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Dan Treichel Receives Wisconsin Apprenticeship Award *River Falls Municipal Utilities Lineman Honored at State Conference*

Madison – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman today addressed the 23rd biennial Apprenticeship Conference and Expo held in Madison. She highlighted the state's apprenticeship program and reported that adult apprenticeship opportunities are increasing as a result of the economic and workforce development initiatives advanced by Governor Doyle.

"Wisconsin's adult apprenticeship program is a sure pathway to a quality workforce," Secretary Gassman said. "The program is one of the reasons our workforce remains second to none. It has been a model to other states since its inception nearly a century ago, first in the nation. Whether you're a recent high school graduate, a veteran returning from active duty, or someone searching for a more rewarding career, the adult apprenticeship program can put you on the path to jobs with good pay and benefits in the skilled trades."

In addition to economic and workforce development initiatives in the Governor's budget, Secretary Gassman stated that DWD will increase efforts this year to reach out to employers and encourage their participation in the adult apprenticeship program to further increase enrollment. "The success of this program is due in large part to the employers who recognize the value of the program and provide training and work opportunities for apprentices," Secretary Gassman said. "We applaud them for supporting the apprenticeship program and for helping to build the state's future workforce."

During an awards luncheon, several individuals and employers received honors. Three people received the Apprentice Leadership Award:

Dan Treichel, a lineworker at River Falls Municipal Utilities, received the state Apprentice Leadership Award at Conference and Expo.

Carl Gaulke, general manager of the River Falls Municipal Utilities, said Treichel was the first apprentice the utility hired. In nominating Treichel, he said he could not be more pleased with the decision to enter the program and hire Treichel.

"Dan is a good example to all of our electric line crew," Gaulke wrote in nominating Treichel for the award. "He was our first-ever apprentice and has more than exceeded our expectations. You couldn't find a finer example of a successful apprenticeship leader than Dan Treichel."

Two more individuals also were honored with the Apprentice Leadership Award:

- Alaina Gomez, a single mother from Milwaukee, who excelled as an apprentice in plumbing and now works for J.M. Brennan installing and maintaining medical gas systems at All Saints Hospital in Racine.
- Ivan Milanovic, a Serbian refugee, who overcame a language barrier to excel as an apprentice electrician and now works for Town & Country Electric, a division of Faith Technologies, Inc., Appleton;

Three employers received the Apprenticeship Program Sponsor Award: H.J. Pertzborn Plumbing & Fire Protection Corporation, Madison; Manitowoc Crane Group, Manitowoc, and Appearances at Alma's, Menomonie.

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South Central WI Construction Laborers JAC and Zignego Company, Inc., Daniel A. Zignego, Controller won the Affirmative Action Award.

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Secretary Gassman said an increase in adult apprenticeship enrollment last year was another sign of Wisconsin’s growing economy. Enrollment hit a peak of 13,000 in 2001, but dropped below 10,000 following the recession. Enrollment increased last year and is about exceed 10,000, due mainly the state’s construction boom. Construction apprentices now total 5,928, up 220 from a year ago, including 114 minorities and women. Adult apprentices typically start at \$15 to \$16 an hour, about half of what successful apprentices will later earn as journeypersons.

To become an apprentice in most trades, an individual must be at least 18 years of age, have a high school diploma or equivalent, and meet minimum test scores in math, reading and comprehension.

For more information about the adult apprenticeship program, visit the department’s website: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dws/appr/default.htm>.