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Secretary Gassman Announces \$58,000 in Grants to Train 245 Workers in Sturgeon Bay

Bay Shipbuilding & Palmer Johnson Yachts to Receive Workforce Advancement Training Grants to Train Workers for Highly-Skilled Jobs of Tomorrow

STURGEON BAY – On behalf of Governor Jim Doyle, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman announced two grants today totaling nearly \$58,000 to help two major Sturgeon Bay employers train 245 workers in welding and metal fabrication.

The Workforce Advancement Training Grants from the Wisconsin Technical College System were awarded to Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC), which will provide training for workers from Bay Shipbuilding Company and Palmer Johnson Yachts. Secretary Gassman made the announcements during visits to each of the companies in Door County today.

“These grants will help Bay Shipbuilding and Palmer Johnson upgrade workers’ skills and meet training needs in welding – a skill in demand for many manufacturers around the state,” Secretary Gassman said. “Through workforce advancement training, our technical colleges are able to create a worker-training program that meets the needs of our businesses and helps train workers for the highly-skilled jobs of tomorrow. If we are to have a strong Wisconsin economy, we must continue these investments in job training and workforce development.”

A **\$31,008** grant will enable NWTC to provide welding training, blueprint reading-measurement training, and supervisory training to 187 welders, journey workers, and supervisors at **Bay Shipbuilding Company**. The training is expected to increase manufacturing efficiency, increase wages for employees, and reduce employee turnover by 10 percent. A division of Manitowoc Marine Group, Bay Shipbuilding specializes in large ship construction projects and has 100 years of shipbuilding and ship repair expertise. The company has flourished in the past five years, growing in revenue by 145 percent and increasing staff by 56 percent. They have plans to continue growing staff and revenue, as well as increasing production, adding equipment, and updating facilities – all plans that require qualified, skilled laborers, a need this training grant will help meet.

A **\$26,581** grant will enable NWTC to provide training on welding procedures, metal fabrication, and aluminum welding techniques to 58 employees of **Palmer Johnson Yachts** – all areas where the company has identified needs. The training is expected to enhance weld accuracy, increase welding certification, and increase worker wages. Palmer Johnson Yachts began as a wooden fishing boat builder more than 80 years ago and today is one of the world’s leading builders of semi-custom sports yachts. The company has recently expanded, purchasing three new buildings and investing more than half a million dollars in equipment. Now they need to provide employees with additional training in welding to continue growing.

Workforce Advancement Training grants are awarded to technical colleges throughout the state to work with local businesses and upgrade worker skills and productivity for Wisconsin workers and businesses – providing improved job security, increased career opportunities, and support for regional workforce and economic development efforts. The budget Governor Doyle proposed to the Legislature quadruples investments in workforce advancement training, from \$2 million to \$8 million, to help Wisconsin’s technical colleges train an additional 36,000 workers. This investment ensures that Wisconsin is creating highly-skilled workers prepared to fill the jobs of tomorrow and that the state remains competitive in the economy of the future.

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