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## **Apprenticeship Numbers Up as More Employers, Job Seekers See On-the-Job Training Program as Skills Gap Solution, Proven Path to Good Jobs**

*Secretary Newson: Attend Apprenticeship Conference, Jan. 26-28, in Wisconsin Dells, learn more*

MADISON – With 26<sup>th</sup> Biennial Apprenticeship Conference roughly one week away, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson said today more employers and workers are beginning to see apprenticeship training as an answer to the skills gap and a pathway to family-supporting jobs.

"Wisconsin's economy is improving, employers are hiring and increasingly taking advantage of our Wisconsin Apprenticeship program so that workers have the right skills," Secretary Newson said. "The unemployed and underemployed also see this proven on-the-job training program as one way to get a good job. The numbers last year show it. We saw growth in all three major trade sectors, construction, manufacturing and services, the best we've growth we've seen in three years."

Overall, new apprentice contracts last year increased by 31 percent compared to the previous year and by 56 percent compared to three years ago. The increases by trade sectors were:

- **Construction** – new apprentices, 1,570, the biggest increase, 51 percent compared to 2012 new contracts and 73 percent compared to new contracts three years ago.
- **Industrial/Manufacturing** – new apprentices, 581, a 9 percent increase compared to the 2012 new contracts and 75 percent compared to new contracts in 2010.
- **Service** – New apprentices, 1,199, a 22 percent increase compared to the 2012 new contracts and a 29 percent increase compared to 2010 figure.

In noting these and other increases, Secretary Newson urged anyone interested in apprenticeship training – employers, workers and job seekers, current and future – to attend the 26<sup>th</sup> Biennial Apprenticeship Conference, *The Apprenticeship Solution: Meeting the Workforce Challenge*, January 26 – 28, in Wisconsin Dells. The three-day conference at the Chula Vista Resort includes a special Apprentice Expo for high school students.

Nearly 600 students from schools in central and southern Wisconsin are expected to attend the Apprentice Expo to get a close-up look at the state-of-the-art, challenging and high-paying career opportunities Wisconsin Apprenticeship can offer. More than 25 training partners including unions, employers, utilities and merit shop organizations will host hands-on, interactive displays for more than 50 occupations involve apprenticeship to train skilled workers. The occupations cover construction, manufacturing, utility, service and agriculture sectors.

The conference program includes nationally recognized speakers Anirban Basu, President and CEO of SAGE Policy Group and Mark Breslin, founder and CEO of Breslin Strategies. Dan Ariens, President and CEO of the Ariens Company will also speak at the conference, co-sponsored by DWD and the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council.

For conference details and registration, visit: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/conference/default.htm>.