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## **Racine Correctional Institution Hosts Winter Graduation Ceremony**

*Lt. Governor Kleefisch; DOC, DWD, Gateway Technical College leaders address graduates*

STURTEVANT – Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary Jon Litscher, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Ray Allen, and Gateway Technical College (GTC) President Bryan Albrecht joined inmates and their families at Racine Correctional Institution's (RCI) winter graduation ceremony.

Inmates received degrees or certificates in the following fields:

- 6 General Equivalency Degrees;
- 6 High School Equivalency Degrees;
- 4 Culinary Arts graduates, who will receive a GTC certificate;
- 13 Custodial Services graduates, who will receive a GTC certificate; and
- 18 CNC machining graduates, who will receive a GTC certificate.

DOC has a self-contained mobile CNC lab that can be moved between DOC correctional facilities which has been parked at RCI since early 2015.

DOC received Wisconsin Fast Forward – Blueprint for Prosperity funding to provide CNC machining instruction to inmates at Racine Correctional Institution prior to their release. Inmates who are selected must have a clean record and must be within 18 months of their release. In 2015, 400 inmates graduated with their GED/HSED, and 696 graduated from CTE/vocational programs throughout all DOC facilities.

Lt. Governor Kleefisch said: "Today's celebration marks inmates turning the page in their old lives and marching towards their future in the Wisconsin workforce. By choosing to equip themselves with talents employers need, the inmates have learned valuable skills that will make their communities stronger. These inmates today are taking the first step towards success and a better future."

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DOC Secretary Litscher said: "Our focus at the Department of Corrections is to provide education, training, and programming for inmates so they are able to thrive upon their release. Under Governor Walker's leadership, the State of Wisconsin has pursued innovative solutions to connect inmates with vocational training that will prepare inmates for in-demand jobs in the community."

DWD Secretary Allen said: "Wisconsin and DWD have pursued several initiatives in partnership with job centers and corrections officials to assist citizens in overcoming barriers and realizing successful re-entry into the community," Secretary Ray Allen said. "Through this partnership, with funding from a Wisconsin Fast Forward – Blueprint for Prosperity grant, men and women under the custody or supervision of the Department of Corrections have an opportunity to learn the job skills that employers demand."

GTC President Albrecht said: "The Gateway community is proud of the commitment and personal accomplishments made by the RCI graduates. Education enlightens the pathway to a productive and successful life."

In addition to DOC's partnerships with Gateway Technical College and Milwaukee Area Technical College, DOC also recently started a pilot project with Madison Area Technical College to train inmates with work release privileges in Industrial Maintenance.

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