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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, November 1, 2007

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## Secretary Gassman Highlights Governor Doyle's Budget Investment in Youth Apprenticeship

### *Budget Doubles Funding For Successful Apprenticeship Program for High School Students*

HARTFORD – During a visit to Helgesen Industries in Hartford today, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman said Governor Jim Doyle's budget investment in the Youth Apprenticeship program will not only help improve skilled employment opportunities for high school students, but also help employers meet their future workforce needs.

The Governor's budget doubles funding for the successful youth apprenticeship program to \$2.2 million by the second year of the biennium, allowing as many as 3,600 juniors and seniors statewide to participate in the program that has created strong partnerships between local schools and businesses.

"Since Youth Apprenticeship began 15 years ago, over 10,000 students have graduated from the program, and many are now mentoring a new generation of apprentices," Secretary Gassman said. "The Governor's investment will open the door of opportunity to more high school students wanting to become apprentices and more employers searching for new talent and future workers as baby boomers approach retirement."

Nearly nine out of 10 Youth Apprenticeship graduates receive job offers from their employers when they graduate from high school. Apprenticeship graduates who go on to college or technical school generally do better than their peers. The program is also very popular with employers; virtually every one of them highly recommends the program.

Secretary Gassman made the comments during a visit to Helgesen Industries in Hartford today. There, she met current and former youth apprentices working for the custom sheet metal fabricating company. Helgesen has participated in the YA program since it began in 1992.

Hartford is part of the CESA 6 Youth Apprenticeship partnership. Last year, the CESA 6 partnership received a \$55,661 state grant, and had 102 students and 81 employers participating. The community of Hartford has 11 students working at nine different work sites in five program areas: auto technician, drafting/mechanical design, information technology, manufacturing/machining, and welding.

Last Friday, Governor Doyle signed a state budget that ensures quality education, makes health care more accessible and affordable, creates jobs, and maintains fiscal responsibility. Besides youth apprenticeship funding, the budget also funds the UW's Growth Agenda, invests \$32 million in financial aid, funds public schools, and moves forward on the Wisconsin Covenant.