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Secretary Newson Opens Apprenticeship Conference, Welcomes Partners, Urges More Employers, Workers to Participate in Proven Training Program

Secretary greets students at Apprentice Expo showcasing rewarding careers in skilled trades

WISCONSIN DELLS – In opening remarks at the 26th Biennial Apprenticeship Conference, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today welcomed apprenticeship partners and urged more employers and workers to participate in the tried and true, on-the-job training program.

Registrations in advance approached nearly 500 for the conference *The Apprenticeship Solution: Meeting the Workforce Challenge*, today and Tuesday, at the Chula Vista Resort. Nearly 600 students from high schools in central and southern Wisconsin were expected for a special Apprentice Expo providing a close-up look at the state-of-the-art, challenging and high-paying career opportunities the Wisconsin Apprenticeship program can offer.

"With Wisconsin's improving economy, employers need skilled workers, and the apprenticeship program can help them train workers on the job to meet their specific needs," Secretary Newson said. "Apprenticeship also offers a new generation of workers career paths to family-supporting jobs in the skilled trades. Up until a year ago, apprenticeship was one of Wisconsin's best kept secrets. Now participation is increasing, and we want to see more employers and workers take advantage of this proven training program. It's helping us build a workforce to move Wisconsin forward."

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.

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 more about Wisconsin Apprenticeship, visit: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/>.