

An enthusiastic supporter of Youth Apprenticeship, Joe Kinsella, President and CEO of Pointe Precision, said the program lets students learn about advanced manufacturing. He said Pointe Precision requires strong math skills in manufacturing critical components for aircraft, medical equipment, and high performance vehicles. He said the firm offers good paying jobs with a comprehensive benefit package.

“With the shortage of workers in the future, this is a good program for us to get students in, give them the experience, get them through technical college, and then bring them back on board to work for us,” Kinsella said. “It’s a great feeder program for our employee base. And some kids, once they get into machining, they want to go on for their engineering degree.”

Secretary Gassman cited other education items in the Governor’s budget, including:

- Requirement of a 3<sup>rd</sup> year of math and science to graduate from high school;
- Wisconsin Covenant – tuition assistance to make college possible for hard working students;
- \$225 million more in University of Wisconsin System funding to graduate more engineers, nurses, and teachers.