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Manufacturing Career Expo Update: 124 Job Seekers Receive Job Offers from 30 Milwaukee-Area Employers

Survey: At least 110 individuals hired so far by 27 employers in Milwaukee region since May event

MADISON – At least 124 job seekers who took part in the 2012 Milwaukee Manufacturing Career Expo on May 10 have been offered new jobs by employers they met through the one-day recruitment blitz, thanks in large part to pre-screening activities involving both participating employers and job seekers, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson announced today.

At least 110 of these individuals accepted offers by 27 participating employers and today earn as much as \$26 an hour as welders, assemblers, CAD designers and other professions, according to survey responses from 54 participating employers in the weeks following the Career Expo.

“The Milwaukee Manufacturing Career Expo represents an important milestone in our ongoing effort to address the skills gap and connect qualified job seekers with available openings in key sectors such as manufacturing,” Secretary Newson said. “Under Governor Walker’s leadership, we took the job fair concept to new levels with the Career Expo, even as we have expanded the number of job fairs being held throughout the state. We look forward to continuing to work with job creators in the Milwaukee region and around the state on initiatives to address the skills gap and support the creation of good-paying jobs.”

Of 54 employers who responded to follow-up surveys in the weeks after the Career Expo:

- 49 employers followed up with 479 job seekers; 48 interviewed 368 job seekers.
- 43 agreed that pre-screening activities were beneficial, and 30 were satisfied with the number of qualified applicants (the other 13 expressed no opinion).
- 30 employers extended 124 offers; 27 ultimately hired 110 individuals.
- 8 employers requested additional contacts by Business Services Representatives for additional services to help recruit and find qualified job seekers.

As one example of the positive feedback received from employers about the event:

"We were very impressed by the quality and volume of job seekers at the Milwaukee Manufacturing Career Expo," said Lisa Juhlke, Area Vice President at Randstad. "As a result of this event, Randstad scheduled interviews with over 60 candidates and has already begun hiring production workers, filling a critical need for our business. This event was invaluable in providing a venue where we could meet work-ready, skilled job seekers and we look forward to continuing to participate in these events in the future."

(more)

Secretary Newson emphasized the success of the event extends beyond the number follow-up interviews and job offers, as the event and pre-screening were targeted heavily toward individuals from the region who were unemployed and collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits. In all, about 1,800 job seekers took part in the Career Expo at State Fair Park. Additionally, many of the approximately 70 participating employers had been experiencing the effects of the skills gap firsthand, having jobs to fill but not qualified individuals to fill the positions.

DWD piloted an innovative screening process to target job seekers who identified manufacturing skills or background and prepare job seekers with an up-to-date resume and coaching on interviewing for a job with employers. Employers, in turn, had to show they had jobs to fill in order to take part.

“Through the Career Expo, we connected job seekers from Milwaukee and communities across the region with good-paying jobs, and we helped area job creators fill their labor market needs at the same time,” Secretary Newson said. “The successes we’ve identified through the survey results thus far are just the beginning. We look forward to replicating the career expo concept in regions across the state while we continue to advance the Governor’s Transform Milwaukee initiative to build the economy in Milwaukee as well.”

In May, Governor Walker announced Transform Milwaukee, a \$100 million initiative to rebuild the city’s workforce, strengthen its manufacturing sector and in doing so, revitalize neighborhoods. The collaborative effort involves DWD, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority and the Department of Children and Families, working with the City of Milwaukee and private foundations.