



For Immediate Release  
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**DOYLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN TAKES CENTER STAGE**  
Bill to have public hearing this week

A proposal initiated by La Crosse economic development professionals will be heard at a public hearing of the Colleges and Universities Committee this week. Assembly Bill 431 introduced by Rep. Steve Doyle (D-Onalaska) would expand the use of grants to technical college district boards under the Workforce Advancement Training Grant Program.

The bill was one of the proposals formulated at an economic development roundtable in La Crosse County consisting of representatives from Western Technical College, Workforce Connections, La Crosse County Chamber of Commerce, La Crosse Area Development Corporation, Union officials and other members of the Seven Rivers Alliance.

The Small Business Diversification and Market Expansion Initiative will expand the existing scope of Workforce Advancement Training Grants available to Wisconsin Technical Colleges. The enhanced grants will provide strategic planning and technical assistance to help companies diversify their business.

“In a changing global economy small business needs to be able to learn the skills to diversify to be stronger and more competitive. This diversification will ultimately result in job growth,” said Rep. Doyle.

The focus of current WAT grants is to upgrade the skills and productivity of employees of established, for-profit businesses and industries in Wisconsin to support regional workforce and economic development efforts. AB 431 was designed to allow the grants to be expanded to enable both emerging and existing companies to diversify their operations and compete in new markets. This proposal does not add any additional money to the program; it simply allows new uses for the current grant money.

“I am confident this bill will receive bi-partisan support from the Colleges and Universities Committee and will be available for a vote in the full Assembly soon,” said Doyle.