

# 07hr\_SC-LEUA\_Misc\_pt21a



July 8, 2008 ... Informational Hearing ... DWD Job Center Consolidation

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

## WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

### 2007-08

(session year)

### Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

### Committee on ... Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs (SC-LEUA)

### COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

### INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
  - (**ab** = Assembly Bill)                      (**ar** = Assembly Resolution)                      (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
  - (**sb** = Senate Bill)                              (**sr** = Senate Resolution)                              (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

\* Contents organized for archiving by: Mike Barman (LRB) (November/2010)

## Senate

### Record of Committee Proceedings

#### **Committee on Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs**

##### **Department of Workforce Development Job Center Consolidation**

July 8, 2008

##### **PUBLIC HEARING HELD**

Present: (4) Senators Coggs, Wirch, Lehman and Grothman.

Absent: (1) Senator A. Lasee.

##### Appearances For

- None.

##### Appearances Against

- None.

##### Appearances for Information Only

- Roberta Gassman — Secretary, Department of Workforce Development
- Dave Hansen — Senator
- Judy Robson — Senator
- Cory Mason — Representative
- John Nygren — Representative
- Gary Sherman — Representative
- Julie Lassa — Senator
- Sally Cutler — North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
- Mary Jo Carson — Mayor, City of Wisconsin Rapids
- Laurie Mlatawou — Disability Rights Wisconsin
- Richard Best — West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area
- Patrick O'Hara — Community Services of Northeast Wisconsin, Inc.
- Bruce Wilk — Threshold/WOW Workforce Development Board
- Paul Gordon — Workforce Resource, Inc.
- Deanna Krell — Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Michael Schnapp — Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Bruce Markert — Department of Workforce Development
- Linda Vegoe — Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council

- Pat Schramm — Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin
- Shelley Peterman Schwarz
- Robert Borremans — Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
- Dan Schmitz
- Hector Colon — Executive Assistant, Department of Workforce Development

Registrations For

- None.

Registrations Against

- None.

Registrations for Information Only

- Cheryl Welch — Fox Valley Workforce Development Board
- Phillip Anderson — Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program
- Jeff Mursau — Representative
- Dale Schultz — Senator

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Adam Plotkin  
Committee Clerk



Department of Workforce Development  
Office of the Secretary  
201 East Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 7946  
Madison, WI 53707-7946  
Telephone: (608) 266-3131  
Fax: (608) 266-1784  
e-mail: [dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us)



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
Jim Doyle, Governor  
Roberta Gassman, Secretary

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June 5, 2008

Name  
Title  
Organization  
Street address  
City, state, zip

**RE: UPCOMING IMPROVEMENTS TO WISCONSIN'S EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES**

Dear :

I write to share information about the steps the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is taking to transform our employment and training services to best meet the needs of Wisconsin's workers and employers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. First, let me give you some background.

**BACKGROUND**

Wisconsin's job center system was created almost twenty-five years ago, with a short-term \$10 million federal start-up grant. Not only are those one-time dollars long-gone, but also according to a 2004 analysis by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center on Wisconsin Strategy, federal employment and training funding to Wisconsin was cut by 56% between 1984 and 2004. Furthermore, since 2004, our federal funding has been cut even more.

Neither the state nor DWD oversee or operate job centers – the designation of job centers and their management are conducted locally by regional workforce development boards. The state is only one of many service providers in job centers. Therefore, the state does not open or close job centers. We are not now closing any job centers.

When the system was created, supported by federal funding, the state had far more Job Service and Veterans staff than now, located in dozens of centers statewide. On top of this, the system was, of course, created before widespread use of computers, and the advent of the Internet. The world has now changed. Technology is everywhere and, additionally, at the very time we need more skilled workers than ever before, few citizens actually visit Wisconsin's job centers. The same holds true for our employer community. Employers often seek job candidates elsewhere because the technology our staff has been using in centers is not cutting-edge or user-friendly compared to what job seekers and employers can find using other Internet sources.

Because our shrinking resources have been spread so thin, too little of our funding has been going into actually serving job seekers and employers with skills assessment, career advising and training. Too much of our capacity has been consumed with overhead costs such as rent, computer lines and publications.

States everywhere are facing such challenges. Now is the time to do things differently, to better use our precious resources to provide the highest quality workforce development services possible to job seekers and employers. I very much appreciate all the helpful feedback we have received on the improvements we are making from many of our partners around the state including leadership from workforce development boards, technical colleges, the Council on Workforce Investment, business, labor, counties and W-2 agencies. We believe that Wisconsin can be a national leader in providing services that are comprehensive, technologically advanced, effective and efficient.

## **STRENGTHENING SERVICES THROUGH TWELVE COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL CAREER AND SKILL CENTER HUBS AND AN ADVANCED NEW VIRTUAL JOB CENTER**

To redirect more funds to assessment, career advising, training and advancement opportunities for workers, by December 31, 2008, we will be stationing our current Job Service and Veterans staff in twelve comprehensive regional sites across the state: Kenosha; two in Milwaukee, given its size; Pewaukee; Menasha; Green Bay; Wausau; Superior; Eau Claire; La Crosse; Madison; and, Janesville. The sites were selected based on population, workforce needs, available resources and efficiencies. We will work closely with our regional partners to implement these changes, which will involve seven key elements:

### **1. REDIRECTING STAFF TO PROVIDE MOBILE SERVICES OUT OF REGIONAL HUBS**

Though our staff will operate out of twelve regional office hubs, they will be mobile throughout the region, having the capacity to travel to and hold office hours in other locations as needed.

