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## **Secretary Gassman Highlights Governor's Workforce Initiatives, Awards Manufacturing Training Certificates at Milwaukee Gear**

### ***State Labor Secretary cites training investments as central to economic recovery, growth***

MILWAUKEE – Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman today awarded certificates to workers in a rigorous manufacturing training and said the \$5.89 million in workforce initiatives Governor Doyle announced recently will position Wisconsin for economic recovery and growth.

In a ceremony at the Milwaukee Gear Company, Secretary Gassman saluted workers in the Manufacturing Skill Standards Certification (MSSC) program. In 2006, Wisconsin became the first state to formally embrace the national training program, and Governor Doyle included additional funding for the MSSC effort last week as part of the worker training package.

"We must invest in training, now more than ever, to ensure a skilled workforce and economic growth in Wisconsin as our nation recovers from an economic crisis unprecedented in decades," Secretary Gassman said. "Manufacturing is our heritage and our future. The skills these workers are gaining will help Wisconsin remain a strong manufacturing state, leading the way as recovery and reinvestment efforts take hold and get the country moving forward again."

As part of his Grow Wisconsin – The Next Steps plan, Governor Doyle set a goal of having 40 percent of Wisconsin's manufacturing workers achieve MSSC standing by 2016. He began the effort three years ago with \$250,000, enabling DWD's partners, regional workforce development boards and the technical colleges, to develop training programs. The package announced last week includes an additional \$85,000.

The centerpiece of the package is a new effort that aligns training resources on a regional basis to meet the training needs identified by industry partnerships. The Governor directed nearly \$3 million to fund the effort, the Wisconsin Sector Strategies Initiative, a new approach to training that is driven by industry demand, rather than by existing training programs. Funded with federal dollars over two years, the package also includes:

- \$1.5 million for Opportunity Grants to help low-wage workers with only a high school education get short-term training at technical colleges, opening career pathways to better jobs in high demand occupations, such as advanced manufacturing and health care;
- \$300,000 for Skills Jump Start Grants to help individuals, who lack a high school diploma, complete their basic education, and at the same time, gain job skills for employment in high demand occupations; and
- \$700,000 for Emerging Industries Skills Partnership, continuing an initiative the Governor launched a year ago to meet the workforce needs in advanced manufacturing, biotechnology and renewable energy.

"Our country's economic crisis left the state with an unprecedented \$5.75 billion deficit," Secretary Gassman said. "With this package, and more important, the state budget he offered, Governor Doyle remains true to our priorities of investing in people, building strong families and communities. He is determined to protect what is most important to our recovery and well being, good schools for our children, health care for those who need it, police and fire protection for all communities, and the ability to grow our economy and create good jobs."