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## **Governor Doyle Announces Steps State is Taking to Keep & Attract Jobs, Invest in Osceola, Help Workers**

MADISON – Governor Jim Doyle announced today that his Administration is working to keep as many jobs in Osceola as possible, in response to the recent news that Polaris Industries will permanently close its Osceola plant by 2012. The Governor has directed the Department of Commerce to work with potential buyers of the company's assets to keep jobs in Osceola. The Governor's Administration is also aggressively working to pursue economic development opportunities to bring new jobs to Osceola and help affected workers.

"I am committed to doing everything in my power to help this community and the hundreds of families who depend on the Osceola plant for their livelihood," Governor Doyle said. "I have directed my Administration to pursue all opportunities to salvage as many jobs as possible and to work with local officials and business leaders to bring renewed economic development to the community."

Governor Doyle directed Department of Commerce Secretary Aaron Olver to meet with the company and potential buyers of the company's assets, and to look for opportunities to bring new employers into the area and help existing employers grow to provide new jobs. The state will aggressively use the tools it has available, including tax credits, loans and training resources, to encourage new investment in the region.

Governor Doyle has charged the Department of Commerce with doing everything possible to bring jobs to Osceola, and his Administration is actively pursuing potential projects that would help bring jobs and investment to the region.

The Governor also announced today that Commerce Secretary Olver, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman and Representative Ann Hraychuck will hold a town hall meeting on Thursday, June 10 at 6:30 p.m. at Osceola High School to discuss efforts to keep and attract jobs to Osceola and the services available to affected workers. The public forum is open to community members.

In addition, Governor Doyle has directed DWD Secretary Gassman to form and dispatch a Rapid Response Team to meet with the affected employees and provide access to worker training and job placement services. DWD, local workforce development partners and the company have set up an initial Rapid Response meeting for Monday, June 7 with affected employees to discuss available services.

DWD is making available a \$25,000 Rapid Response start-up grant to the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board to initiate services for the affected workers. DWD will continue to work with workers and the company over the next 18 months to pursue potential federal funding opportunities for educational and workforce training and unemployment benefits.

Governor Doyle thanked State Representative Ann Hraychuck for her strong leadership regarding this difficult issue.