### **2. CREATING A NEW VIRTUAL JOB CENTER**

We will fund and implement an innovative new and easy to use virtual job center, which will give job seekers and employers the ability to reach DWD and each other across Wisconsin anywhere, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The virtual job center will offer features such as posting of resumes and job orders; initial screening of job candidates; online personal job search assistance and job interviews; online job fairs, workshops and seminars; and, videoconferencing. This will expand our ability to reach thousands of new customers all over the state. We will have staff and technical support available to help individuals who may be new to using computers and technology, and we will offer that assistance in small communities and neighborhoods throughout Wisconsin.

### **3. REACHING OUT TO ALL OF WISCONSIN PROACTIVELY**

We are committed to serving every community, whether large or small and urban or rural. We will not just wait for job seekers to come to us; we will reach out to our customers around the state through a variety of sites including technical colleges, community organizations and libraries. We will be able to reach more communities and individuals, including unemployed and underemployed workers, something we know is now more important than ever before.

### **4. INCREASING CONNECTIONS OF WORKERS TO JOB TRAINING AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES**

We will increase our enrollment of workers in training and pathways to higher wage work. We will re-train our own staff so that they can deliver needed assessment, career advising and training services to customers. Our staff will increase the connection of workers to skills through technical college training.

#### **5. ESTABLISHING STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS**

We will reach out more aggressively to employers to meet their workforce needs and connect them with qualified job seekers. We will also improve our referrals to employers and expand their pool of workers to consider for future hiring needs.

#### **6. CONTINUING STRONG SERVICES TO WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES**

DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) will continue to serve its caseload of consumers with disabilities based on where those individuals live. Some of our DVR counselors will be stationed in the twelve comprehensive sites, and others, depending upon where their consumers reside, will remain in other community sites, including other existing job center locations.

#### **7. CONTINUING EXCELLENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS**

Providing the best services possible to veterans and dislocated workers continues to be a top-priority for DWD, particularly given these challenging times in our nation and around the world. Using our twelve sites and our capacity for mobile and virtual services and office hours, we will help all dislocated workers get connected to all of the assessment, re-training support and placement services they need. We will give the same strong attention to the needs of veterans, many of whom are now returning from service with special challenges or disabilities.

#### **WORKING TOGETHER**

All of us at DWD look forward to working with you and all of our statewide partners over the weeks and months ahead as we work, in a time of great need, to transform and strengthen our employment and training services. Our goal is for every single job seeker and employer to have access to the resources they need to be successful. We believe that by consolidating services, reducing overhead and offering an expanded scope of assistance via innovative staffing, increased service hours and cutting-edge technologies, we will strengthen Wisconsin's employment and training system.

Given the opportunities and challenges we face, we are working to responsibly address our own staffing and space plans while meeting the needs of workers, employers and the state. And in our commitment to those we serve, we will not be cutting any staff positions as we make these changes.

I hope that you find this information helpful. If you have any questions, please contact Rex Loehe, Executive Staff Assistant at DWD, at [Rex.Loehe@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:Rex.Loehe@dwd.state.wi.us) or 608-266-1756.

Best regards,



Roberta Gassman  
Secretary







June 15, 2008

## Officials worried about DWD offices

*By Shenandoah Sowash  
Central Wisconsin Sunday*

With Job Service offices in Adams, Marshfield, Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids, the Department of Workforce Development has a hearty presence in central Wisconsin, a presence some politicians worry might vanish.

DWD Secretary Roberta Gassman plans to consolidate Job Service offices and resources across Wisconsin by creating 12 regional sites. For most central Wisconsin residents, the nearest hubs will be Madison and Wausau.

Local leaders, including Sen. Julie Lassa, D-Stevens Point and Rep. Marlin Schneider, D-Wisconsin Rapids, are mainly concerned with accessibility.

"At a time when our community is experiencing economic challenges, including a downsizing paper industry and rising fuel costs, the people of central Wisconsin rely on the Job Service for assistance in finding new training and employment opportunities," Lassa said. "It is unreasonable to ask people to travel to Madison or Wausau to seek those services."

DWD officials say limited federal funding made it necessary to consolidate resources and they plan to fill in the gaps with a virtual job center capable of video job interviews, virtual job fairs and face-to-face job search assistance through web cameras.

Schneider says given destructive floods, a tough economy and industrial plants closing throughout the state, the timing of Gassman's decision couldn't be worse.

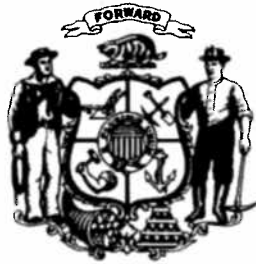
DWD Communications Director Jessica Erickson said the department has no intention of closing centers or eliminating staff positions. Rather, the department will focus on making staff members mobile to better serve the state.

