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DWD Secretary Highlights Governor Doyle's Workforce Agenda, Visits Workers Benefiting from State Programs

State Labor Secretary Visits World Class Precision Products in Bayfield

BAYFIELD – During a visit today to World Class Precision Products, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman met workers who are succeeding in the 21st century labor market, thanks to workforce system partnerships involving public, private, educational and other entities.

"Here in Bayfield, World Class Precision is taking advantage of a strong workforce system that provides employers with employees who have the skills and training they need to be job ready," Secretary Gassman said. "The investments we are making to prepare workers are helping employers be successful, resulting in a stronger economy for the region and state."

As part of Governor Doyle's "Up North" tour, Secretary Gassman visited World Class Precision Products, a state-of-the-art manufacturer specializing in CNC machining and pattern, mold and die-making. The company employs 20 in Bayfield and is a division of the World Class Manufacturing Group Inc. headquartered in Weyauwega. She met with Bob Peltonen, owner and CEO of the World Class companies that also includes two other manufacturing facilities in Wisconsin, and learned about the company's work with DWD, the agency's regional workforce partner Northwest Wisconsin CEP Inc. and the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) to train and hire skilled workers.

Secretary Gassman met with employee Charles Beedlow who underwent advanced training through the Northwest Wisconsin CEP Inc., as well as WITC. Beedlow completed WITC-Ashland's machine tool operator program in 2008, has worked for the company for two years and has been promoted to the position of Quality Manager.

Secretary Gassman also met Lucas Mattson, a newly hired machinist who received assistance through DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), including referral to programming at WITC-Ashland, where he completed the machine tool operator program this year. DVR also provided Mattson with a job lead at World Class Precision Products and placement through the On-the-Job Training Hiring Initiative, a \$2 million DVR program funded through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars that has resulted in hundreds of job placements across the state.

During the visit, Secretary Gassman also met leaders from the city and county of Bayfield members of The North Star Manufacturing Alliance, a business consortium spearheaded by Bob Peltonen that collectively markets participating businesses and submits bids for large commercial and government projects.

"Governor Doyle's number one priority is to help businesses create jobs and to provide workers with opportunities to get those jobs," Secretary Gassman said. "The successful job placements at World Class Precision Products are reflective of how our workforce system is working collectively to provide job opportunities, resulting in a stronger Wisconsin economy."