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State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Jim Doyle, Governor
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On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

Secretary Gassman: Under Governor Doyle's Leadership, Vocational Rehabilitation Strengthens State Workforce

During 'Up North' Tour, State Labor Secretary congratulates client in Bayfield

BAYFIELD – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman said today that that the agency's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is helping Wisconsinites succeed in the workplace, thanks to investments made under Governor Jim Doyle's leadership.

"In Bayfield as well as in communities across Wisconsin, we are helping people who face a variety of challenges find family-supporting jobs, stay employed or develop the skills needed to be job ready when that next employment opportunity is available," Secretary Gassman said. "Our strong commitment to vocational rehabilitation is one more way that, under Governor Doyle's leadership, we are putting Wisconsin back to work."

During the Governor's "Up North" Tour, Secretary Gassman met with Dirk Wachsmuth, a DVR consumer since 2007 who in 2008 successfully launched a small commercial fishing business, Wachsmuth Fisheries, along with his wife, Elizabeth. Through DVR, Wachsmuth received vocational guidance, benefits counseling, business planning assistance, business equipment and supplies and other services. Wachsmuth currently grosses over \$21 an hour from fishing on his boat, the *Wolverine II*, which was built in 1940 by Burger Boat Co. of Manitowoc.

Along with DVR services, Wachsmuth received assistance through the Great Lakes Intertribal Council Inc.'s Vocational Rehabilitation for Native Americans program, as well as the Red Cliff Band of Chippewa Indians, North Country Independent Living and Employment Bound. Additionally, the Wisconsin's Women's Business Initiative provided assistance with a small business loan.

DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides employment services and counseling to people with disabilities who face substantial barriers to employment. In federal fiscal year 2009, DVR served over 12,600 people, provided training to 4,100 people and placing 2,200 people into jobs.

As part of the visit, Secretary Gassman also cited Governor Doyle's other investments in worker training, including more than \$2 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding that he directed into the DVR's On-the-Job Training (OJT) Hiring Initiative, a program launched in 2009 that has resulted in the placement of hundreds of Wisconsinites in jobs across the state. Currently, over 150 former OJT participants are in permanent jobs.

For more information about DWD programs and its Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, visit:

<http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/>

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