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Secretary Newson: Governor's Workforce Agenda Supports Workers, Job Creators

\$100 million investment to develop Wisconsin's workforce will target resources to in-demand careers

WAUKESHA – During a meeting today with private-sector business leaders, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today reaffirmed Governor Walker's commitment to address the need for skilled workers and pursue efforts that focus on demand-driven worker training in Wisconsin.

"Governor Walker's focus on private-sector job creation has helped Wisconsin employers create over 63,000 new opportunities for parents, neighbors, and others to support themselves and their families, and we are committed to helping employers create even more jobs," Secretary Newson said. "With \$100 million in additional state resources to develop the workforce over the current biennium, the Governor has is committed to equipping workers with the skills needed for jobs employers have available today."

Secretary Newson made his remarks during a visit with business executives and human resources managers at MRA – The Management Association in Waukesha. In addition to investments in the 2013-15 biennial budget, Governor Walker has proposed a series of workforce bills in the fall legislative session to further align DWD and workforce partners with programs that prepare workers for in-demand jobs.

Founded in 1901, MRA – The Management Association is a not-for-profit employer association headquartered in Waukesha, Wis., that serves more than 4,000 employers in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa, covering 800,000 employees throughout the world. MRA, one of the largest employer associations in the nation, helps its member organizations to thrive by creating powerful teams and safe, successful workplaces.

Highlights of the workforce bills include:

- The creation of an apprenticeship tuition reimbursement program for employers and workers of 25% of apprentice-related instruction up to \$1,000;
- An additional \$1 million over the biennium for Wisconsin's highly-regarded youth apprenticeship program, which will increase the number of students able to participate in the program;
- Increasing state funds by \$4 million in Wisconsin's vocational rehabilitation program, which will enable Wisconsin to leverage an additional \$14 million in federal funding to serve job seekers with disabilities;
- Technical Education Incentive Grants to encourage school districts to train students for in-demand occupations;
- Scholarships for top high school students who wish to attend a state technical college;
- An update to the Wisconsin Workers Win program, which enables Unemployment Insurance claimants to train with a local employer;
- Reforming Wisconsin's licensing regulations to enable potential licensees to take a licensing exam prior to the completion of their training; and
- An expansion of Wisconsin's Transitional Jobs Program to serve high-unemployment, high-poverty areas by connecting eligible unemployed individuals with transitional jobs that enable a job seeker to earn income and begin to develop work experience.