



**News advisory**

April 9, 2018

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**Ceremony celebrates opening, partnership  
and expanded career opportunities for area residents**

The Wisconsin Building Trades Council donated \$100,000 to WRTP/BIG STEP as a sign of the group's commitment to back the training that will be ongoing at the group's new office at its new Gateway's Racine Campus location.

Terry McGowan, serving as the president and business manager for the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 139 as well as a member of the Wisconsin Technical College System Board, presented the check at the opening ceremony of the WRTP/BIG STEP location April 9, in Room T217 of the college's Technical Building on its Racine Campus.

"This is a sign of our commitment to get this thing done and build it right," he told the audience.

The day celebrated not only the opening, but also the partnership between contractors, the trade industry and training partners needed for this effort.

"We are here in Racine because Wisconsin contractors and building trades want to have a presence," said WRTP/BIG STEP President Mark Kessenich.

"They know they need to have a talent pipeline, they know they will have to respond to the demands of the Foxconn project and everything related to that.

So, it's about industry bringing BIG STEP to Racine and forging that partnership in order to connect residents to career opportunities in the trades."

The training will help under-served area residents to connect with the training needed to secure solid-paying careers in the trades.

"I know people from Racine are hard-working, good people," said Racine Mayor Cory Mason. "If you give the skills, and the opportunity, they will succeed. That's what today is really about – BIG STEP and Gateway, together with the city and the county, are going to blow the doors of opportunity wide open so that average working-class people right here in the city of Racine can walk right through there and succeed."

Gateway President and CEO Bryan Albrecht said the college is proud of its partnership with WRTP/BIG STEP.

"This pre-apprenticeship training program provides a pathway of opportunity for residents of Racine, especially the inner city of Racine, to build skills necessary to compete for jobs not only for Foxconn, but other construction-related fields," said Albrecht.

"For Gateway, it will expand our programs and services to the manufacturing and construction trades, so this is a great opportunity to host it here on the Racine Campus."

WRTP/BIG STEP is a non-profit group which strives to help under-employed, under-served, and under-represented individuals succeed in well-paying careers and respond to industry's workforce needs.

Outreach and training will be held at the site for the WRTP/BIG STEP construction readiness program as well as other services. The 40-year old group has worked to train and provide skills for solid careers in Milwaukee, Madison and Minneapolis and is expanding its operations to Racine as a result of increased demand for skilled workers for the Foxconn development.

Training is offered free of charge to students.

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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