"We're transforming our employment and training system to best meet the needs of employers ... in the 21st century," said Erickson.

Lassa and Schneider, as well as Reps. Louis Molepske Jr., D-Stevens Point, and Amy Sue Vruwink, D-Milladore, recently sent Gassman a letter, expressing their concern for constituents who may not have access to the Internet or transportation.

"We're committed to serving all communities ... Our commitment is as strong as ever," Erickson said.





**WISCONSIN STATE SENATE**  
**P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882**

June 23, 2008

State Senator Spencer Coggs  
Chair, Senate Committee on Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs  
123 South, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707  
HAND-DELIVERED

Dear Senator Coggs,


As you know, the state Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has proposed consolidating staff currently working in seventy eight community job centers across Wisconsin into twelve regional centers. Their plan is to begin to remove staff from communities over the coming weeks and continue through the end of the year.

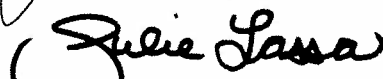
We, the undersigned, are extremely concerned about the detrimental impact this proposed restructuring may have on veterans, displaced workers and the disabled in communities across the state. Significant questions about any actual cost savings and whether they outweigh the benefits of having state job service workers located five days a week in our communities working cooperatively with our county human services staff deserve answers. Furthermore, the Department's decision to undertake a radical restructuring of the delivery of state services to job seekers in this time of economic uncertainty and without input from respected community partner organizations or a broader public discussion is disturbing.

To provide representatives of DWD with the opportunity to explain what they believe are the merits of their proposal and to also hear from the public about the real world impact of their decisions, we ask that you convene a public hearing on this matter in the Senate Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs Committee. We believe that a hearing will also be very valuable to the legislature as we continue to evaluate the functions entrusted to and funding for DWD's delivery of critical services to the people of Wisconsin.

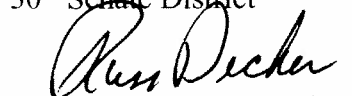
Thank you for your consideration of our request.

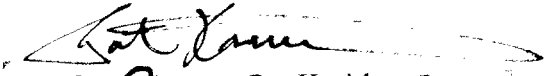
Sincerely,

  
State Senator John Lehman  
21<sup>st</sup> Senate District

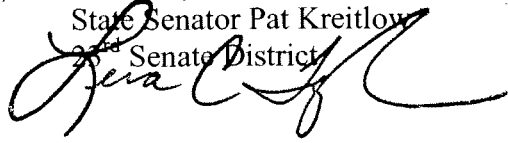
  
State Senator Julie Lassa  
24<sup>th</sup> Senate District

  
State Senator Dave Hansen  
30<sup>th</sup> Senate District

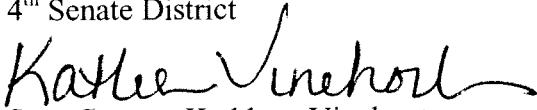
  
State Senator Russ Decker  
29<sup>th</sup> Senate District



State Senator Pat Kreitlow  
26<sup>th</sup> Senate District



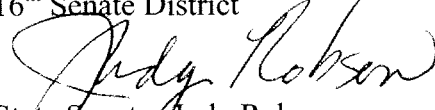
State Senator Lena Taylor  
4<sup>th</sup> Senate District



State Senator Kathleen Vinehout  
31<sup>st</sup> Senate District



State Senator Mark Miller  
16<sup>th</sup> Senate District



State Senator Judy Robson  
15<sup>th</sup> Senate District



State Senator Bob Jauch  
25<sup>th</sup> Senate District



## Plotkin, Adam

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**From:** Plotkin, Adam  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 24, 2008 12:04 PM  
**To:** Sen.Lehman; Sen.Hansen; Sen.Lassa; Sen.Decker; Sen.Kreitlow; Sen.Miller; Sen.Taylor;  
Sen.Robson; Sen.Vinehout; Sen.Jauch; Sen.Wirch  
**Cc:** Browne, Michael; Wadd, Jay; Wilson, Danielle; Worcester, Barbara; Lynch, Carrie; Buhrandt,  
Jeff; Kuhn, Jamie; Peterson, Eric; Gratz, Nadine; Dicks, Helen; Kleinschmidt, Linda; Barry,  
Sarah; Kahn, Carrie; Bishop, Jennifer; Stoll, Joanna  
**Subject:** DWD Job Center Letter

Senator Coggs has received the letter regarding the consolidation of DWD staff in job centers statewide. Due to the great interest expressed in the letter for a public hearing, Senator Coggs plans on convening an informational hearing of the Committee on Labor, Elections, and Urban Affairs on July 8.

We anticipate sending out the official committee notice within the next few days.

