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For Immediate Release

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GEFI Building Update – May 20, 2014

Based upon the initial inspections of the building, it appears GEFI will be closed for an extended period of time in order to complete clean-up and needed repairs from the fire. There are continued inspections taking place of the structural and mechanical systems, and the building could be closed up to 8 weeks or longer. We will have better estimates once the mechanical and structural engineers are able to finalize their evaluations on the damage to floors, ceilings, and other structures and systems in the building. We do not have a total cost estimate of repairs at this time.

Throughout the closure, both DWD and DCF have continued to operate all their online services as normal. All of DWD's non-GEF1 locations have continued to operate normally, including the Unemployment Insurance Call Centers and Wisconsin Job Service centers. All of the services that DCF performs for its partners in counties throughout Wisconsin have also continued to operate without disruption.

Staff have been flexible about doing their job well regardless of working in alternate locations or at home since last week's fire, and the majority of Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and Department of Children and Families (DCF) employees will have a long-term work location on or before Tuesday, May 27.

GEFI Building Clean-Up and Repair

To protect the health and safety of our employees, DWD and DCF staff will not be returning to the building until after the clean-up is complete and the ventilation system has been cleared. In addition, there will be no parking in the GEFI building until further notice because the ventilation system is connected throughout the building, including the parking garage.

As expected, there is a lingering smoke smell throughout the building, and there was extensive damage on the fourth floor. The Madison Fire Department released today that the fire was ruled accidental as a result of an unspecified electrical fault/failure. The building had last been inspected on December 6, 2013, and there were no violations. The building is due for its next inspection before June 30.

Both DWD and DCF have identified staff to retrieve work files or equipment that will be crucial to work functions in the weeks ahead. All materials are all being cleaned before they are being distributed back to employees, and those items most critical to continue work functions are being retrieved first.

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