

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
Secretary



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

201 East Washington Avenue

P.O. Box 7946

Madison, WI 53707-7946

Telephone: (608) 266-3131

Fax: (608) 266-1784

<http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/>

e-mail: dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 26, 2009

CONTACT: Dick Jones, Agency Liaison, 608-267-4780

Secretary Gassman: Governor's Budget Makes Tough Choices, Protects Hardworking Families, Sets Course for Growth

State Labor Secretary salutes workers, employers in Sheboygan Falls, Manitowoc stops

MANITOWOC – Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman said today Governor Doyle's budget preserves education, health care and public safety as top priorities, spares middle class families tax increases, and sets a course for recovery and growth in the midst of a prolonged, national economic crisis.

"The economic upheaval created at the national level demands hard choices and strong leadership," Secretary Gassman said. "Faced with an unprecedented deficit, Governor Doyle has offered a budget that confronts our problems, holds fast to what we value, and helps us emerge a stronger state. With this budget, we can protect investments in education and hard-fought gains in health care. We can maintain police and fire protection. Working together, we can create jobs and grow our economy."

Secretary Gassman discussed Governor Doyle's budget while visiting Curt G. Joa, Inc., in Sheboygan Falls, and Orion Energy Systems, Inc., in Manitowoc. During both stops, she saluted the workers and employers for their success in challenging economic times. The country's economic crisis, the worst since the Great Depression, left 45 states with budget deficits, a record \$5.7 billion gap in Wisconsin alone. Secretary Gassman said the Governor's budget makes \$2.2 billion in spending cuts and leaves a \$270 million balance at the end of the two-year budget cycle, the largest surplus in 10 years.

"The budget makes the largest cuts we've ever seen, and it rejects new spending for worthy programs," Secretary Gassman said. "Yet it protects working families hit hard by the recession, and it safeguards what is most essential, education, health care, and public safety. Furthermore, it puts to good use funding Wisconsin will receive under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This one-time funding will help Sheboygan Falls, Manitowoc and communities throughout the state share in America's economic recovery and growth."

At Orion Energy Systems, Secretary Gassman presented President & CEO Neal Verfuert a commendation from Governor Doyle congratulating the company for winning the Platts Global Energy Award and its contributions in energy conservation. Founded in 1996, the small venture-capital enterprise now employs 240 workers in helping industrial and commercial customers, many of them Fortune 500, reduce energy costs by 50 percent to 70 percent. Orion is among the emerging green industries that can help Wisconsin lead the nation in achieving energy efficiency and conservation goals as part of the recovery and reinvestment plan.

At Curt G. Joa in Sheboygan Falls, Secretary Gassman presented President Don Lammers with a commendation from Governor Doyle, honoring the leading manufacturer of paper production machinery for its nearly 70 years as a strong partner in the adult apprenticeship program. More than 100 individuals have completed apprenticeship training at Curt G. Joa. Since 1984, a total of 63 have earned journey status as machinists, millwrights and industrial electricians. Nine employees are currently in apprenticeship training.