Thank you,  
Adam

*Adam Plotkin  
Clerk, Committee on Labor, Elections, and Urban Affairs  
Office of Senator Spencer Coggs  
phone, 608-266-2500  
fax, 608-282-3546*





# Washington County Board of Supervisors

*Herbert J. Tennies, Chair*

*Daniel W. Stoffel, First Vice-Chair*

*John W. Stern, Second Vice-Chair*

June 25, 2008

Governor Jim Doyle  
115 East, State Capitol  
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Governor Doyle:

I am writing to insist that Job Service continue to provide full-time staff services at the Washington County Workforce Development Center. On June 5, I received a letter from DWD Secretary Roberta Gassman announcing her plan to move current Job Service staff from the Washington County Center to Pewaukee as part of a consolidation from 38 current Job Center sites to 12 comprehensive regional sites. The letter goes on to state that these moves, which have already begun in other counties, is to be completed by December 2008. As the eleventh largest Wisconsin county, our employers and workers require the involvement of Job Service as a valued partner in our County Workforce Development Center.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development provided leadership to shape county based vocational services into unified one-stop Workforce Development Centers (WDC's). Instead of "each state and local agency for itself", the guiding principal for these Centers was that partnerships be formed to efficiently offer county based services accessible to workers and employers at one identified location. In Washington County this partnership included the Moraine Park Technical College as the selected location, emphasizing the direct connection between worker training for the jobs of tomorrow in the same place as assistance for job dislocations. A construction project was required to add a wing specifically for this six partner WDC. Leases and operational agreements were signed by partners, including Job Service and the Division of Vocations Rehabilitation, obligating partners to repay borrowing costs and operate the Center for at least fifteen years. The DWD plan to partially vacate the Washington County Center will not save the taxpayers money and it will not adequately serve workforce needs.

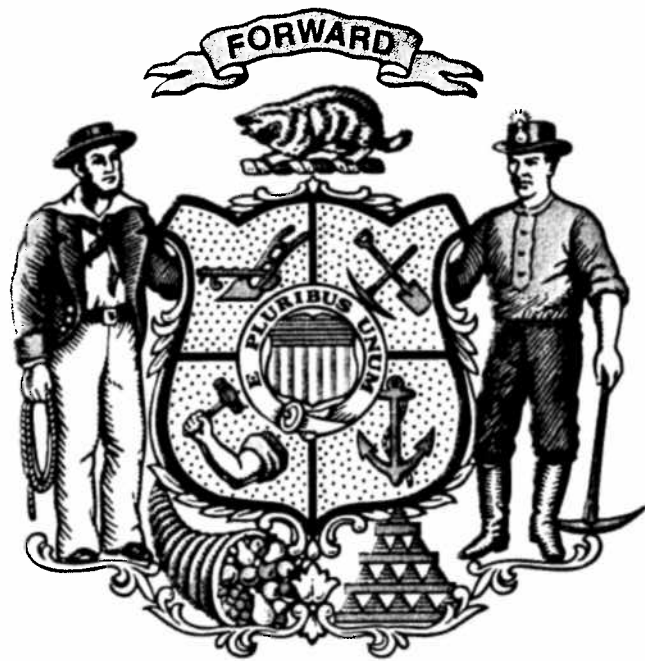
The investment in technology advocated by DWD is an important direction for the future. However, today's reality is that many individuals with workforce challenges are not able to secure needed services at their own direction using remote technology. Face to face interaction with these workers is still essential and is part of Job Service's responsibility. Other financially strapped Center partners cannot be expected to do Job Service's work. Neither is it realistic to ask unemployed workers to drive to Pewaukee given \$4 gasoline. It is also disturbing that the new DWD plan fails to provide even a single Center for the entire Moraine Park Technical College district. For these reasons, we ask that you direct DWD to put on hold implementation of the regional consolidation and to continue to honor State commitments and provide services based at the Washington County Workforce Development Center.

Sincerely,

Herb Tennies, County Board Chairperson

✓ New CC: Senate Committee on Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs  
Cc: State legislative delegation, DWD Secretary, W-O-W Workforce Development Board, MPTC





**Plotkin, Adam**

**From:** Buschman, Sara  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 02, 2008 1:59 PM  
**To:** Plotkin, Adam  
**Subject:** RE: Labor, Elections, & Urban Affairs - Informational Hearing - July 8

Adam,

It appears Washington County will be sending Bruce Wilk from the Threshold, Inc. to testify on their behalf at the hearing. He will be bringing a letter from the Washington County Board chair as well. Let me know if you need any further information.

Sara

**Sara Buschman**

Legislative Aide to  
State Representative Pat Strachota  
58th Assembly District

*Toll-Free: 1-888-534-0058*  
*Email: [sara.buschman@legis.wi.gov](mailto:sara.buschman@legis.wi.gov)*

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**From:** Plotkin, Adam  
**Sent:** Monday, June 30, 2008 11:02 AM  
**To:** Buschman, Sara  
**Subject:** RE: Labor, Elections, & Urban Affairs - Informational Hearing - July 8

It is a public hearing so if your district folks want to come in, that's fine. I think we may have a number from around the state coming, so they don't necessarily need to have lengthy testimony prepared. Let me know if you know the names of anyone that will be coming.

