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Secretary Newson: Governor Walker's Workforce Initiatives Invest in Workers, Address Skills Gap, Put Wisconsin on Path to Prosperity, Brighter Future

Congratulates Gateway on new training center, cites Governor's worker training plans

STURTEVANT – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today described Governor Walker's comprehensive workforce agenda, with over \$100 million to be invested in worker training, as the bold strategies Wisconsin needs to spur economic growth, create jobs and ensure a brighter future for the state.

"Governor Walker has offered a multi-faceted approach with a single purpose, to help Wisconsin and its workers move to the forefront of the most prosperous and innovative in the country," Secretary Newson said. "With the worker training investments and policy initiatives that he is including in his budget, we can effectively and successfully move beyond the skills gap and advance to a period of greater economic expansion and job growth."

Secretary Newson highlighted Governor Walker's workforce agenda as he joined Gateway Technical College in dedicating the SC Johnson integrated Manufacturing and Engineering Technology (iMET) Center in Sturtevant. Gateway has billed the center as the region's first flexible manufacturing training center, offering training for production occupations in demand, such as Computer Numerical Control machining, welding, metal fabrication and industrial robotics.

"Governor Walker's worker training package includes more funding for technical colleges and flexibility in using state resources to expand worker training," Secretary Newson said. "With our technical colleges, regional workforce boards and other strong partners and stakeholders, we have real opportunities to move Wisconsin forward."

Among the workforce items Secretary Newson highlighted were several at DWD, which he described as being the agency at the heart of the Governor's economic and workforce development strategies:

- \$15 million in state funds over the biennium for DWD grants to both public and private organizations to provide training to new and incumbent workers.
- Office of Skills Development at DWD to administer the training grants.
- New Labor Market Information System to track job vacancies and link unemployed workers to jobs that they are qualified to fill or to the training they need to become qualified.
- Over \$2 million for apprenticeships, the state's premiere on-the-job training program, including \$300,000 for pre-apprenticeship training for veterans who want to become welders in the piping industry.