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DWD Secretary Gassman Commends Master Lock and UAW for Nation's First Pay for Knowledge Agreement

Agreement helps maintain state's manufacturing economy

MILWAUKEE – The Wisconsin economy will be stronger if other companies follow the example of Master Lock and the United Auto Workers' agreement to tie higher pay to better training, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman said today.

Gassman visited Master Lock to deliver a Gubernatorial commendation to Dan Carey, general manager of Master Lock's Milwaukee plant, and Tony Rainey, president of United Auto Workers Local 469 in honor of their agreement to link higher pay to training in basic manufacturing skills.

"Manufacturing is the lifeblood of the Wisconsin economy," Gassman said, "but we have to invest in worker training to stay at the forefront in today's highly competitive global economy. Master Lock and the UAW have provided a great example of how to do that."

Carey said the training program is part of Master Lock's strategy for maintaining high productivity at its Milwaukee plant, which has about 375 hourly and salaried employees.

Gassman presented certificates to 16 Master Lock employees who have completed at least one module of the 4-part Manufacturing Skill Standards Certification program through Milwaukee Area Technical College. Master Lock has agreed to give employees a 50-cent per hour raise for each module they complete.

"Thanks to this agreement between Master Lock and the UAW, you can enjoy the immediate financial reward of improved skills," Gassman told the employees. "But in the bigger picture, training like this helps Wisconsin continue to grow our economy, compete at the high end and create more good jobs for working families."

The Manufacturing Skill Standards Certification program teaches basic skills that are common to all manufacturing environments, including safety, quality production, manufacturing processing and maintenance. Each requires approximately eight weeks of rigorous training followed by testing. Several prominent Wisconsin companies have embraced MSSC, including Harley Davidson, Argon Industries and Federal Tool and Engineering, and Vulcan Industries.

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Wisconsin was the first state to formally endorse the national program. Last year, Governor Jim Doyle allocated \$250,000 in grants to local workforce development boards, enabling them to partner with technical colleges and develop a manufacturing skill certification system throughout the state. As part of his Grow Wisconsin – The Next Steps plan, Governor Doyle has set a goal of having 40 percent of Wisconsin's manufacturing workers achieve MSSC standing by 2016.

"MSSC is part of our 21st Century Workforce Wisconsin program to help workers gain passports to the jobs of the future, while ensuring that employers will have the kind of highly skilled workforce they need to grow and create jobs," Secretary Gassman said.

Senator Spencer Coggs, D-Milwaukee, accompanied Secretary Gassman at the Master Lock presentation, which is one in a series of Workforce Development Month events. Governor Doyle declared September as Workforce Development Month in a Labor Day proclamation.

A member of Governor Doyle's Cabinet, Secretary Gassman leads the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, which is charged with strengthening Wisconsin's workforce. DWD provides training and employment assistance to job seekers, enforces worker's rights, administers the state's Unemployment Insurance, Apprenticeship, and Worker's Compensation programs and works with employers to find appropriate job candidates.