



DOL News Brief

December 23, 2009

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The "Tools Challenge" Continues!

More than 440 sites have joined the Department of Labor's "Tools for America's Job Seekers Challenge." Enter your online job search or career site now and get in on the action. Starting January 4, DOL will be asking workforce professionals and members of the public to log-on to the site, vote for their favorite tools, provide comments, and of course, apply for jobs! It's not too late, join the challenge now.

- [Join the Challenge](#)

Ken Bennett Appointed Secretary Solis' Regional V Representative

"What an honor it is to have the opportunity to work in Region Five where some of the best Department of Labor employee are assigned," said Ken Bennett, upon



returning to his hometown of Chicago as Secretary Solis' Region Five Representative. "I want everyone to know that I am here to help. I am ready to put all my knowledge, skills and experiences to work for you." Bennett comes to DOL with an extensive background in strategic program development, project management and staff development on the local, state and federal levels. Prior to joining the Department, he served in the White House as a Deputy Assistant to President Obama and Deputy Director of Presidential Personnel. He will serve as the Secretary's point person covering the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

Wage & Hour: Reaching Out to the Latino Community on Radio

North Carolina has a growing Latino population of both permanent residents and migrant workers — many of whom are not fluent in English. In an effort to spread the word about workers' rights throughout the state's emerging Latino communities, two DOL Wage and Hour investigators gave a live presentation to listeners on Punto Latino @ La Tremenda radio show.

What's Hot

POTUS Extends COBRA

On Monday, President Obama signed legislation extending the eligibility period for the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) premium reduction through Feb. 28, 2010 — an additional two months — and the maximum period for receiving the subsidy for an additional six months. "Millions of unemployed Americans and their families will be better able to afford and keep their health benefit coverage because of this new law," said Assistant Secretary of the Employee Benefits Security Administration Phyllis C. Borzi.

- [Read Borzi's Statement](#)

Twenty-Five Years Later: Wilberg Mine Tragedy

This week, as many Americans gear up for the holiday season, community members in Utah's Emery County observed a somber anniversary. Twenty-five years ago, just days before Christmas, the Wilberg Mine was the site of a horrific disaster. Mine management was attempting a company longwall production record when flames erupted at the mouth of the longwall section where 28 miners were working. The fire spread rapidly, rendering impassable both of the section's main escapeways. Twenty-seven miners perished; only one managed to escape. As with most mining tragedies, however, it also gave way to improvements in mine safety, including the development of smaller self-contained self-rescuers that can be readily available to miners; keeping tailgate entries open; and preventing roof falls on longwalls to help miners easily escape in the event of an emergency. "When I think of tragedies such as the one that occurred at the Wilberg Mine, I am reminded that no job is truly good unless it is also safe," said Secretary Solis.

- [Read the Secretary's Op-Ed](#)

DOL Working For You: Mine Academy Serves Stranded Citizens During Blizzard

The Labor Department's National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley, West Virginia was the scene of a real life continuity of operations (COOP) exercise when it served as an emergency shelter for scores of citizens trapped in last weekend's record snowfall.

In all, 45 people, including children, disabled individuals, and even a few pets hunkered down for several days and were given a place to sleep, food and medical



Approximately 105,000 people tuned in to Carmen Otero-Infante and Edgardo Martinez-Caban and were later able to participate in a question and answer session. The Wage and Hour Division is planning other efforts to reach this growing community, including building relationships with community organizations and distributing educational posters.

- [W&H Resources for Spanish Speakers](#)

Save the Date: April 14-15 Latino Health & Safety Conference

Following a Labor Day announcement from Secretary Solis, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will convene a national action summit on workplace safety and the Latino community. Scheduled for April 14-15, 2010 in Houston, Texas, the conference will bring together representatives from various sectors to develop new partnerships, target and expand outreach, and share the most effective strategies to reach Latino workers. More information, including registration information, will be available in the next few weeks on [OSHA's Web site](#).

See You Next Year

The next issue of the DOL Newsletter will arrive in your inbox January 7, 2010 with more exciting news, information and events from the U.S. Department of Labor. Until then, have a safe and happy holiday. We will see you next year!



- [View the Poster \(PDF\)](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

Office of Public Engagement — Tribal Consultation Meetings

- [January 5, 2010 — Ft. Snelling, MN](#)
- [January 12, 2010 — Phoenix, AZ](#)

OFCCP — How to Prepare Construction Contractors for an OFCCP Compliance Evaluation

- [January 5, 2010 — Mountainside, NJ](#)

EBSA — Retirement Planning Workshop

- [January 13, 2010 — Oxon Hill, MD](#)

OFCCP — Long Island Industry Liaison Group Meeting

- [January 13, 2010 — Farmingdale, NY](#)

OFCCP — Veteran Employment

attention by Academy employees. DOL emergency management specialist and COOP site coordinator Shane Alexander provided on-site status updates, while Academy Superintendent Janet Bertinuson (both pictured here) coordinated emergency actions with DOL officials.

