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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Secretary Gassman Awards \$38,636 Skills Jump Start Grant, to North Central Wisconsin WDB and Nicolet Area Technical College in Rhinelander**

**3/18/10 – Wisconsin Rapids** – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman recently announced awarding \$39,636 in Skills Jump Start (SJS) grant funding to the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (NCWWDB) and Nicolet Area Technical College (NATC). This grant is geared to help low-wage workers, mainly those with no high school diploma or in need of remedial instruction, build career paths to good jobs in demand occupations.

The SJS grant will help northern Wisconsin workers in Forest, Oneida, Lincoln, Langlade and Vilas counties find opportunities to get ahead and gain valuable skills. The SJS program is an innovative approach to give workers, as the name implies, a jump start. Workers can go to NATC, meet their basic education needs, and at the same time learn new skills to put them on a career path to a good job and a better life.

The Skills Jump Start grant will provide a unique combination of basic math and reading classes along with technology and computer training in NATC's Home Technology Integration certificate program. The emerging Home Technology Integration field combines a number of different technologies into a single computer-based network that controls such things as home security, heating, cooling, appliances, entertainment equipment, and telecommunications.

This latest job training grant builds upon three previous grants NCWWDB and NATC have received from Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development. Those job training grants provided additional skills training in health care, manufacturing, and welding.

This grant is also part of more than \$300,000 recently distributed to Workforce Development Boards and technical colleges across the state as part of Governor Jim Doyle's ongoing investment in worker training.

According to a study by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, nearly 700,000 Wisconsin workers, who are 25 to 54 years of age and have a limited education, are paid less than the median wage of \$15.11 an hour, not enough to keep a family out of poverty.

"In these tough economic times, Governor Doyle's top priority is creating and retaining jobs and helping our workers get these jobs," DWD Secretary Roberta Gassman said. "Workers can go to a technical college, meet their basic education needs, and at the same time learn new skills to put them on a career path to a good job and a better life."

Eligible, low-wage workers who are at least 18 and lack a high school diploma or need remedial instruction can apply for participation in the Skills Jump Start Program by calling the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board's contact person, Kaying Her, at 715-422-4700.

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**NCWWDB:** The North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board is a public/private partnership between government and business that plans, administers and coordinates Workforce Investment Act (WIA) employment and training programs for adults and youth in the North Central Wisconsin counties of Adams, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas, and Wood. Visit NCWWDB at: [www.ncwwdb.org](http://www.ncwwdb.org).

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