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Contact: John Gard
(920) 860-6780

Wisconsin Road and Bridge Construction Workers Are Best in the Midwest

New Report Reveals Workers Add Significant Value to the Economy, Build Better Roads at a Lower Cost

MADISON, Wis. – Wisconsin’s street, highway, and bridge construction workers were the most productive in the Great Lakes Region and third highest in the nation – contributing a per worker average of nearly, \$185,000 to the economy, according to a report released today by Wisconsin Infrastructure Investment Now, Inc. (WIIN).

The report, *Road and Bridge Construction Workers in the Midwest*, was co-authored by Frank Manzo, policy director of the Midwest Economic Policy Institute and Professor Robert Bruno, of the University of Illinois School of Labor and Employment Relations. It assesses the economic and construction-related benefits of skilled workers in the Great Lakes region – Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

“Wisconsin’s highly-skilled construction workers are the most productive in the Midwest. That productivity translates into direct economic benefits to the state, as well as better quality roads and bridges built at a lower cost,” said John Gard, spokesperson for WIIN.

Other key findings from the report are:

- a) Construction workers in the Great Lakes region build highways cost effectively, constructing each lane-mile at 43 percent less than the national average;
- b) Construction employment opportunities are expected to increase by 21.4 percent through the next decade. The majority of these new jobs will require completion of a three-to-five-year apprenticeship program; and

- c) A direct, statistical and positive correlation exists between worker productivity and prevailing wage laws.

WIIN looks forward to working with Governor Walker and state legislators to reach consensus on a plan to fund the state's future transportation infrastructure needs. "This report presents clear and convincing evidence that our state's existing prevailing wage laws have helped train world-class, highly-productive construction workers that deliver tremendous value to taxpayers," Gard said. "High productivity delivers tremendous efficiencies and savings to taxpayers through a training system that is privately financed by the men and women who do the work."

Wisconsin Infrastructure Investment Now, Inc. ("WIIN") promotes and supports the responsible investment in, and expansion of, transportation facilities, renewable and traditional energy projects, mining and other infrastructure projects in Wisconsin. WIIN promotes governmental policies that support infrastructure investment and expansion including support for Wisconsin's prevailing wage laws and opposition to right to work laws.

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