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Wednesday, February 14, 2007  
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## **Secretary Gassman highlights Governor's Workforce Agenda** *Visits Oconomowoc manufacturer, promotes job training through tech schools*

**Oconomowoc** – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman said today \$8 million in Governor Doyle's budget for job training, a four-fold increase, will improve the skills and productivity of thousands of workers, just as it did for employees of an Oconomowoc manufacturer.

"With this budget, Governor Doyle is continuing his winning Grow Wisconsin strategy and building on his first-term success in workforce and economic development," Secretary Gassman said. "Wisconsin's workforce is second to none, and the investment he is making in job training will help our workers maintain their competitive edge, gain new skills and succeed in today's global economy."

In his budget Tuesday, Governor Doyle included an additional \$6 million to quadruple funding for Workforce Advancement Training through the Wisconsin Technical College System. In the last two years, the Governor has awarded \$2 million in Workforce Advancement Training grants. The grants have enabled 11,900 workers to gain new job skills through their local technical college. The program has helped nearly 90 employers increase productivity, freeing capital for expansion and job creation.

"By providing \$8 million over the next two years, Governor Doyle will ensure that Wisconsin's workforce remains first rate," Secretary Gassman. She said the increased funding will provide training to 36,000 workers, benefiting them and 300 employers.

Secretary Gassman visited Bruno Independent Living Aids, Inc., and met with employees receiving training under the program. Last August, Governor Doyle announced a \$121,205 grant to Waukesha Area Technical College. Of that amount, nearly \$39,500 supported training at WCTC for 149 workers at Bruno Independent Living Aids.

Bruno Independent Living Aids is a global manufacturer of power wheelchairs, wheelchair lifts for vehicles and other products for individuals with limited mobility. In 2004, the company announced a \$5.65 million expansion, financed with Industrial Revenue Bonds. In expanding production, Bruno added 100 jobs.

Last spring, Bruno Independent Living Aids was among the winners of the Governor's New Product Awards. Its winning product was the "Joey" VLS-4000 Interior Platform Lift for Minivans and other hatchback vehicles. In September, the company won a five-year, \$83.5 million contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to provide lifts for vehicles used by disabled veterans.