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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Governor Doyle Announces Additional Unemployment Benefits**

### ***Moves swiftly to ensure extended benefits for Wisconsin workers***

MADISON – Governor Doyle today announced additional extended unemployment benefits for Wisconsin workers who have exhausted their benefits, both their regular Wisconsin benefits and the federal extended benefits approved last summer.

“With our nation in an economic crisis, Washington has approved additional unemployment benefits, and I am moving swiftly to see that Wisconsin workers who are eligible for additional assistance receive these benefits without delay,” Governor Doyle said. “I am directing the Department of Workforce Development to expedite claims for these individuals to help them get back on their feet as we work together to strengthen the economy. I want to thank our members in Congress for providing this much needed assistance to Wisconsin’s working families.”

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) took immediate steps to access the additional Federal Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits for workers who have exhausted their regular benefits, payable up to 26 weeks, and the federal extended benefits approved last summer, which added up to 13 weeks of benefits.

Under the second round of extended benefits, unemployed workers in Wisconsin can receive up to an additional seven weeks of extended benefits. An individual may receive the additional benefits if he or she has or had a prior regular UI claim benefit year that ended on or after May 1, 2007. Benefits are payable for the week beginning Nov. 23, 2008, and may continue through the week ending August 29, 2009.

The new law provides for two tiers of extended benefits, depending on a state’s unemployment rate. With a seasonally adjusted rate of 5.1 percent, Wisconsin is in the first tier, entitling workers who have exhausted all benefits additional assistance of up to seven weeks. States with an unemployment rate above 6 percent are in the second tier, providing benefits up to an additional 13 weeks.

DWD will contact by mail all individuals who may be eligible for up to seven more weeks of extended benefits. Potentially eligible individuals may now file an initial application. To speed the process, they are encouraged to file their claim online, at [www.ucclaim-wi.org](http://www.ucclaim-wi.org), a safe, secure Internet site. If people don’t have a computer with Internet access at home, they can use a computer at their local public library or a Job Center.

They also can file a claim by phone and using Wisconsin’s automatic Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system. The toll-free number is 800-822-5246. Claims can be filed using the online site or IVR system at the following times: Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Claims specialists will be available to provide assistance by phone during extended business hours, starting Monday, Nov. 24. The extended hours are: Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to noon.

Regular UI benefits are limited to 26 weeks with the maximum payment of \$355 per week.