Adam

*Adam Plotkin*  
*Clerk, Committee on Labor, Elections, and Urban Affairs*  
*Office of Senator Spencer Coggs*  
*phone, 608-266-2500*  
*fax, 608-282-3546*

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**From:** Buschman, Sara  
**Sent:** Monday, June 30, 2008 10:59 AM  
**To:** Plotkin, Adam  
**Subject:** RE: Labor, Elections, & Urban Affairs - Informational Hearing - July 8

Adam,

Is this going to be invited speakers only or is the public invited to attend and give comment? We have a Job Center in our district that is scheduled to be closed and our local officials are concerned and would probably like to attend.

Thank you for any information you have.

**Sara Buschman**



**Plotkin, Adam**

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**From:** Sen.Schultz  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 02, 2008 4:19 PM  
**To:** Sen.Coggs; Sen.Grothman; Sen.Lasee; Sen.Lehman; Sen.Wirch  
**Subject:** Senator Schultz to Committee on Labor: DWD Job Center plan

**Attachments:** Schultz to Gassman re Job Center forced closure 1Jul08.doc; Gassman to Schultz re rural Job Centers 5Jun08.doc

To Senator Spencer Coggs, Chair and members  
Senate Committee on Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs  
From Senator Dale Schultz  
Date July 2, 2008  
Re **Department of Workforce Development Job Center Consolidation**

Prior commitments prevent my presence at your informational hearing on this subject on Tuesday, July 8, 2008 at 11 a.m. in 411-S.  
Attached for your consideration is my July 1 letter to Secretary Gassman stating concerns I have received about impacts of this plan.  
Secretary Gassman's June 5 letter to me is also attached.  
Thank you.



Schultz to Gassman re Job Cent...      Gassman to Schultz re rural Jo...



WISCONSIN STATE SENATE  
**DALE W. SCHULTZ**

July 1, 2008

Roberta Gassman, Secretary  
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development  
Madison

Dear Secretary Gassman,

You recently announced a Doyle Administration plan to redeploy Job Service staff from 78 statewide Job Center locations to 12 urban centers. You said the plan would “transform our employment and training services to best meet the needs of Wisconsin’s workers and employers in the 21st century.”

More realistic, rural Wisconsin job seekers, employers and concerned legislators can see the plan will significantly reduce their access to quality, timely services. Moving all Job Service personnel to 12 urban locations fails the needs of rural areas. Median household incomes are significantly lower in rural regions than urban. The result is that our current economic circumstances, including plant closures and layoffs, cause greater burdens on rural communities and workers than for urban areas. Last month’s flooding disaster exacerbates their plight.

A responsive state government would collaborate on ways to rush more services to help rural workers and employers in response to current conditions. Your plan instead abandons rural communities, workers and employers by consolidating services into a handful of urban sites.

Your plan lowers Job Service costs at the disregard of Job Center partner organizations and local taxpayers. Your plan increases their expenses when they are already strapped by years of funding cuts. Your plan forces those partners to pick up infrastructure costs vacated by Job Service with no advanced notice and at a time they can least afford increased expenses. Your plan shifts costs and only adds to the already high tax burden felt by rural communities. Partner organizations will be forced into a decision to increase local taxes or cut vital services.

Your plan disregards most of the hard-working Job Service staff, forcing them to move, commute long distances, or quit. Your plan would then have staff travel back to the communities they were forced to leave to provide services on an itinerant basis. Itinerant services will require costly travel reimbursement, higher fuel consumption and considerable non-productive “windshield” time.

Your plan requires rural workers to have considerable computer ability to access online job center services when in reality, many rural job seekers lack fundamental computer skills requisite for job search and work related skill development. Many rural residents do not have reasonable access to broadband service required for the technology systems proposed in your plan.

Wisconsin residents that actually need Job Center services often lack basic academic and workforce skills. According to your own DWD figures, forty percent of Wisconsin workers, age 26 and older, hold only a high school diploma or are high school dropouts. These workers require more face-to-face assistance. They need a case manager and support services to prepare for and compete in today's global economy. Simply put your plan to force the closure of all rural community Job Centers leaves rural workers facing a future with more low-skill, low-wage jobs and threatens the economic viability of rural communities.

It appears your consolidation plan was developed in relative isolation without sufficient real world input from those it most impacts, including Job Center partners, rural community leaders, workers, employers and the families it would harm.

I urge you to reconsider this ill-developed plan and start anew with an inclusive process.

With kindest regards,

Dale W. Schultz  
Wisconsin State Senator



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June 5, 2008

Senator Dale Schultz  
Room 115 Westh  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707

**RE: UPCOMING IMPROVEMENTS TO WISCONSIN'S EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES**

Dear Senator Schultz:

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States everywhere are facing such challenges. Now is the time to do things differently, to better use our precious resources to provide the highest quality workforce development services possible to job seekers and employers. I very much appreciate all the helpful feedback we have received on the

improvements we are making from many of our partners around the state including leadership from workforce development boards, technical colleges, the Council on Workforce Investment, business, labor, counties and W-2 agencies. We believe that Wisconsin can be a national leader in providing services that are comprehensive, technologically advanced, effective and efficient.

