



Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton addresses workers Tuesday at Schuette Metals in Rothschild, announcing a new training initiative that will be done by Northcentral Technical College to help the company compete in a global market.

Grants partner NTC, companies for training

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ROTHSCHILD — A new state grant could give workers at Schuette Metals an edge in the global marketplace.

The \$23,300 grant will be used to offer training through Northcentral Technical College. The grant program is necessary to help state businesses compete globally and to create more jobs, said Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton.

The state's economy is shifting to more knowledge-based industries, and workers will need training in technology to stay competitive, she said.

"Everywhere in Wisconsin, we have come to understand our competitive edge is an agile, well-trained, up-to-date work force," said Lawton while addressing employees Tuesday at Schuette Metals in Rothschild about the upcoming training opportunities.

Companies like Schuette Metals, a manufacturing company that employs 85 people, have incorporated more technology into their production processes. For many companies, that means increasing their work forces and retraining employees, but the necessary learning curve sometimes

hinders businesses during the transition.

"Companies start to grow and grow quickly," Lawton said. "They bottleneck, and it hurts their success. We want to make sure their growth isn't the story of their own demise in the same sense."

Tom Osowski, engineering manager at Schuette Metals, estimates the company has grown by 10 percent in the past three years, and he expects it to grow another 10 percent this year.

"We've been very aggressive in our sales efforts to increase the size of the company," he said.

A total of \$77,263 will be used to form partnerships with NTC to train 82 employees from Schuette Metals, 312 employees from Medford-based Weather Shield Manufacturing and Mosinee-based Peachtree Companies, 15 employees from Competitive Edge for Wausau Canvas and 90 employees from Top Brass Manufacturing in Wittenberg.

NTC President Lori Weyers said the grants going to Weather Shield and Schuette Metals will be the first two awarded by the state from this grant package.

Partnerships between businesses and the school are nothing new, but represent a trend she hopes to encourage. The school hopes to establish a center for business and industry that would provide workplace training and bring workers back to the classroom, she said.

The announcement of the funds is part of the state's \$2 million in Workforce Advance Training grants that were budgeted for the Wisconsin Technical College System to train 11,900 workers throughout the state.