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Lt. Governor Kleefisch, Secretary Newson, Other Cabinet Members Deliver Governor Walker's Message on Jobs to Janesville Area Veterans

Top officials hold listening session at new Rock County facility for homeless vets

JANESVILLE – In a listening session with veterans today, Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and members of Governor Walker's Cabinet reinforced the Governor's goal of full employment for veterans, especially those returning home after serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"In his recent state address, Governor Walker said it is unacceptable to think that any man or woman who has served our country would return home and not be able to find a job," Lt. Governor Kleefisch said. "You and many others like you served your country. In answering the call to duty, you sacrificed so much. Now we're here to serve you. We are working to reduce unemployment among our veterans, determined to help our veterans find work and succeed here at home."

Lt. Governor Kleefisch was joined by Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson, Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Secretary John Scocos, Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) Dave Ross, and Major General Donald P. Dunbar, Adjutant General of Wisconsin. During a visit to Rock Valley Community Programs (RVCP), Inc., they met with nearly 50 veterans, many of them residents of a wing RVCP opened a year ago for homeless veterans. Following the listening session, the delegation toured the facility.

"With his Wisconsin Working plan, Governor Walker directed us to redouble our efforts to get Wisconsin working again," Secretary Newson. "At DWD, we will hold twice as many job fairs. Our Office of Veterans Services has helped veterans find jobs at Hormel Foods Beloit, John Deere and United Alloy. We will build on that record of success as the economy improves. We are moving in the right direction. After losing 150,000 jobs over three years, Wisconsin gained jobs 13,500 private sector jobs last year, 9,300 in manufacturing."

Secretary Newson said DWD will strengthen its partnership with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to find skilled workers for expanding businesses. As part of that effort, he said DWD will also work more closely with DVA Secretary Scocos and his staff to help veterans find jobs and encourage employers to hire a vet. The two agencies will collaborate on job fairs for veterans.

"My mission as Secretary is to ensure that our servicemen and servicewomen have all the tools they need to reintegrate into civilian society with housing, education, health care, other treatment and meaningful jobs," Secretary Scocos said. "Veterans have qualities that every employer is looking for: leadership, the ability to work as a team leader and a team member, the ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines, the ability to give and follow directions, planning and organizational skills, commitment to working safely, and flexibility and adaptability."

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DWD, Veterans Affairs and the Department of Military Affairs have worked together to help veterans enter apprenticeship training. The Veterans In Piping initiative, the first in the Midwest, is in collaboration with the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing, Pipefitting and Sprinkler Fitting Industry. All who complete training and succeed in earning two national welding certificates 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 first graduating class includes five veterans now working in Madison.

"At sendoff ceremonies for our brave Soldiers and Airmen, I make a promise to the families that we will do our best to take care of our service members," said Major General Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin and commander of the Wisconsin National Guard. "That promise doesn't end when the troops return from deployment. I am proud that the state of Wisconsin recognizes the value of our veterans, and is willing to help our employers recognize this as well. I fully support Gov. Walker's goal of full employment for our veterans."

Legislation included in the Wisconsin Working plan would waive an initial state license fee for certain veterans and recognize military training as meeting the certain state licensing requirements.

"Under Governor Walker's leadership, we are pursuing an ambitious agenda to connect our veterans to jobs," Secretary Ross said. "We need to fully realize the incredible talents that veterans add to our workforce, both long-time veterans and those returning home from active duty now. They have unique, valuable skills. They are hard working. They know what it takes to succeed. These are all good traits that translate so effectively to our 21st Century economy. We need to be creative and see that those without jobs gain employment."

For more information about the agencies and services for veterans, see:

DWD, <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/veterans/>

DVA, <http://dva.state.wi.us/>

DSFS, <http://drl.wi.gov/>

DMA, <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/default.asp>