

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, June 3, 2011

CONTACT: John Dipko, Communications Director, 608-266-6753

On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

## **Interim Secretary Baumbach Applauds First Class to Complete Veterans in Piping Training, Achieve Advance Standing in Apprenticeship Program**

### ***Wisconsin VIP training is first in Midwest; jobs guaranteed for graduates***

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Interim Secretary Scott Baumbach today congratulated 14 veterans who completed accelerated training in welding at Camp Williams in Juneau County, the first class in a new Veterans in Piping (VIP) initiative to create job opportunities for veterans.

“We are pleased to collaborate with the piping industry in training veterans for good jobs and rewarding careers, and we are especially proud of these first graduates,” Interim Secretary Scott Baumbach said. “They are well on their way to becoming full-fledged participants in Wisconsin’s model apprenticeship program. Apprenticeship is on-the-job training at its best, and this is our way of thanking them, as best we can, for serving our country.”

The VIP initiative, the first in the Midwest, is a collaborative effort involving DWD, the Wisconsin National Guard and the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing, Pipefitting and Sprinkler Fitting Industry. The United Association (UA) is providing the instructors and training at no cost, and the National Guard is providing the training site. A graduation ceremony for the first class was held today in Green Bay at the annual conference of the Wisconsin Pipe Trades Association.

In January, the graduates began 20 weeks of pre-apprenticeship training in welding. All who completed training and succeeded in earning two national welding certificates now have second-year standing in the Wisconsin apprenticeship program. In addition, the national association is guaranteeing jobs to course graduates as they continue apprenticeship training and work to achieve journeyworker status.

The DWD Division of Employment and Training’s Office of Veterans Services recruited the participants for the first class and a second group to begin training July 18 at Camp Williams. In addition to veterans, the training at Camp Williams is being offered to former and current National Guard and Reserve military personnel in Wisconsin and from other Midwest states.

Wisconsin’s plumbing, steamfitter and sprinklerfitter apprenticeships require five years of training to achieve journeyworker status. During that time, apprentices earn a wage while learning skills. With experience, the average journeyworker wage is about \$33 per hour or more than \$68,000 per year, plus benefits.

The United Association first began VIP training in Washington State under a 2008 agreement with the state National Guard. The only other VIP program was at Camp Pendleton Marine Corps base in California.

For more information about the initiative:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Veterans-in-Piping-Wisconsin/161646387213473> or <http://www.uavip.org/>

About other DWD services for veterans: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/veterans/>

About the Wisconsin apprenticeship program: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/>