"This is what we train for," said Alexander about the staff effort, while Bertinuson added "it was our opportunity to give back to the community."

National News: Enactment of the Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections Act

This week, President Obama signed into law S. 1422, the Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections Act. This new law amends the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 to make sure that flight attendants and pilots are able to qualify for FMLA benefits, just like other American workers. FMLA provides access to up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for events such as the birth or adoption of a child or to care for a family member with a serious health condition — ensuring that workers are able to take care of their families when the need arises.

- [Read the Press Secretary's Statement](#)

DOL in Action

OSHA Cites Walt Disney World After Worker Deaths

DOL's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has cited Walt Disney World for safety violations and proposed a total of \$44,000 in penalties against the company following the fatal accident of a monorail driver in July. Additionally, OSHA issued a recommendation letter concerning the death of an actor during a "Pirates of the Caribbean" production at the theme park.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Department Obtains Judgment Against Advisors to NFL Player

Financial advisors Mary Wong and David Talbot have been barred from serving in a fiduciary capacity to any employee benefit security plan governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) after allegedly participating in prohibited transfers from a pension plan sponsored by one of NFL player Michael Vick's companies. In a separate court judgment, Talbot was ordered to restore \$369,431.71 to the pension plan.

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL Settles Discrimination Findings at Coca-Cola Bottling Plant

The Department has agreed to settle findings of hiring discrimination at the BCI Coca-Cola Bottling Co. plant located in Los Angeles, Calif. Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) investigators found that the facility's selection process disproportionately rejected African-American applicants for entry-level merchandiser positions. Under the terms of the agreement, BCI Coca-Cola agrees to pay \$49,376 in back pay and interest to be shared among 26 former applicants, as well as hire seven of the previously rejected African-American applicants.

- [Read the News Release](#)

National Emergency Grant for Oregon

The Department has announced a \$945,820 National Emergency Grant to provide services for 813 workers laid-off by Hynix Semiconductor Manufacturing America Inc. in Eugene, Ore. "Today's grant will continue to help these Oregonians with job placement assistance, career training and other re-employment services to help them get started in new careers," said

Conference

- [January 15, 2010 — San Francisco, CA](#)

OFCCP — Open Forum Compliance Assistance

- [January 22, 2010 — San Antonio, TX](#)

OFCCP — Beyond the Written AAP

- [January 27, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

EBSA — Getting It Right: Know Your Fiduciary Responsibilities Seminar

- [January 28, 2010 — Pasadena, CA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [January 6, 2010 — Boston, MA](#)
- [January 13, 2010 — Boston, MA](#)
- [January 20, 2010 — Boston, MA](#)
- [February 4, 2010 — Los Angeles, CA](#)

Follow USDOL on

- DOL's OSHA cites Walt Disney World following monorail collision and issues recommendation letter following actorâ.
<http://bit.ly/5L8FOW> 40 minutes ago
- DOL obtains judgment with Omaha, Neb., woman over improper transfer of assets of plan sponsored by NFL player
<http://bit.ly/6dC9EL> about 2 hours ago

Secretary Solis.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Spotlight on States: Texas

OSHA Announces Expansion of its San Antonio Office

With a population of more than two million people, San Antonio is the 7th largest city in the United States. Population and business growth, coupled with an extensive workload, have prompted OSHA to elevate its San Antonio location to an area office in order to better serve the needs of workers and employers in central Texas. The change in San Antonio's status from a "district" to an "area" office will include an increase in staff to address the safety and health of high risk construction workers, with an emphasis on Latino construction workers who are statistically at greater risk of workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Opportunities are Open: Featured Possibilities

Want a career that ensures all workers, both nationally and in our global community, have a voice? DOL may be the place for you. The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM) and Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) are hiring. Whether you have an interest in managing and developing human capital or protecting vulnerable populations internationally, the Department of Labor has opportunities open. Explore the three featured positions below or [view all](#) the exciting and rewarding careers at DOL.

1. Positions in the Washington DC Metro Area
[International Relations Officer — GS-0131-12/13](#)
MS-10-HRC-ILAB-030
Close: 12/31/2009
2. Positions in the Washington DC Metro Area
[International Economist — GS-0110-12/14](#)
MS-10-HRC-ILAB-035
Close: 03/19/2010
3. Position in the Dallas, TX
[Human Resources Officer — GS-0201-14/14](#)
MS-10-CHI-OASAM-037
Close: 01/11/2010

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U.S. Department of Labor, Frances Perkins Building, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210
www.dol.gov | Telephone: 1-866-4-USA-DOL (1-866-487-2365) | TTY: 1-877-889-5627 | [Contact Us](#)