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## **Secretary Newson Highlights Governor Walker's Commitment to Apprenticeship, Other Workforce Investments**

*Biennial budget signed by Governor Walker restores state funding of on-the-job training program*

PEWAUKEE – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today highlighted Governor Walker's commitment to apprenticeship training. The 2013-15 budget signed by Governor Walker restores state funding for the program to help address the skills gap for employers, provide employment opportunities for jobs seekers and keep Wisconsin's economy moving forward.

"For more than a century, Wisconsin Apprenticeship has equipped thousands of Wisconsinites with skills for family supporting jobs in the trades," Secretary Newson said. "In recent years, federal dollars supported the program, but those funds have dwindled and put the program's future at risk. The 2013-15 budget that Governor Walker recently signed has restored state funding for apprenticeship. The program is one component of his \$100 million workforce development agenda."

Speaking to the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council, Secretary Newson noted that since 2003, Wisconsin has used federal dollars to support adult apprenticeship training. Facing budget deficits in succeeding years, the state came to rely more on federal dollars for apprenticeship training. However, the 2013-15 state budget commits the state to funding the program, starting with \$1.8 million in the second year of the biennium.

"Because of prudent budget decisions Governor Walker made last session, Wisconsin's fiscal house is in order, allowing us to fund apprenticeship training and other workforce programs," Secretary Newson said.

"Apprenticeship is one of our best kept secrets, and now that funding is assured, we want to encourage more employers and workers to take advantage of this tried and true, on-the-job training program."

Secretary Newson addressed the council at the Southeast Wisconsin Carpentry Training Center. On average each year, nearly 10,000 apprentices learn skills in manufacturing, construction and service industry trades. Roughly half of the apprentices are in construction trades. Hit hard during the recession, construction is adding jobs with a recent surge in home building.

Examples of Governor Walker's other workforce development investments include:

- \$15 million in worker training grants as part of the Wisconsin Fast Forward initiative;
- New, cutting-edge Labor Market Information System providing real-time data, focused on skills to better match job seekers to jobs;
- \$12.1 million over the biennium for the ACT, WorkKeys and the precursor Explore and Plan tests to help parents and teachers advise youth in choosing career pathways, and
- \$5 million in increased state aid to Wisconsin technical colleges, DWD training partners.