
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 11, 2012

CONTACT: DWD Communications, 608-266-2722

On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/WIWorkforce>

On Twitter: @WIWorkforce

State Showcases Training Success During Manufacturing Month

DWD, regional partners collaborate on innovative ways to advance opportunity, fill employers' needs

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today said Manufacturing Month provides an opportunity to highlight regional training strategies that are helping job seekers gain the skills that manufacturers are seeking to grow their business and advance Wisconsin's economy.

"Under Governor Walker's leadership, we continue to pursue innovative ideas to connect job seekers to new opportunities, particularly in the manufacturing sector," Secretary Newson said. "At the same time, we want to recognize the innovative practices that are already helping to bridge the manufacturing skills gap in Wisconsin. We applaud these efforts and congratulate the workforce development boards, technical colleges and other DWD partners for these successes."

Secretary Newson cited the following examples of regional best-practices that are currently in place:

Southeast: The Southeast Wisconsin Workforce Development Area, in partnership with area employers and Gateway Technical College, developed a 14-week CNC Machine Operator boot camp to prepare students to become CNC Machine Operators and develop the necessary soft skills to gain or retain employment. To date, 88 percent of participants have successfully completed the program and obtained employment in the occupation. Sixty-four participants have completed the program since 2011.

Milwaukee area: The Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB), working in concert with employers, WRTP-Big Step, Milwaukee Area Technical College, other education providers, and the city of Milwaukee, developed a manufacturing partnership program to match Milwaukee-area job seekers with job openings available at Milwaukee manufacturing employers in the area. MAWIB assessed employer needs, recruited and evaluated potential job seekers, provided customized training options, and worked to retain participants who were placed at local employers.

Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington: The Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington (WOW) Workforce Development Board coordinated with Waukesha County Technical College and Moraine Park Technical College to provide 3 CNC Training boot camps earlier this year to prepare participants for work at local manufacturers. A total of 27 individuals completed the boot camps and earned a stackable credential, with 14 individuals finding work at local manufacturers to date. The boot camps provided a minimum of 288 hours of instruction and 10 technical college credits, with successful participants receiving a CNC operator certificate documenting skills attained.

Bay Area: The Bay Area Workforce Development Board and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College collaborated with Marinette Marine to provide employee orientation and basic skills training for 618 new employees hired by Marinette Marine, which is currently manufacturing a number of Littoral Combat Ships under a contract with the United States Navy. The Bay Area Workforce Development Board also provided remedial skills training for more than 1,000 incumbent employees in consultation with Marinette Marine to enhance their skills. The funding for the training was provided by an Industry Sector Partnership grant awarded by DWD.

(more)

North Central: The North Central Workforce Development Board, working collaboratively with Nicolet Area Technical College and the Grow North Manufacturers Consortium, has developed the Heavy Metal Tour for eighth-grade youth in central Wisconsin. Currently, nine school districts are participating, with 340 students signed up to enroll in the Gold Collar Careers program, tour local technical college manufacturing labs and visit local metal and plastic manufacturing employers. The purpose of the program is to encourage students to consider manufacturing as a positive career option.

Northwest: The Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board along with community partners are hosting a series of events during which job opportunities within the manufacturing sector are promoted to high school guidance counselors and other school district staff. The Fall Counselor Workshop in Siren, on October 5th, will include presentations on "Addressing the Skills Gap" and a tour of the Nexen Group, Inc. facility. On October 17th in Ashland, tours of H-Windows and C. G. Bretting Manufacturing will be given to school district representatives. The goal of these events is to promote manufacturing as a viable career in Wisconsin. Additionally there will be a Manufacturing Summit for employers on October 31st.

West Central: The West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board is working with local manufacturers, education and economic development stakeholders to plan a Manufacturing Training Academy that will provide an opportunity for workers laid off from the Polaris plant closing to receive skills training that will prepare them for work at local manufacturing employers. The Workforce Development Board will partner to develop a training curriculum that meets hiring employers' labor needs. Once developed, this model can be replicated to serve the skill needs of other manufacturers and unemployed or laid-off workers throughout the workforce development area.

Western: The Western Workforce Development Board is working with EMMA, the Equipment and Metal Manufacturing Association, to promote manufacturing to high schools. EMMA recently held a manufacturing expo and robotics demonstration that introduced high school instructors to the skills needed for advanced manufacturing. The WDB helping EMMA identify best practices in STEM education for future implementation in western Wisconsin.

Southwest: The Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board worked with Blackhawk Technical College to offer a welding boot camp providing 175 hours of instruction in gas metal arc welding and 50 hours of instruction in blueprint reading during the summer of 2012. Of the 9 participants in the boot camp, all received a welding certificate and 7 entered employment in a relevant field.

Governor Walker is proclaiming October 2012 as Manufacturing Month in Wisconsin. Secretary Newson this week cited several new manufacturing-related initiatives, including:

- Manufacturing Day: Wisconsin will join several other states throughout to celebrate Manufacturing Day on Friday, October 5. Manufacturing employers, training centers and other facilities are hosting open house and other events for students and the general public. For more information, visit www.mfgday.com.
- The Job Center of Wisconsin website now has a specialty page with links to manufacturing training and other resources: <https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/Manufacturing>. The page was developed in collaboration with key manufacturing employers.
- The Waukesha County Business Alliance is providing executive oversight for the new Dream It. Do It. program in Wisconsin, a collaborative campaign to open students' eyes to good-paying, high-tech opportunities in Wisconsin. Dream It. Do It. is part of a national recruitment sponsored by the National Association of Manufacturers, and Wisconsin joins 19 other states in implementing it. For more information, visit: <http://dreamitdoitwi.com/>

Note to News Media: For more information or to write about any of these strategies or initiatives, please contact the DWD Communications Office at 608-266-2722.