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DWD Secretary Newson Visits Greenheck Fan Corporation, Cites Youth Apprenticeship as Pathway to Manufacturing Careers

At Manufacturing Month event, Secretary highlights role of school-to-work programs in economic growth

SCHOFIELD – During a visit today to Greenheck Fan Corporation, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson described Greenheck Fan as a strong partner in the state's Youth Apprenticeship program preparing a new generation of skilled workers for Greenheck Fan and other manufacturers throughout Wisconsin.

"Youth Apprenticeship provides opportunities for hundreds of Wisconsin youth to develop skills that are in demand by employers, including manufacturers like Greenheck Fan Corporation," Secretary Newson said. "Under Governor Walker's leadership, we support approaches like Youth Apprenticeship that prepare students for opportunities that job creators make available under Wisconsin's improving economy."

The state's Youth Apprenticeship program enrolled nearly 1,700 students for the 2011 - 2012 school year, including 296 youth apprentices who were enrolled in a manufacturing-focused youth apprenticeship. Youth Apprenticeship combines traditional classroom instruction with work experience and vocational instruction resulting in technical college credit.

At Greenheck Fan Corporation, 15 youth apprentices have been trained since 2001, including a youth apprentice who is currently enrolled in the program.

Secretary Newson's visit coincided with Manufacturing Month, which Governor Walker proclaimed for the month of October. DWD is coordinating promotional efforts for the month with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, and the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Currently, nearly 450,000 workers in Wisconsin are employed in the manufacturing sector, earning an average wage 20% higher than the average weekly wage for all workers.

Secretary Newson also noted examples of manufacturing-related best practices that leverage the Youth Apprenticeship program to support skilled workers:

- **Second Chance Partners:** This southeastern Wisconsin-based program locates education centers in partnering manufacturing employers, creating a close linkage between classroom instruction and the student's work experience.
- **Cardinal Manufacturing:** This program is operated by the Eleva-Strum School District in western Wisconsin. It offers students the opportunity to operate a small manufacturing business in partnership with local employers.