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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, June 13, 2011

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On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

DWD Secretary Baumbach Opens 25th Biennial Apprenticeship Conference and Centennial Celebration

Conference celebrates 100 years of apprenticeship in Wisconsin

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Scott Baumbach welcomed attendees and read a Proclamation from Governor Scott Walker at the opening session of the 25th Biennial Apprenticeship Conference and Centennial Celebration today, June 13.

The conference, which is jointly sponsored by DWD's Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards and the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council, runs through Tuesday, June 14 at Monona Terrace.

"DWD plays an important role in advancing Governor Walker's vision of creating an environment for 250,000 private sector jobs by 2015," said Secretary Baumbach. "To this end, a strong and vibrant apprenticeship program helps people gain valuable skills in the construction, manufacturing and service sectors. They can then apply these skills in family-supporting jobs that, ultimately, will move our state's economy forward."

In June 1911, Wisconsin became the first state in the nation to enact apprenticeship legislation. Wisconsin's law quickly became a model for other states and the entire nation. Since that time, the state has maintained a strong and successful partnership between employers, organized labor, the technical college system and the highly-motivated apprentices.

"We are already seeing positive results under the Governor's leadership. Secretary Baumbach continued. "Wisconsin has added nearly 25,000 private sector jobs this year, including the manufacturing sector. There is a definite demand for the highly-skilled workers who have completed apprenticeship training and have gone into journeyworker status."

Secretary Baumbach noted that today's apprenticeship system combines real employment with classroom instruction and on-the-job training. Wisconsin currently has about 8,000 registered apprentices training and working in some 200 occupations statewide. Approximately 2,000 registered apprenticeship programs are currently in place in Wisconsin.

With 1,645 employees, DWD works with employers to fill jobs, provides training and employment services to workers, enforces workers' rights, helps the developmentally challenged through its vocational rehabilitation programs and administers Unemployment Insurance benefits and Worker's Compensation issues.