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Lt. Governor Kleefisch, Secretary Newson Applaud Second Chance Partners on Innovative School-to-Work Model to Train Skilled Workers

Manufacturing-based program expanded to Green Bay in 2012; statewide effort planned

GREEN BAY – During a visit today to Lindquist Machine Corporation, Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson praised Second Chance Partners for Education as an effective school-to-work program that encourages high school students to consider careers in manufacturing. Second Chance Partners for Education provides a blend of classroom instruction and on-the-job training that results in students receiving both their high school degree and a Youth Apprenticeship certificate of completion.

“To successfully meet the skills gap, employers like Lindquist Machine Corporation, school districts, and workforce development agencies are collaborating to ensure that training opportunities are targeted at businesses that are hiring,” Lt. Governor Kleefisch said. “The Second Chance Partners program demonstrates the kind of creative and dynamic approach that Wisconsin needs to address the skills gap and prepare workers to succeed in the modern workforce.”

Second Chance Partners for Education, a certified Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program for well over a decade, specializes in engaging high school students who prefer a work-based learning environment to traditional classroom instruction and who excel in a manufacturing setting. The organization’s mission focuses on helping disengaged students graduate from high school while preparing them for meaningful careers or continued education to ultimately lead productive lives.

Generac Power Systems launched Second Chance Partners for Education in 1996 to bolster the YA manufacturing program. Today, the YA Second Chance Partners for Education program provides training and career opportunities to 145 juniors and seniors at 13 education centers in nine counties throughout southeastern Wisconsin, the Fox Valley and Green Bay area. The Green Bay education center opened in January 2012, marking the first site operated by Second Chance Partners for Education outside of southeastern Wisconsin. An additional site opened in Appleton in September 2012, with additional education centers planned for this fall. In addition to over 80 businesses, 36 high schools are involved in the remarkably successful collaborative effort.

Of all students enrolled, 90 percent successfully complete the program, and 60 percent succeed in entering the workforce immediately, the majority of them in manufacturing. The remaining graduates either enroll in post secondary education or advance to adult apprenticeship programs. With the education and training they received, some choose to enter the military and serve their country.

To help address the skills and knowledge gap, DWD this year approved an expansion of the Second Chance Partners for Education, allowing it to operate as statewide YA Consortium and work directly with schools throughout the state. The expanded role in educating and training students will facilitate program management and help leverage additional partnerships with local manufacturers, school districts and technical colleges.

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In addition, DWD is giving school districts the option of working with more than one YA consortium. With the added flexibility, districts can retain existing partnerships with local YA consortia, but also use the unique and highly successful Second Chance alternative that immerses students in a learning environment where they can excel and earn their high school diploma while gaining work experience and job skills.

"DWD is focused on solutions that increase positive outcomes through innovation, and Second Chance Partners for Education has continually demonstrated its success," Secretary Newson said. "We look forward to working together with Second Chance Partners for Education to bring its model to even more communities in Wisconsin."

"Second Chance Partners for Education is making a significant difference in the lives of disengaged students in northern Wisconsin. This innovative approach to education is preparing students for productive lives and meaningful careers, while providing manufacturers an opportunity to teach and engage a new generation of skilled workers. We are pleased to have the support of Lt. Governor Kleefisch and Secretary Newson, and we are eager to engage more students in northern Wisconsin and across the state in our proven work-based learning model." - Stephanie Borowski, President, Second Chance Partners for Education

Second Chance Partners for Education Success Stories

Brady Hart was a student at Green Bay Preble High School, where he felt the traditional high school setting wasn't working. He entered the Second Chance program and quickly realized there were many positives not available in a typical high school, including being paid for work and applying his work experience to the classroom instruction he receives.

Since enrolling, Brady has learned significantly from each work placement, gaining skills in welding and CNC machining. The Second Chance program has helped Brady to plan for the future, and he now plans to attend Northeast Wisconsin Technical College upon graduation to become a certified welder. He credits Second Chance Partners for Education with giving him direction and a positive outlook through the accountability required of all program participants.