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DWD Apprenticeship, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Launch Innovative Program to Train Substation Electricians

New statewide program reflects collaborative approach to build labor skills that are in demand

GREEN BAY – The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (BAS) and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) today formally kicked off a new statewide program to train apprentices in the substation electrician trade, filling a need for training that is in high demand by employers across Wisconsin.

“We are pleased to be partnering with Northeast Wisconsin Technical College to offer this new program to help workers build skills that we know employers in our state are seeking,” said Jane Pawasarat, Administrator of DWD’s Division of Employment & Training, which includes BAS. “Participants will learn how to work with power transformers, how to control equipment used in substations and how to perform other tasks associated with the utility industry, including smart grid technology.

“Innovative collaborations like the one we’re launching today will go a long way toward getting Wisconsinites into good-paying jobs and making Wisconsin the workforce of choice,” Administrator Pawasarat said.

Some Wisconsin companies currently have in-house programs to train substation electricians, but the program at NWTC is designed to meet the needs of all industry partners. The program follows a new hybrid model in which apprentices are assessed on-the-job using a combination of time and competencies. The program is four years, or 8,000 hours, including 7,360 hours of on the job and 640 hours of related instruction.

“At Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, we strive to be at the forefront of creating a highly-skilled workforce,” said NWTC President Dr. H. Jeffrey Rafn. “We are excited to offer the new Substation Electrician apprenticeship which will prepare individuals for cutting-edge careers in the utility industry.”

The program is Wisconsin’s second new apprenticeship program made possible through the \$6 million Sector Alliance for the Green Economy (SAGE) project grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The purpose of SAGE is to employ short and long-term strategies critical to the greening of Wisconsin’s workforce by forming partnerships with businesses, educators and other stakeholders to identify and address labor force needs specific to “green” or clean energy jobs in construction, manufacturing and utility industries. Wisconsin launched the new Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship program in July 2011.

NWTC elected to serve as the premier training site for Substation Electrician apprentices in response to the regional labor market’s need for such skills. In addition, by providing related instruction for this program, NWTC is adding to its comprehensive scope of training programs for utilities, which include an Electric Line Worker apprenticeship program, a technical diploma in Electrical Power Distribution, and an associate degree program in Utilities Engineering Technology.

For more information about the program, contact Burt Harding, NWTC Apprenticeship Training Representative, 920-492-5618, or visit DWD’s BAS website at: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/default.htm>.