



## DOL News Brief

January 14, 2010

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### Innovation Drives Everything



"American innovation that will put Americans to work." That's what Labor Secretary Solis saw at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit earlier this week. She joined Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, Michigan Governor Jennifer

Granholm and dozens of elected officials at a special visit to the show, the largest and most prestigious auto exhibition in the world. The delegation met with the CEOs of the "Big Three" automakers, leadership of the United Auto Workers Union, got a first-hand look at the next generation of "green" transportation and technology...and even got to test drive a few cars of the future. As much as there was to see, there was even more to hear, especially during a working lunch that focused on "Jobs and Advanced Technologies," where representatives from local businesses shared how they will be putting people to work in high-growth, energy efficient manufacturing jobs, thanks to Recovery Act funding.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

### It Pays to Be Safe

Eight Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H farm safety and health quiz bowl teams from across Pennsylvania competed in the Farm Safety Quiz Bowl State Finals on January 13.



The Mifflinburg Area FFA and Union County 4-H teams finished in first place, taking home a \$650 cash prize each. The competition, co-sponsored by the Department's Wage and Hour Division, allowed teams to demonstrate their knowledge about farm safety and health. Participants studied a range of resources, including child labor requirements in agricultural occupations under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Finalists then competed during the Farm Safety Quiz Bowl State Finals at the annual Pennsylvania Farm Show.

### What's Hot

#### Hello Mrs. O! First Lady Comes to Labor

The Labor Department was the place to be on Thursday, when Michelle Obama made a visit, delighting of hundreds of employees jammed into the Great Hall, and thousands of others across the country who watched via the internet. She praised the work of DOL, thanking colleagues for their efforts "whether you've been here for decades or for days," and added, "We often forget about the the work that you do to make things happen for this nation." Describing herself as "one of the 120 percenters," who give 120 percent to both family and work. Mrs. Obama said, "if you are not doing everything at 120 percent, you think you're failing. And with that kind of anxiety comes a lot of additional stress and a whole lot of guilt." She called for better policies that allow parents more flexibility to balance family demands and work — the type of policies that are the cornerstone of the Department of Labor. "These aren't niceties" she added, "they're necessities." The First Lady also expressed "profound heartbreak" over the losses attributed to the Haitian earthquake. After her remarks, she paid a visit to the Department's child care center, where she read "Green Eggs and Ham" to a dozen toddlers, and joined Secretary Solis in serving the kids healthy snacks prepared by the local Job Corps culinary students.



- [View the Video](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)
- [Read the First Lady's Remarks](#)
- [Read the Secretary's Remarks](#)

#### Department Announces "Pathways Out of Poverty" Grants

The fourth of five Green Jobs grants was announced this week. The \$150 million Pathways Out of Poverty grants will serve individuals in diverse communities across the nation. Authorized by the Recovery Act, these grants will support programs that help disadvantaged populations find economic self-sufficiency through employment in energy efficiency and renewable energy industries. Programs funded by these grants will help workers in communities where poverty rates are 15 percent or higher gain access to good jobs that pay family-supporting wages and offer opportunities for advancement.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Visit the Green Jobs CoP](#)

### DOL Working For You

- [Read the News Release](#)

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## Latino Safety Conference

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will convene a National Action Summit for Latino Worker Health and Safety, April 14-15 in Houston, Texas. The summit will spotlight hazards and challenges faced by this vulnerable sector of the nation's workforce and craft strategies to prevent thousands of injuries and deaths every year. "Far too many Latino workers have needlessly lost their lives just trying to earn a living and it must stop," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA David Michaels.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- Register

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## Upcoming Deadlines & Events

### Spotlight: ODEP is Listening

On January 21, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Kathy Martinez will host the first in a series of listening sessions in Dallas, Texas. Each session is an opportunity for members of the public to provide input on effective ways to employ women, Veterans and minorities with disabilities, as well as best practices for increasing employment of people with disabilities. Additional listening tours will be January 27 (Philadelphia), February 11 (Chicago), February 16 (San Francisco), February 24 (Atlanta), and March 3 (Boston).

- More Information and Registration
- [January 21, 2010 — Dallas, TX](#)

### EBSA — Getting Ready for the 2009 Form 5500 and Electronic Filing Webcast - Part IV

- [January 21, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

### EBSA — COBRA Premium Reduction Extension Provisions Compliance Assistance Webcast

- [January 22, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

### EBSA — Getting It Right: Know Your Fiduciary Responsibilities Seminar

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

### ETA — Webinar: Youth Entrepreneurship as a Tool in the Workforce Development System

- [January 22, 2010 — Online](#)

## Funding Helps Michiganders Succeed In New Careers

Three individuals, including two former auto industry workers, have all embarked on new careers in Michigan thanks to Workforce Investment Act funding provided by the Labor Department.



Kevin Kolassa spent 25 years manufacturing gas tanks and steering columns when he lost his job and decided "I needed to do something different with my career." With his college education partly paid for by DOL, Kolassa became certified and employed as a phlebotomy technician. He plans to someday become a medical lab technologist.

Patrick Madonna took a buyout from his job as an assembler after 12 years at the Ford Motor Company but found it difficult to find full time work after that. Through the Michigan Works! Program, Madonna received job search assistance and was quickly hired as a customer service rep by a local furniture outlet, where he was since promoted to Sales Manager. "The program helped me find a better job," he said.



