



Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Scott Walker | Secretary Cathy A. Jess

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 30, 2018

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Minimum-Security Inmates Complete Technical College Certificate Program for Construction

MADISON – Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and Department Secretary Cathy Jess joined Madison College President Jack E. Daniels, family, and friends to congratulate 11 Wisconsin Correctional Center System inmates graduating from Madison College’s Construction Essentials certificate program.

The Construction Essentials certificate program is a 15-week, 11-credit program which provides basic instruction in construction processes. Inmates also earn the OSHA-30 certification, which is required for construction workers. With this credential, inmates are qualified to work as shop helpers and construction laborers.

The inmates, who are from Oregon Correctional Center and Thompson Correctional Center, represent part of the Department’s efforts to train inmates nearing release for in-demand careers in the community.

With Wisconsin’s unemployment under 3% for the last five months and more people working in Wisconsin than ever before, the Department is helping employers meet the need for skilled workers by devoting significant resources to increase educational and vocational opportunities for inmates. This includes hosting short-term intensive academies across Wisconsin with area technical colleges in fields like construction, welding, CNC machining, and industrial maintenance.

“Especially at a time when home prices are at record highs and construction growth is strong (thanks to Foxconn and other major economic developments), we need talented individuals entering the construction industry,” said Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch. “Today’s graduates will reenter society ready to earn a wage and pay taxes as they make positive contributions toward building Wisconsin.”

These academies result in industry-recognized credentials inmates can utilize to find family-sustaining jobs in the community in an effort to reduce recidivism. The Department previously partnered with Madison College to provide vocational training in industrial maintenance. Of the 17 inmates who completed training, 14 have released into the community and all 14 have found employment, including 10 who found employment in relevant fields.

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“Given that Wisconsin’s unemployment rate has been under 3% for the last five months and a record number of people are working, many employers are seeking skilled workers to fill open positions,” Secretary Cathy Jess said. “We recognize that academies like this provide inmates an opportunity to learn an in-demand trade and learn skills employers are seeking in the community. Through this effort, our hope is to enable inmates to live crime-free lives and connect employers with motivated, hardworking employees.”

The Department has also purchased a mobile lab which provides instruction in CNC machining and received funds in the 2017 – 2019 biennial budget to purchase additional mobile labs which will provide instruction in welding and industrial maintenance.

“This ceremony reflects our mission to provide open access to quality higher education,” said Dr. Jack Daniels, president of Madison College. “Note those words, ‘open access,’ which includes individuals such as today’s graduates who deserve a second chance and have worked hard to earn the necessary credentials to gain the skills that will make them employable, contributing members of our community.”

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