

# DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday, February 27 ~ 10:30 – 11:30 am

Facilitator: Norm Voorhees

## Prevailing Wages

*The citizens of Northwest Wisconsin request:*

- **To resubmit Governor Doyle's initiative for construction Prevailing wages which was a part of the Grow Wisconsin economic development plan for the State of Wisconsin.**

**Reason for the Request:** Needed changes to the process used to determine Prevailing Construction Wages so that area collectively bargained rates be applied to all public projects. The model for this request could mirror the City of Superior's Prevailing Wage Ordinance for construction which was enacted in 1988. Superior's ordinance recognizes area collectively bargained rates as the Prevailing rate. Changes to these processes and others would remove the competitive bidding disadvantage for contractors who work under collectively bargained rates that include FAMILY SUPPORTING wages with healthcare and pensions. This would also reduce the burden on State subsidized healthcare needs and have a positive affect on the economic future for the State of Wisconsin.

The reporting process may be discriminatory. There is no accountability without the submission of certified payrolls. The value of thresholds should be set at lower levels and not change.

### **For further information contact:**

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## Crex Meadows Youth Conservation Camp

*The citizens of Northwest Wisconsin request:*

- **Support for additional funding in order to sustain the Crex Meadows Youth Conservation Camp project in northwest Wisconsin.**

**Reason for the Request:** For a decade, Crex Meadows Youth Conservation Camp (YCC) has been making a difference in the lives of teenagers who are at-risk and come from low-income families in northwest Wisconsin. Since the camp's inception, 500 youth have participated in this unique work experience that is unlike any other in the state. However in the last few years, CEP, Inc., the administering organization, has faced deep cuts in both federal and state funding, making it impossible to keep the camp open for these low-income students.

The camp is located within Crex Meadows, a 30,000 acre wildlife sanctuary and refuge in Burnett County. The campers participate in an effective mix of real work, for which they receive a paycheck, an engaging academic curriculum that translates to high school science credit, and a variety of recreational activities.

In most years, the Camp serves about 60 young people, who come from school districts across northern Wisconsin. For many of these young people this is not only their first job but also their first time away from

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home for an extended period. Campers are paid minimum wage to work with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) employees on projects that might include banding Canada Geese, removal of exotic plants, maintaining forest trails in the Governor Knowles State Forest, and construction of small bridges and platforms over “foot-soaking” areas along the hiking trails.

The academic curriculum is inquiry based with interactive, hands-on learning in areas such as biology, critical thinking, science method, and engineering. During evenings and weekends, campers have the opportunity to participate in activities like swimming, fishing, volleyball, trust and teambuilding, campfire games and storytelling, and even horseback riding. For more than half the campers this is their first time on a horse.

The experience at Crex Meadows gives these young people a chance to excel, learn about skills they never even knew they had, get paid for real work, earn science or elective credits at their local high school, and start planning for a brighter future. Crex Meadows has made a difference in the lives of campers. Young people that seemed headed for bleak futures have returned and finished high school, gone on to vocational school or in some cases college, and found rewarding and satisfying employment. Many of these former campers credit the skills and confidence gained at Crex Meadows as instrumental in the turn-around they made in their lives.

## **The impact of such an investment for the northwest Wisconsin region is:**

- The opportunity for students who are credit deficient to earn credit towards graduation - increased high school graduates from the region.
- Employability skills developed by 60 youth each summer - more youth gainfully employed.
- Support of the DNR and the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area through the countless conservation hours put in by the youth and their counselors during the summer.
- Self-confident youth that pursue post-secondary education or obtain employment.
- The Crex Meadows YCC has the strong support of local legislators, the Workforce Investment Board, the Youth Council, and residents of the region.

## **For further information contact:**

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