
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, August 12, 2013

CONTACT: DWD Communications, 608-266-2722

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

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/WIWorkforce>

On Twitter: @WIWorkforce

Secretary Newson Congratulates Ocean Spray on Entering Apprenticeship Program, Urges Other Employers to Partner in Building Skilled Workforce

Employer, worker participation increasing as DWD promotes on-the-job training as skills gap solution

KENOSHA – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today congratulated Ocean Spray on entering the Registered Apprenticeship program and urged other employers to sponsor apprentices as one way to address the skills gap and ensure a skilled workforce through on-the-job training.

"Apprenticeship offers employers a great opportunity to partner with us in on-the-job training that meets their specific needs," Secretary Newson said. "It offers workers an opportunity to earn while they learn, equipping them with the latest skills and setting them on a pathway to rewarding careers. Apprenticeship is part of Governor Walker's comprehensive effort to ensure a highly skilled, well-trained workforce with over \$100 million in workforce investments."

Secretary Newson visited the Kenosha Ocean Spray plant, where he joined Plant Director Tim Peoples in signing a contract officially designating Ocean Spray as participating, Registered Apprenticeship employer. With the agreement, Ocean Spray will start by sponsoring three apprentices in Maintenance Technician Apprenticeship training with plans to add more apprentices in the future.

"Ocean Spray's ability to expand our markets and products is directly tied to our ability to find employees with the right skills," Peoples said. "We chose to start an apprenticeship program at our Kenosha plant to develop our workforce while providing growth opportunities."

Since April, DWD has been promoting apprenticeship as a path to family-supporting jobs for job seekers and workers and a way for employers to train workers and fill skilled jobs. The educational initiative has included videos on DWD website, billboard displays in major metro areas, public service announcements on TV stations, and a tool kit with informational flyers and brochures for current and future workers, primarily high school students exploring career options and pathways. DWD is also promoting apprenticeship on the Packer Radio Network, reaching potential apprentices and sponsoring employers during radio broadcasts of 20 games on 55 stations.

Wisconsin Apprenticeship combines on-the-job training with a journeyworker tailored to employers' specific skills needs, and classroom instruction, often at a technical college. Apprentices are enrolled for four to five years, increasing their wages as their skills develop. Apprentices graduate from the apprenticeship program with a nationally-recognized credential, providing employers with a highly-skilled, loyal workforce. Apprentices who graduate can find work in good-paying jobs. The average annual wage in manufacturing occupations is over \$51,400, more than \$10,000 above the average annual wage for all occupations in Wisconsin.

DWD partnered with Laughlin Constable, a regional advertising agency and the primary vendor for the state Department of Tourism, to invest in the comprehensive education and outreach effort to build interest in the apprenticeship program. From Jan. 1-June 30 this year, the DWD Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards has seen a 30 percent increase in new apprentices, to 1,383, over the same period last year. From April 1-June 30, the number of participating industrial employers has increased by 67 over the same three months in 2012.

For more information: www.WisconsinApprenticeship.org.