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Secretary Baumbach Announces \$918,010 Grant to Help Dislocated Workers in Western Wisconsin Gain New Skills, Return to Work

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Scott Baumbach today announced a \$918,010 National Emergency Grant to provide employment and training services to 325 dislocated workers displaced by Polaris Industries in Osceola and Robin Manufacturing U.S.A. Inc., in Hudson.

“Good jobs are available, and the federal grant that DWD requested will help these workers learn new skills and find new jobs,” Secretary Baumbach said. “Job postings on www.JobCenterofWisconsin.com recently exceeded 34,000 statewide, including family-supporting jobs in manufacturing and healthcare in the west central region. As we work to support a business-friendly environment and advance private sector job creation, we are committed to helping dislocated workers and all job seekers gain employment.”

Workers at the Polaris Osceola facility built all-terrain vehicles. Polaris began a series of layoffs in March with the final dislocation to occur in late December. Workers at Robin Manufacturing built small engines for all-terrain vehicles until the Hudson plant closed last month.

Employment and training services will help affected workers gain new skills to compete in the job market today. Training will focus on the region’s high growth industries, including advanced manufacturing, engineering, finance, welding and healthcare. In requesting the grant, DWD and its partners proposed a manufacturing training center adjacent to the Polaris plant.

The NEG program helps states respond when significant events create a sudden need for assistance. Services are being coordinated by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and provided through regional Workforce Development Boards. NEG funding is being coordinated with resources available through the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. The program commits significant resources to occupational retraining.

Support services include travel payments, child care and other training related expenses. Workers with skills in demand are being assisted in job search activities including workshops on resumes, interviewing and analysis of transferable skills. Those determined to need skill development to find suitable employment will have a variety of training options to select from.

DWD has been awarded a number of NEG grants since the recession began. In April, nearly \$4 million in additional assistance was provided for over 2,580 dislocated workers affected by multiple layoffs and plant closures throughout the state, primarily in the manufacturing sector. That award was the second payment of \$13.6 million in NEG funding that the U.S. Department of Labor approved for Wisconsin a year ago. The total amount was the largest NEG grant ever awarded to Wisconsin.