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## **Training Funds Available to Help Unemployed Workers**

**PIERRE, S.D.** – The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) has training funds available to help unemployed workers upgrade their occupational skills or learn new skills.

“We want to help laid-off South Dakotans get back to work,” said State Labor and Regulation Secretary Pam Roberts. “Through a \$617,000 National Emergency Grant, we will be able to help up to 100 people become more employable and re-enter the workforce.”

To be eligible, a worker must have lost their job after Jan. 1, 2008, qualify for unemployment insurance benefits and have been unemployed the previous 14 weeks. Workers interested in on-the-job training should contact their DLR local office.

“Employment specialists can match workers with employers who have high-demand, high-wage occupations to offer,” said Secretary Roberts. “This program has helped train people in the energy, IT, and manufacturing sectors, along with truck drivers.”

Businesses creating on-the-job training opportunities can be reimbursed 50 to 90 percent of the wage rate. The reimbursement is to assist with the costs of the training. The program will end June 30.

“Employers across the state have voiced their concern about not enough skilled workers,” said Secretary Roberts. “On-the-job training programs like this give them the opportunity to train potential new employees at almost no cost to them.”

The National Emergency Grant is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 in response to unexpected economic events which caused significant job losses. The on-the-job training program is a method to jumpstart re-employment for dislocated workers experiencing prolonged unemployment.