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### **3. REACHING OUT TO ALL OF WISCONSIN PROACTIVELY**

We are committed to serving every community, whether large or small and urban or rural. We will not just wait for job seekers to come to us; we will reach out to our customers around the state through a variety of sites including technical colleges, community organizations and libraries. We will be able to reach more communities and individuals, including unemployed and underemployed workers, something we know is now more important than ever before.

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We will reach out more aggressively to employers to meet their workforce needs and connect them with qualified job seekers. We will also improve our referrals to employers and expand their pool of workers to consider for future hiring needs.

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## **7. CONTINUING EXCELLENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS**

Providing the best services possible to veterans and dislocated workers continues to be a top-priority for DWD, particularly given these challenging times in our nation and around the world. Using our twelve sites and our capacity for mobile and virtual services and office hours, we will help all dislocated workers get connected to all of the assessment, re-training support and placement services they need. We will give the same strong attention to the needs of veterans, many of whom are now returning from service with special challenges or disabilities.

## **WORKING TOGETHER**

All of us at DWD look forward to working with you and all of our statewide partners over the weeks and months ahead as we work, in a time of great need, to transform and strengthen our employment and training services. Our goal is for every single job seeker and employer to have access to the resources they need to be successful. We believe that by consolidating services, reducing overhead and offering an expanded scope of assistance via innovative staffing, increased service hours and cutting-edge technologies, we will strengthen Wisconsin's employment and training system.

Given the opportunities and challenges we face, we are working to responsibly address our own staffing and space plans while meeting the needs of workers, employers and the state. And in our commitment to those we serve, we will not be cutting any staff positions as we make these changes.

I hope that you find this information helpful. If you have any questions, please contact Rex Loehe, Executive Staff Assistant at DWD, at [Rex.Loehe@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:Rex.Loehe@dwd.state.wi.us) or 608-266-1756.

Best regards,

Roberta Gassman  
Secretary

## **Senator Dale Schultz**

[www.senatordaleschultz.com](http://www.senatordaleschultz.com)

For release July 2, 2008

Information: Dale Schultz 800.978.8008

### **Doyle Plan Abandons Rural Job Seekers, Employers and Communities**

Madison....Senator Dale Schultz wants to stop plans by Governor Jim Doyle's administration to force every Job Center in rural Wisconsin to close.

In a letter to Doyle's Secretary of the Department of Workforce Development, Roberta Gassman, Schultz said moving all Job Service personnel to 12 urban locations fails the needs of rural areas.

Schultz is asking the Doyle administration to start anew and develop a better plan that doesn't abandon rural Wisconsin.

"A better plan would be a responsive state government that collaborates on ways to provide more services to rural workers and employers in response to the current economic and flooding challenges in rural Wisconsin," Schultz said.

Schultz said the Doyle plan was not responsive to rural areas because it was developed without an effort to collaborate with rural community leaders, rural residents and the other partners that work with job seekers at rural Job Center offices.

Job Centers help workers obtain training and find jobs, and help employers find qualified employees and access training and hiring programs. Partners that make Job Centers possible include DWD Job Service, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, technical colleges, W-2 agencies, Workforce Investment Act service providers and regional, county and community agencies such as Community Action Program.

"Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development withdrawing staff and funding would force the Job Centers across rural Wisconsin closed, or, the partner organizations would have to come up with substantially more money to continue services and keep the Centers open," Schultz said.

**- More -**

### **Schultz- Job Center closure plan, add one**

Schultz said rural property taxpayers can't bear the burden if state resources are taken away, forcing rural Job Centers to close. He said the Doyle plan treats rural communities unfairly in part because incomes in rural areas are considerably less than in urban areas.

"Median household incomes are significantly lower in rural regions than in urban areas," Schultz said. "The result is that our current economic circumstances, including plant closings and mass layoffs, cause greater burdens on rural communities and workers than for urban areas. This past month's flooding disaster exacerbates the plight of rural folks."

Schultz said while the Doyle plan relies heavily on providing services through the internet, many rural workers lack computer skills and many rural areas don't even have broadband internet service to access job search and job training services.

Department of Workforce Development  
Office of the Secretary  
201 East Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 7946  
Madison, WI 53707-7946  
Telephone: (608) 266-3131  
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e-mail: [dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us)



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
Jim Doyle, Governor  
Roberta Gassman, Secretary

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June 5, 2008

Senator Dale Schultz  
Room 115 Westh  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707

**RE: UPCOMING IMPROVEMENTS TO WISCONSIN'S EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES**

Dear Senator Schultz:

I write to share information about the steps the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is taking to transform our employment and training services to best meet the needs of Wisconsin's workers and employers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. First, let me give you some background.

**BACKGROUND**

Wisconsin's job center system was created almost twenty-five years ago, with a short-term \$10 million federal start-up grant. Not only are those one-time dollars long-gone, but also according to a 2004 analysis by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center on Wisconsin Strategy, federal employment and training funding to Wisconsin was cut by 56% between 1984 and 2004. Furthermore, since 2004, our federal funding has been cut even more.

