

**Holperin**

**Senate**

*the Northern Advantage*

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## “Next Generation Workforce” Plan For Technical Colleges Deserves Support, Holperin Says

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(For more information: 715-891-1412)

Wisconsin’s 16 technical colleges have developed a state budget request that would allocate aid dollars to several initiatives important to northern Wisconsin.

“I support the Wisconsin Technical College System’s ‘Next Generation Workforce’ budget package,” said State Senate candidate Jim Holperin today.

The package calls for a boost of \$13 million in state aid each year for Wisconsin’s Technical Colleges, with the increase to go to:

- \*classes to train workers in renewable energy occupations.
- \*classes that lead to degrees in health care occupations.
- \*training in advanced manufacturing skills.
- \*fire service training for over 800 local fire departments.
- \*programs to assure students stay in school until they earn a degree.

Other components of the package address local labor shortages, small business grant participation, campus infrastructure needs, minority student retention and other issues.

“The 12<sup>th</sup> Senate District does not have a University of Wisconsin campus,” Holperin said. “But we are served by three outstanding technical colleges... Nicolet Area, Northcentral and Northeast Wisconsin... which offer practical ‘close-to-home’ higher education. This area’s State Senator needs to be an aggressive and effective advocate for technical colleges and I pledge to be that advocate.”

Holperin said technical colleges are the schools people turn to when they need training or credentials, but also want to stay in the area, keep their current jobs, and continue to support their families.

“Technical college graduates report average 10% wage increases each year for the 5 years following graduation,” he said. “This is much higher than the average increase for other workers and since 80% of graduates stay in the area, there’s a very positive ripple effect throughout local economies.”

Holperin added that general state funding for Wisconsin technical colleges has been frozen at \$118 million annually since the 2001 fiscal year. State aid now comprises only about 15% of the cost of instruction for technical college students. The rest comes from property taxes and tuition/fees.

“Obviously the Next Generation Workforce Plan is an ambitious initiative and right now there are no ‘extra’ state tax dollars to fund it,” Holperin conceded. “However, state funding for the UW has gone up and I believe the state’s technical colleges need a few friends in the legislature. I intend to fight for the colleges that are most important to our area so they get their fair share of state resources.”