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DWD Secretary Newson: Governor Walker Invests \$422,000 to Provide Milwaukee-Area Youths with Summer Work Experience

Prioritizes GPR funds in state budget to support work-readiness experience for hundreds of young people

MILWAUKEE - Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today announced \$422,000 in state general purpose revenue (GPR) funding to support work-readiness experience for hundreds of youth and young adults in the Milwaukee area. DWD and its regional partner, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB), will invest the funds in the board's Summer Youth Program, providing participants with valuable work experience and filling labor market needs of area employers.

"The program is a critical link in the workforce pipeline to connect Milwaukee youths with post-secondary education, while providing them the opportunity to gain work experience and earn wages," Secretary Newson said. "This investment is reflective of the Governor's commitment to prioritize state dollars during tight budget times to strengthen the workforce in the Milwaukee area. Area employers in turn will reap the benefits of having a pool of local workers available who can fill their seasonal labor needs."

Secretary Newson was joined by MAWIB Executive Director Donald Sykes in announcing the funding at Palermo's Pizza, a long-time Milwaukee manufacturer that has employed Summer Youth Program participants in previous years and intends to employ more through the 2012 Summer Youth Program. The program runs from June 20 to August 16 and is jointly operated by MAWIB and the City of Milwaukee as the Earn & Learn program to place Milwaukee County young people up to 21 years old into subsidized work experiences, including almost 2,000 young people in 2011. Of those, almost 400 were funded through state GPR funds.

"On behalf of MAWIB, we thank Governor Walker for seeing the benefits that the Summer Youth Program brings to the Milwaukee community every year," Executive Director Sykes said. "We also appreciate the involvement of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development to help make this effort possible."

Giacomo Fallucca, owner of Palermo's Pizza who also co-chairs the Earn & Learn program, stated: "As a proud Wisconsin business owner and manufacturer, we look forward to working with our partners at the regional and state levels to provide work experience to young Milwaukee-area residents this summer, which benefits our area's economy in the long run."

Through the program, MAWIB issues and receives applications, monitors activities at participating employers' worksites, and provides technical assistance to ensure a safe and productive work experience for both the youth and employer. Work experiences typically last six weeks for each participant and occur at private employers, in addition to community, government and faith-based organizations.