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**STATE OF WISCONSIN**  
  
Department of Workforce Development  
**Scott Walker, Governor**  
**Reginald J. Newson, Secretary**

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## **Secretary Newson Highlights Apprenticeship as Proven On-the-Job Training to Address Wisconsin's Skills Gap, Meet Employers' Needs**

*Employer, Tech College partners join in highlighting Apprenticeship as path to family-supporting jobs*

WAUSAU – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today highlighted a statewide education and outreach initiative to boost employer and job seeker participation in Wisconsin Apprenticeship, an award-winning program that has produced skilled workers to meet employers' needs for more than a century.

"Wisconsin's first-in-the-nation apprenticeship program has been a key component of the state's workforce strategy since 1911 and has adapted over time to meet changing industry needs," Secretary Newson said. "Today we are issuing a call to action for employers to consider apprenticeship as a way to fill their need for highly skilled and well trained workers, and we urge individuals to consider this program as a pathway to a good-paying career."

Highlights of the statewide outreach effort include:

- A "toolkit" of updated brochures, folders and educational materials for regional representatives to provide directly to employers explaining how apprenticeship can provide them with well-trained and loyal workers, which can make their businesses more productive.
- An educational video that speaks directly to employers about the benefits of apprenticeship with a brochure titled *The Top 10 Reasons to Train Apprentices*.
- Postcards, display ads for online and print that convey the value of Apprenticeship to employers.
- Outdoor ads targeting potential apprentices that will be on four billboards along highways in the Milwaukee, Madison, Wausau and Green Bay/Fox Valley regions during the month of May.
- Public-service announcements that inform audiences about the benefits of apprenticeship to both employers and potential apprentices.

During a visit to Northcentral Technical College, Secretary Newson underscored the important role technical colleges play in providing training, as well as employers in hiring apprentices and providing the on-the-job training. He was joined by NTC President Lori Weyers.

"Wisconsin has a skilled workforce shortage and Wisconsin's Technical Colleges are the solution," said NTC President Weyers. "Locally, NTC is committed to providing relevant educational opportunities in a variety of programs including our Apprenticeship programs. We are proud to work with local employers, the Department of Workforce Development and the Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards to ensure local apprentices have the skills needed to be successful in the workforce."

Representing employers was Donna Jones, a Process Control Engineer at Marshfield Door Systems, who began her career as an apprentice in training and today is active in the program administered by DWD.

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"Marshfield Door Systems would not be as successful as it is today if it were not for the apprenticeship program," Jones said. "To be a millwright and an electrician in our mill, you need to go through an apprenticeship program. Not only is it giving you the on-the-job training, but you're working with a journeyman, learning the skills, the skill sets your employer needs. Not only that, you learn safety and have respect for the equipment."

The apprenticeship has a distinct advantage for employers, Jones said.

"One thing I like about the apprenticeship program is you can train your apprentices around your industry, the skill set they need to learn," she said. "You can train *your* apprentice for what *you* need from that individual," she said. "That's what's really unique about the apprenticeship program. I'm 100% for the apprenticeship program."

Apprentices are enrolled for four to five years, increasing their wages as their skills develop. Apprentices graduate from the apprenticeship program with a nationally-recognized credential, providing employers with a highly-skilled, loyal workforce. Apprentices who graduate can find work in good-paying jobs. The average annual wage in manufacturing occupations is over \$51,400, more than \$10,000 above the average annual wage for all occupations in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's apprenticeship program was the first in the nation when it was signed into law in 1911. Since that time, Wisconsin has trained thousands of apprentices in a wide variety of occupations. Last year, the U.S. Department of Labor and the national Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship presented Wisconsin a National Registered Apprenticeship Trailblazer and Innovate Award.

In 2012, Wisconsin had 9,608 apprentices training in over 200 occupations, including 4,832 working in construction, 1,689 in industrial and manufacturing trades, and 3,087 in the service industry.

Even so, Secretary Newson noted that the outreach initiative is designed to engage even more employers to take advantage of the program and to help turn around a decline in employer participation that has been seen nationally and in Wisconsin over the past decade.

As part of Governor Walker's commitment to Wisconsin Apprenticeship, his 2013–15 budget proposal includes permanent state funding for Wisconsin's apprenticeship program and the Veterans in Piping program, a pre-apprenticeship training program for veterans that results in second-year apprentice status and guaranteed apprenticeship placement upon graduation.

DWD partnered with Laughlin Constable, a regional advertising agency and the primary vendor for the state Department of Tourism, to invest in the comprehensive education and outreach effort to build interest in the apprenticeship program.

For more information, visit [www.WisconsinApprenticeship.org](http://www.WisconsinApprenticeship.org).