

Wisconsin Department of Corrections: Minimum-security inmates earn technical college certificates in high-demand occupation

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High-Demand Occupation

MADISON – Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and Department Secretary Cathy Jess joined Madison College President Jack E. Daniels, family, and friends to congratulate 15 Wisconsin Correctional Center System inmates graduating from Madison College's Industrial Maintenance certificate program.

The Industrial Maintenance certificate program is a 12-week, 11-credit program which provides basic instruction during which students learned to read technical drawings, schematics, and diagrams; perform electrical/mechanical assembly and disassembly; assist in the repair and calibration of components; and apply basic knowledge of electricity and industrial controls and basic fluid powers.

With this credential, inmates are qualified for entry-level positions in industrial and mechanical maintenance. "I am a strong supporter of programs like Madison

College's Industrial Maintenance certificate that provide inmates with training and a credential in high-demand fields that they can use once they're released from the correctional system," said Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch. "These graduations represent not only the completion of a program, but a tangible accomplishment that these inmates can carry with them after their release."

The inmates, who are from Oregon Correctional Center and Thompson Correctional Center, are part of the Department's efforts to prepare inmates for work after they release into the community. Over the last few years, the Department has partnered with the Department of Workforce Development as well as workforce development boards and technical colleges throughout Wisconsin to host short-term intensive academies which provide training in high-demand fields with vacant positions.

"We believe that inmates should have access to quality education and training so they can find a good-paying job after they're released," said Secretary Cathy Jess. "This isn't just a financial investment, but an investment in hope and opportunity for the future of these inmates and everyone currently in our facilities. Our goal is for these inmates to begin a career and live successful lives in the community."

More than 94% of inmates who have completed these academies have found employment after returning to the community. With Wisconsin's unemployment under 3% for the last nine months and more people working in Wisconsin than ever before, employers need skilled workers to fill open positions. These academies provide the skills inmates need to find a good-paying job.

"Today's graduation ceremony reflects Madison College's mission to provide open access to quality higher education," shared Madison College President Dr. Jack E. Daniels III. "That means access for all, including individuals such as today's graduates who deserve a second chance and have worked hard to gain the skills that will make them employable, contributing members of our community."

The Department has also purchased a mobile lab which provides instruction in CNC machining and purchased two additional mobile labs which will provide instruction in welding and industrial maintenance beginning in 2019.