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DOC Partners with Madison College on Industrial Maintenance Training Partnership

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary Jon Litscher joined leaders from the state Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Madison College, and the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin (WDBSCW) to celebrate the first graduates from an innovative pilot program to provide in-demand skills training in industrial maintenance for minimum-security inmates with work release privileges.

Graduating today are 15 inmates with work release privileges from Thompson Correctional Center and Oregon Correctional Center. The program provides an accelerated industrial maintenance curriculum, with inmates earning 11 credits in 12 weeks, which can be applied towards an Industrial Mechanic one-year technical diploma or an Industrial Maintenance Technician two-year technical diploma.

Participants learn to interpret engineering drawings, job-specific math skills, workplace communication, and other job-specific skills. They also met with representatives from several south central Wisconsin employers to learn about careers in manufacturing. The local median wage for industrial maintenance mechanics is \$18.80 per hour. Industrial maintenance is a rapidly-growing field, with the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimating 16 percent annual growth.

DOC Secretary Litscher said: “Providing opportunities for inmates to learn in-demand technical skills is a core part of DOC’s mission. Training programs help inmates to learn valuable skills employers are seeking, which makes it easier for inmates to find work upon their release and provide a positive contribution to their community.”

Seth Lentz, WDBSCW Deputy Director, said: “This is a prime example of a strong workforce development partnership that is yielding incredible results. We’re proud of this collaboration with DOC and Madison College to help build, sustain and expand training opportunities for such skilled and dedicated individuals and we hope to continue this momentum in our work together.”

Theresa Valencia, Madison College Manufacturing Instructor, said: “In my 17 years of teaching I have never had such a high achieving class of students. Their dedication and motivation to learning new skills is top notch. Regardless of how much we teach them they constantly want to learn more. This is a characteristic sought by all employers.”

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DWD Secretary Ray Allen said: "With this specialized training, Wisconsinites are returning from the corrections and criminal justice system with the skills and knowledge needed to fill jobs in the modern economy. These innovative partnerships are the kinds of investments that will strengthen the economy and protect community safety."

DOC has also partnered with Milwaukee Area Technical College and Gateway Technical College to develop similar training programs to provide inmates with in-demand skills they can use to find a job upon their release.

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