Sheila Jolley worked for seven years in customer service for a publications distribution firm when her job was outsourced to Canada. Jolley decided to "reinvent myself" and enrolled in a medical billing and coding computer program paid for by DOL funds. She is now a Debit Card Specialist at a health administration company. "I got my second chance at being a success from the schooling I received" through DOL, she said.

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## News You Can Use: New COBRA Model Notices Available

This week the Department's Employee Benefits Security Administration posted COBRA premium reduction extension model notices online to help plans and individuals comply with requirements under the Recovery Act and the Department of Defense Appropriation Act 2010 (2010 DOD Act). Each model notice is designed for a particular group of qualified beneficiaries and contains information to help satisfy notice provisions outlined by the Recovery Act, including those added by the 2010 DOD Act.

- [Get COBRA Updates](#)
- [Read the Fact Sheet](#)

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## DOL In Action

### DOL Sues Trucking Company to Recover \$3 Mil in Medical Claims

The Labor Department sued the owners of bankrupt Mid-States Express Inc., in Aurora, Ill. for misusing 401(k) and health plan assets to operate the company. Defendant Bruce Hartmann failed to disclose to employees that their \$3 million in medical claims were not likely to be paid, even as the company continued to deduct money from their paychecks for medical coverage. "These defendants blatantly misused their employees' retirement and health benefit contributions for personal gain," said Phyllis C. Borzi, Assistant Secretary of the Employee Benefits Security Administration.

- [Read the News Release](#)

### MSHA Issues West Virginia Accident Investigation Report

### MSHA — Mining Blasting Safety and Application Seminar

- [January 20-21, 2010 — Beaver, WV](#)

### MSHA — 14th Professional Development Mine Safety Seminar for Supervisors

- [January 20-21, 2010 — Allentown, PA](#)

### MSHA — Annual Arkansas Mine Safety and Health Conference

- [February 4-5, 2010 — Hot Springs, AR](#)

### OFCCP — Veteran Employment Conference

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

### OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Supply and Service Contractors

- [January 15, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

### OFCCP — Web Listening Series

- [January 20, 2010 — Webinar](#)

### OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [January 20, 2010 — Boston, MA](#)
- [January 21, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)
- [February 4, 2010 — Los Angeles, CA](#)

### OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [January 21, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [January 28, 2010 — Orange, CA](#)
- [January 29, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

### OFCCP — Workforce Awareness Group Seminar

- [January 22, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

### OFCCP — Open Forum Compliance Assistance

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

### OFCCP — Workforce Awareness Group Seminar

- [January 22, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

The Department's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) has issued its accident investigation report for the May 2009 inundation at the Cobra Resources LLC Mountaineer Alma A Mine in Wharnccliffe, W.Va. Heavy rains touched off a series of events that blocked the escape routes of seven miners working underground for nearly 24 hours. Ultimately, all seven exited from the mine without injury. MSHA issued two citations to the mine operator for failing to properly maintain the mine's system of diversion ditches and escapeways.

- [Read the News Release](#)

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## Spotlight on States: New York

### More Than \$1.8 Million for Mail Hauling Employees

More than \$1.8 million in back wages will be recovered for employees of MT Transportation & Logistics Services Inc., a Long Island, N.Y., trucking company under contract with the United States Postal Service to haul mail. DOL's Wage and Hour Division cited the company and its officers for failing to pay their service employees the hourly rates and fringe benefits required under the federal McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act. The company and its officers will also be debarred from future government contracts for three years.

- [Read the News Release](#)

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## Green Scene: Job Corps Off to a Green Start



The new year is already full of excitement for staff and students at both the Los Angeles Job Corps Center and the Earle C. Clements Job Corps Center in Morganfield, Ky. Major "green" construction begins this year thanks to funds made available through the Recovery Act. Designed to attain Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

certification status, the new L.A. facility will feature water-efficient landscaping. The Earle C. Clements Job Corps Center will soon be greening its center by installing a wind/solar hybrid grid inter-tie electrical power generating system.

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## Opportunities are Open: ¿Se Habla WHD?

Looking for a way to put your foreign language skills to work? Check out these positions that are available in the Department's Wage and Hour Division. We're looking for individuals who care about people and want to make sure they get the wages, overtime and other benefits that they have earned. We are particularly looking for applicants that are proficient in Spanish, any Indian dialect, as well as Russian or Polish. Explore the three Wage and Hour Investigator opportunities below or [view all](#) the rewarding DOL positions.

1. Positions in Westbury, NY  
[WHD Investigator \(Spanish/English\) — GS-1849-09/09](#)  
DE-10-BOS-WHD-39  
Close: 01/27/2010
2. Position in Westbury, NY  
[WHD Investigator \(Indian-any dialect/English\) — GS-1849-09/09](#)  
DE-10-BOS-WHD-42  
Close:01/27/2010
3. Position in Westbury, NY

**OFCCP — Webinar: Ready, Set, Go for Construction Contractors**

- [January 26, 2010 — Webinar](#)

[WHD Investigator \(Russian or Polish/English\) — GS-1849-09/09](#)

DE-10-BOS-WHD-45

Close: 01/27/2010

**OFCCP — AAP Development and Preparing for a Desk Audit**

- [January 26, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [January 28, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)
- [February 3, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)

**OFCCP — Webinar: Affirmative Actions Audit**

- [January 27, 2010 — Anchorage, AK](#)

**OFCCP — Beyond the Written AAP**

- [January 27, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

**OFCCP — Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) Workshop**

- [February 3, 2010 — Pittsburgh, PA](#)

**OSHA — MACOSH Meeting**

- [January 19-20, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

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