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

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Secretary Newson Ready to Lead DWD, Help Governor Walker Create Jobs, Get Wisconsin Working Again

Senate panel endorses appointment, Senate confirmation expected Wednesday

MADISON – Citing his credentials and experience, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today thanked Governor Walker for his Cabinet-level appointment and told lawmakers he is eager to help the Governor create private sector jobs and get Wisconsin working again.

"I am thrilled to be taking the helm at DWD during a pivotal moment for our agency and our state's workforce development system," Secretary Newson stated in written testimony he presented to the Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Small Business and Tourism. He said that under Governor Walker's leadership, DWD has developed a new mission and strategies to help the Governor improve the state economy.

"I am honored to be nominated by Governor Walker," Secretary Newson stated. "As Governor Walker's nominee, I stand committed to this mission to advance Wisconsin's economy and business climate by empowering and supporting the workforce."

The Senate committee recommended Senate approval of his appointment, which could occur as early as Wednesday. In his testimony, Secretary Newson described DWD as an agency focused on working with its workforce partners to help the private sector create employment opportunities as well as fill existing jobs.

"First of all, we know good jobs are available," he stated. "In fact, our website www.JobCenterofWisconsin.com has had approximately 120,000 postings this year, far outpacing last year's 12-month total of about 75,000. We've created over 29,000 private sector jobs through September, and our unemployment rate remains below the U.S. rate and below the rates of other manufacturing-heavy Upper Midwest states. Even so, there are still too many hard working Wisconsinites who are unemployed, and too many employers saying they can't find employees with the right skills."

Prior to his appointment, he served as Deputy Secretary, overseeing the agency's six divisions, which encompass approximately 1,600 employees. He came to DWD in August from the Department of Transportation, where he was Executive Assistant, one of the DOT top three leadership positions. From 2005 until January 2011, he was operations director for DOT's Southeast Region, managing a \$320 budget and directing 500 employees since 2005. From 2003 to 2005, Secretary Newson managed the state Disadvantaged Enterprise Program, and in that capacity, he orchestrated and developed leading market management strategies for minority business development.