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## Press Release

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### Helms, Walsh Named Vocational Trainers of the Year

JUNEAU, Alaska—The Alaska Workforce Investment Board has named Bret Helms the Post Secondary Vocational Training Administrator of the Year and Brian Walsh the Secondary Vocational Training Instructor of the Year for 2008.

“Vocational education is a critical component of our Alaska workforce investment system,” Labor Commissioner Click Bishop said. “Vocational education, also known as career and technical education, helps keep students in school, reduces dropout rates, improves grades and increases entry into the workforce or postsecondary education.”

Only one in five Alaska jobs requires a four-year bachelor's degree or more – however many of the rest do require education and training after high school. In Alaska, these post-secondary training needs are being served by a variety of institutions, including the University of Alaska system, the Alaska Vocational Technical Center, regional training centers, trade unions and the private sector.

“Bret and Brian have joined a select group of Alaskans whose contributions are significantly improving and promoting vocational technical career education,” AWIB Chair Jim L. Lynch said. “Nominations for these prestigious awards come from an Alaska business or industry.”

Helms, of Fairbanks, is the training administrator for the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union #375. He was recognized for a program that “instills pride of work and high tech skills” and that creates good Alaska citizens.

Walsh, of Anchorage, teaches welding at the Anchorage School District's King Career Center. He was chosen for his “creative and innovative” approach to teaching and for his good working relationship with employers and apprenticeship programs, and for providing opportunities for your students to develop skills that help them find jobs.

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