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Workforce Development, Tourism Officials Deliver Message of Job Creation, Stronger Economic Outlook to Northern Wisconsin

Workforce, tourism leaders representing Walker Administration met with regional business leaders

ASHLAND – During a conference with northern Wisconsin business leaders yesterday, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Deputy Secretary Jonathan Barry and Department of Tourism Deputy Secretary Dave Fantle reiterated Governor Walker’s message that Wisconsin’s economy is turning around, and the tourism industry is a major part of the state’s success.

“Tourism had a \$16 billion impact on the state’s economy last year and supported 181,000 jobs in Wisconsin,” Tourism Deputy Secretary Fantle said during the Northwest Wisconsin Business Development Conference. “There is great potential to grow the tourism economy in northern Wisconsin, particularly the northwest part of the state where arts, culture and outdoor recreation opportunities are in abundance.”

DWD Deputy Secretary Barry stated: “We know that the tourism economy is all about small business, with 15,000 businesses with fewer than 50 employees providing over 60 percent of the jobs in the tourism industry. And, as an owner of a small business in southern Wisconsin that relies particularly on winter tourism, I understand the importance this industry has on communities across our state.”

Deputy Secretary Barry focused on strategies that will enable area tourism businesses to find and add employees, specifically noting www.JobCenterofWisconsin.com as a critical tool for job creators to use in connecting with workers. He also touched on the efforts across state government to work collaboratively to provide support to hiring and expanding businesses throughout the state, including programs available from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to provide financial assistance to small businesses.

Deputy Secretary Fantle reaffirmed the importance that the tourism industry plays in our state’s economy and how communities across Wisconsin are reaping the economic benefits from the state’s investments in Wisconsin tourism marketing strategies.

“We thank Governor Walker for recognizing the return on investment Wisconsin receives when it spreads the message that Wisconsin is where vacationers go to have fun,” Deputy Secretary Fantle said. “We also thank the many tourism businesses in northwest Wisconsin for doing their part to welcome new and returning vacationers to the region, which strengthens the regional economy.”