
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 15, 2014

CONTACTS: DWD Communications, 608-266-2722; Mark Maley, WEDC, 608-210-6767

On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/WIWorkforce>

On Twitter: @WIWorkforce

Growing our Economy: Walker Administration Teams Up to Help Madison Employer Add 286 Jobs & Train 250 Workers to Fill Openings

WI Economic Development Corp., DWD offer tax credits and training grants to expand Madison location

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Secretary Reed Hall today toured SPi Global's Madison call center. SPi Global Madison, also known as Laserwords, provides call center services for a Fortune 200 client selling internet and television packages across the United States. Through growth of existing and introduction of new clients the company is dramatically expanding its Madison presence following incentives by WEDC and DWD to add close to 300 workers to its 40-employee location.

Highlights of the incentives include:

- WEDC awarded Laserwords \$375,000 in economic development tax credits to create 286 new jobs and retain 40 existing jobs in Madison. In addition, Laserwords is investing \$1.2 million in capital improvements to its facility.
- DWD awarded Laserwords a Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) grant of \$198,026 to train 250 new employees at Wisconsin inbound call center. Workers receive inbound sales training, assessment of customer issues, and utilization of call center management technology. As new employees of Laserwords, trainees will have the opportunity to advance onward from entry-level positions, paying from \$11 to \$30 an hour based on experience.
- Other partners in the recruitment process include the Urban League of Greater Madison and local staffing agencies.

"The Laserwords story is an example of how economic development, workforce development and other partners are helping Wisconsin's private sector create jobs and moving our state's economy forward," said DWD Secretary Newson said. "Through a nimble and responsive approach to job growth and economic development, the Walker administration is advancing an agenda from which Wisconsin communities and families will benefit for years to come."

"WEDC is pleased that Laserwords is demonstrating its commitment to Madison and the State of Wisconsin by embarking on this expansion," said Reed Hall, secretary and CEO of WEDC, the state's lead economic development organization. "Their decision to remain here and bring nearly 300 jobs to the region over the next three years is a vote of confidence in the Wisconsin economy."

During today's tour, Secretaries Newson and Hall toured the facility and met with Laserwords staff, including workers who have been trained under the Wisconsin Fast Forward grant and have already begun working for the company.

Applications recently closed for the second round of WFF training grants, which made up to \$7.5 million available to train workers in manufacturing, construction, transportation, financial services, information technology, and health care occupations.

Governor Walker recently signed legislation to invest an additional \$35.4 million in the Wisconsin Fast Forward-Blueprint for Prosperity initiative. The new funds will address waiting lists in the Wisconsin Technical College System, support training opportunities for high school pupils, and enhance employment opportunities for workers with disabilities.