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Secretary Gassman Announces \$67,000 Training Grant, Funding for Northcentral Tech to Boost Skills of 532 Workers at Three Manufacturers

Labor Secretary highlights Governor's workforce agenda to move Wisconsin forward

SCHOFIELD – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today presented Northcentral Technical College a Workforce Advancement Training grant of \$67,303, funding to upgrade the skills of 532 workers at three manufacturers, boost production and increase their competitive advantage.

“This is Governor Doyle’s Grow Wisconsin plan in action, investing in people, growing our economy and creating jobs,” Secretary Gassman said. “With this grant, Northcentral Technical College can improve the skills of 532 workers and help their employers, Crystal Finishing, MarquipWardUnited and Volm Companies, increase production and reduce costs.”

As part of his Grow Wisconsin plan, Governor Doyle created the Workforce Advancement Training (WAT) grant program in the 2005-2007 budget with \$2 million, and it has provided training to nearly 30,000 incumbent workers employed by businesses throughout the state. With the current budget, he provided \$5 million for WAT grants over the two year period.

In a visit to Crystal Finishing Systems, Secretary Gassman presented the grant to Northcentral Technical College (NTC), described the training workers will receive, and highlighted additional workforce agenda items in Grow Wisconsin – The Next Steps, the Governor’s latest plan to build on the success of earlier investments in workforce and economic development.

“Despite the major economic difficulty at the national level, the Wisconsin economy is holding its own, due to investments we have made under Governor Doyle’s leadership,” Secretary Gassman said. “In the months ahead, we must take the next steps to keep Wisconsin moving forward and ensure a first-rate workforce.”

The WAT grant she presented will provide the following training:

- **Crystal Finishing Systems, Inc., Schofield** – NTC will provide training in lean manufacturing principles, customer service and team building to 337 workers at Crystal Finishing Systems, a diversified manufacturer and supplier of extruded aluminum products. The training will provide employees opportunities for job advancement and help the company achieve long-term viability, profitability and competitiveness.
- **MarquipWardUnited, Phillips** – NTC will provide training in Critical Core Manufacturing Skills for 100 workers at MarquipWardUnited, a global manufacturer of high-speed, corrugating, finishing and sheeting machinery for the corrugated box and paper converting industries. The training will prepare them for job advancement as a third of workforce at the Phillips location retires within the next decade.
- **Volm Companies, Inc., Antigo** – NTC will provide 95 employees skills and knowledge needed to increase productivity and improve market competitiveness. Training will focus on lean manufacturing practices, greater supervisory skills and a safer work environment. Volm is a major manufacturer of food packaging products.