Neither the state nor DWD oversee or operate job centers – the designation of job centers and their management are conducted locally by regional workforce development boards. The state is only one of many service providers in job centers. Therefore, the state does not open or close job centers. We are not now closing any job centers.

When the system was created, supported by federal funding, the state had far more Job Service and Veterans staff than now, located in dozens of centers statewide. On top of this, the system was, of course, created before widespread use of computers, and the advent of the Internet. The world has now changed. Technology is everywhere and, additionally, at the very time we need more skilled workers than ever before, few citizens actually visit Wisconsin's job centers. The same holds true for our employer community. Employers often seek job candidates elsewhere because the technology our staff has been using in centers is not cutting-edge or user-friendly compared to what job seekers and employers can find using other Internet sources.

Because our shrinking resources have been spread so thin, too little of our funding has been going into actually serving job seekers and employers with skills assessment, career advising and training. Too much of our capacity has been consumed with overhead costs such as rent, computer lines and publications.

States everywhere are facing such challenges. Now is the time to do things differently, to better use our precious resources to provide the highest quality workforce development services possible to job seekers and employers. I very much appreciate all the helpful feedback we have received on the

improvements we are making from many of our partners around the state including leadership from workforce development boards, technical colleges, the Council on Workforce Investment, business, labor, counties and W-2 agencies. We believe that Wisconsin can be a national leader in providing services that are comprehensive, technologically advanced, effective and efficient.

## **STRENGTHENING SERVICES THROUGH TWELVE COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL CAREER AND SKILL CENTER HUBS AND AN ADVANCED NEW VIRTUAL JOB CENTER**

To redirect more funds to assessment, career advising, training and advancement opportunities for workers, by December 31, 2008, we will be stationing our current Job Service and Veterans staff in twelve comprehensive regional sites across the state: Kenosha; two in Milwaukee, given its size; Pewaukee; Menasha; Green Bay; Wausau; Superior; Eau Claire; La Crosse; Madison; and, Janesville. The sites were selected based on population, workforce needs, available resources and efficiencies. We will work closely with our regional partners to implement these changes, which will involve seven key elements:

### **1. REDIRECTING STAFF TO PROVIDE MOBILE SERVICES OUT OF REGIONAL HUBS**

Though our staff will operate out of twelve regional office hubs, they will be mobile throughout the region, having the capacity to travel to and hold office hours in other locations as needed.

### **2. CREATING A NEW VIRTUAL JOB CENTER**

We will fund and implement an innovative new and easy to use virtual job center, which will give job seekers and employers the ability to reach DWD and each other across Wisconsin anywhere, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The virtual job center will offer features such as posting of resumes and job orders; initial screening of job candidates; online personal job search assistance and job interviews; online job fairs, workshops and seminars; and, videoconferencing. This will expand our ability to reach thousands of new customers all over the state. We will have staff and technical support available to help individuals who may be new to using computers and technology, and we will offer that assistance in small communities and neighborhoods throughout Wisconsin.

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Best regards,

Roberta Gassman  
Secretary



# HERZING COLLEGE

5218 E. Terrace Drive, Madison, WI 53718 • P (608) 249-6611 • F (608) 249-8593 • info@msn.herzing.edu • www.herzing.edu

July 2, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Testimony for the Record on behalf of the Department of Workforce Development

I am Don Madelung, President of Herzing College in Madison, WI and Chair of the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin. I also serve a Vice President of the Wisconsin Workforce Development Association representing all of the Wisconsin workforce boards.

Improvements to Wisconsin's Employment and Training Services:

I have been an observer and a participant in the restructuring of the Workforce Development Board and its initiatives in the South Central region for the past 16 years. I have witnessed good years, lean years and years where we wondered if we could exist and provide the needed services to our clientele.

I am in total support of the current transformation of the employment and training services that needs to be provided to the Wisconsin workforce and its employers to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century demands. The current job service system was created over 25 years ago and was initially a very loose federation of service providers and in recent years the DWD has assisted regional workforce boards to centralize the services under the one-stop provider system. With Federal support being decreased almost every year and accumulating to over 56% in the past 20 years, it is now time to be prudent with every dollar spent on workforce development and employment training.

The goal is to provide each employer and job seeker the best possible opportunity to maximize their time, money and resources to make sure everyone in every community has access to the best services we can provide. We are not eliminating services, but re-organizing them to maximize efficiencies. We need to act more like the businesses we serve and be good stewards of shrinking Federal and State resources.

This re-direction will assure the state the best possible results that will be sustainable for many years to come. We are not making changes just to make changes. The South Central Workforce Development Boards started re-designing its strategic goals for our region over a year and a half ago and are well on our way toward implementation.

Milwaukee • New Orleans • Madison • Birmingham • Atlanta • Orlando • Minneapolis



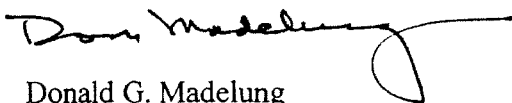
The DWD is going to create a Virtual Job Center. This new approach, one we will see more and more in our daily lives, will provide an opportunity to reach out to employers and job seekers in ways we could not in the past and will allow the people access to services 24/7 and still give people the face to face job assistance through web cameras. More opportunities will be provided through on-line job fairs, video job interviews, on-line workshops, seminars and offer career advice and counseling. If you can't come to us, we will go to you.

