



**News release**

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**Lt. Governor says Fab Labs such as Gateway's  
ensure state economy remains competitive**  
*Gateway host site for national Fab Lab conference*

Wisconsin Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch on Tuesday told attendees of the United States Fab Lab Network Symposium held at Gateway Technical College that resources such as Fab Labs are needed to provide the innovation and skills to keep the state's economy competitive.

Kleefisch, speaking to leaders of the innovative fabrication laboratories from across the nation, said Fab Labs teach the collaboration and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills needed today.

"One of the best points of Wisconsin is our ethical, educated workforce and many of them are educated right here at Gateway," said Kleefisch. "The Fab Lab is an exciting resource not only at Gateway, but to the rest of the state ... We need to continue to invest in Fab Labs and technical colleges where we can access and train a competitive workforce."

There are five Fab Labs in Wisconsin and 60 in the United States.

Kleefisch said Fab Labs help provide a structure for students to gain leadership skills and to gain interest in STEM-related learning in a very hands-on way.

Gateway's SC Johnson integrated Manufacturing and Engineering Technology Center was selected as the host site for the March 23 to March 25

international symposium for the Fab Lab group. The group focuses on innovation, science and technology education as well as working with entrepreneurs and inventors.

During a panel discussion in the morning, Gateway President and CEO Bryan Albrecht pointed out that Fab Labs teach students creating, inventing and using different engineering skills. “They may be learning about materials, but they are also learning about design,” he said. “It helps provide a well-rounded education for different occupations.”

A number of groups use Gateway’s Fab Lab, from area entrepreneurs seeking to design and create prototypes for their inventions, Gateway students as part of their coursework as well as students in area K12 districts using it for focused STEM-based learning.

Part of the conference’s goal will be to show how Fab Labs can reach out to area school districts to provide those learning opportunities in STEM education, which something Gateway has done with success.

Fab Labs are a global network of local labs, helping inventors and entrepreneurs by providing access to tools for digital fabrication. They are available as a community resource, offering open access for individuals as well as scheduled access for programs.

Gateways’ Industrial Design Fab Lab is a work space containing a variety of computer controlled tools that allow for the manufacture of nearly anything an individual can conceive. The college links current program

courses with the lab, as well as a resource for area inventors, entrepreneurs,  
K12 school districts and youth groups.

Gateway Technical College collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

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