Job seekers will be the ultimate beneficiaries of these improvements. The opportunities to consolidate resources will reduce overhead costs on internal technical support, rent and other services we provide without sacrificing quality and allow the savings to be put into client services and support. We will coordinate our efforts more with already existing entities such as local technical colleges, libraries, community organizations, childcare centers and our staff will be mobile and more flexible to reach out to companies and individuals we need to serve.

The benefits employers will see are is a more aggressive approach to meet their needs for a strong, well prepared workforce. We will match their needs for employees with qualified and ready-to-work job seekers and will be the bridge between employers, the technical colleges and private colleges that can provide individuals the precise training job seekers need to earn a living wage and a life changing career.

Thank you for your support as we move forward.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Madelung", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Donald G. Madelung  
Chair, Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin  
President, Herzing College





**DALE W. SCHULTZ**  
Wisconsin State Senator



Packet

To: Senator Spencer Coggs, Chair and members  
Senate Committee on Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs  
From: Senator Dale Schultz  
Date: July 2, 2008  
Re: **Department of Workforce Development Job Center Consolidation**

Prior commitments prevent my presence at your informational hearing on this subject on Tuesday, July 8, 2008 at 11 a.m. in 411-S.

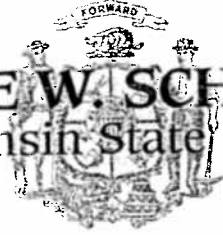
Attached for your consideration is my July 1 letter to Secretary Gassman stating concerns I have received about impacts of this plan.

Please contact me if you have questions about my support for maintaining job centers in rural areas.

Thank you.



**DALE W. SCHULTZ**  
Wisconsin State Senator



July 1, 2008

Roberta Gassman, Secretary  
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development  
Madison

Dear Secretary Gassman,

You recently announced a Doyle Administration plan to redeploy Job Service staff from 78 statewide Job Center locations to 12 urban centers. You said the plan would “transform our employment and training services to best meet the needs of Wisconsin’s workers and employers in the 21st century.”

More realistic, rural Wisconsin job seekers, employers and concerned legislators can see the plan will significantly reduce their access to quality, timely services. Moving all Job Service personnel to 12 urban locations fails the needs of rural areas. Median household incomes are significantly lower in rural regions than urban. The result is that our current economic circumstances, including plant closures and layoffs, cause greater burdens on rural communities and workers than for urban areas. Last month’s flooding disaster exacerbates their plight.

A responsive state government would collaborate on ways to rush more services to help rural workers and employers in response to current conditions. Your plan instead abandons rural communities, workers and employers by consolidating services into a handful of urban sites.

Your plan lowers Job Service costs at the disregard of Job Center partner organizations and local taxpayers. Your plan increases their expenses when they are already strapped by years of funding cuts. Your plan forces those partners to pick up infrastructure costs vacated by Job Service with no advanced notice and at a time they can least afford increased expenses. Your plan shifts costs and only adds to the already high tax burden felt by rural communities. Partner organizations will be forced into a decision to increase local taxes or cut vital services.

Your plan disregards most of the hard-working Job Service staff, forcing them to move, commute long distances, or quit. Your plan would then have staff travel

back to the communities they were forced to leave to provide services on an itinerant basis. Itinerant services will require costly travel reimbursement, higher fuel consumption and considerable non-productive "windshield" time.

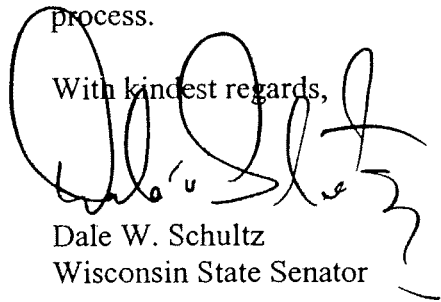
Your plan requires rural workers to have considerable computer ability to access online job center services when in reality, many rural job seekers lack fundamental computer skills requisite for job search and work related skill development. Many rural residents do not have reasonable access to broadband service required for the technology systems proposed in your plan.

Wisconsin residents that actually need Job Center services often lack basic academic and workforce skills. According to your own DWD figures, forty percent of Wisconsin workers, age 26 and older, hold only a high school diploma or are high school dropouts. These workers require more face-to-face assistance. They need a case manager and support services to prepare for and compete in today's global economy. Simply put your plan to force the closure of all rural community Job Centers leaves rural workers facing a future with more low-skill, low-wage jobs and threatens the economic viability of rural communities.

It appears your consolidation plan was developed in relative isolation without sufficient real world input from those it most impacts, including Job Center partners, rural community leaders, workers, employers and the families it would harm.

I urge you to reconsider this ill-developed plan and start anew with an inclusive process.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale W. Schultz", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Dale W. Schultz  
Wisconsin State Senator