



DOL News Brief

March 11, 2010

[Subscribe](#) | [Send Feedback](#) | [PDF Version](#)



Remembering Scotia



An historical marker was placed beside U.S. 119 at Oven Fork, Ky., Tuesday to honor the 26 miners and federal inspectors who died in two coal mine explosions on March 9 and March 11, 1976.

The methane blasts rocked the Scotia Mine in eastern Kentucky and, 34 years later, widows of the fallen men, representatives from the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), members of the mining community and local politicians gathered to honor the fallen miners at the site of the new highway marker. "We are not resigned to the deaths of miners," Dr. Gregory Wagner, MSHA deputy assistant secretary, said during the ceremony. "We will continue to fight, and we will continue to work to eliminate the causes of injuries, illnesses and fatal accidents in mining. We look forward to the day that we celebrate a time when no miners die in this nation."

- [View the Slideshow](#)

\$2 Billion for Training and Youth

On Wednesday, Secretary Solis testified before the Appropriations Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. She presented the department's fiscal



year 2011 budget and fielded questions from Chairman David Obey and the rest of the Congressional panel—covering the full range of DOL programs and initiatives. At the hearing, Solis also announced the Obama Administration's support for \$2 billion in additional funds for training and youth employment. "Workers and their families are hurting in these tough economic times," said the Secretary. "We want to ensure that investments prompting job creation will continue until the labor market fully recovers from the economic downturn."

- [Read the Secretary's Testimony](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)
- [Read the News Release](#)

What's Hot

Pension Asset Restitution

The U.S. Labor Department has obtained consent judgments providing for restitution of more than \$12 million by plan officials and service providers involved with the employee stock ownership plan sponsored by The Employee Ownership Holding Co. of Stockton, Calif., and Fife, Wash. The judgments also provide for release of a fund currently holding more than \$11 million. "These settlements send a clear message that the Labor Department will not tolerate the blatant misuse of pension assets at the expense of workers and their families," said Secretary Solis.

- [Read the News Release](#)

\$3 million in Proposed Fines for BP-Husky Refinery

BP North American Inc. and BP-Husky Refining LLC's jointly owned refinery in Oregon, Ohio, were hit with 42 alleged willful violations and 20 alleged serious violations for exposing workers to a variety of hazards, including failure to provide adequate pressure relief for process units. The Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) proposed a total of \$3,042,000 in penalties. "OSHA has found that BP often ignored or severely delayed fixing known hazards in its refineries," said Secretary Solis. "There is no excuse for taking chances with people's lives. BP must fix the hazards now."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Department Provides More Than \$2.7 Million for Louisiana Recovery

A \$2,769,323 DOL National Emergency Grant will help continue clean-up and recovery efforts in the wake of damage caused by Hurricane Gustav in Louisiana in 2008. Funds will be used to create more temporary jobs to assist in the recovery efforts as a result of the devastation. In addition, the funds will provide workforce development services for many of the participants to assist them in obtaining permanent employment.

- [Read the News Release](#)

News You Can Use

Comment Period on Change to Injury/Illness Data Extended

OSHA is extending the comment period on the proposal to revise its Occupational Injury and Illness Recording and Reporting regulation to March 30 because of weather-related federal government closures in February, and to correct the comment period stated in the proposed rule. The proposal focuses on restoring a column on the OSHA Form 300 to better identify work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The rule does not change existing requirements for when and under what circumstances employers must record MSDs.

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

Screening and Surveillance: A Guide to OSHA Standards

OSHA has updated the "Screening and Surveillance: A Guide to OSHA

Celebrate "Herstory" with DOL



In recognition of Women's History Month, the Department is hosting several events in the upcoming weeks. Next Monday, March 15, DOL's Women's Bureau will begin their series of webinars/teleconferences designed to connect women with green jobs

training and green employment.

On Wednesday, March 17 join Secretary Solis for a one-on-one conversation with CNBC's Maria Bartiromo, where she will explore Bartiromo's amazing journey and discuss the "10 Laws of Enduring Success." The following day, Ms. Kate Campbell Stevenson will deliver her acclaimed one woman performance titled "Women: Back to the Future." Both events will be held at the Frances Perkins Building in Washington, D.C.

- [More on the WB Teleconference](#)
- [View the Bartiromo Invitation](#)

Oates Highlights ETA Training

On Tuesday, Assistant Secretary for Employee and Training Administration Jane Oates keynoted a meeting of the Association for Career and Technical Education. This annual event focused on current policy issues, advocacy and leadership. Assistant Secretary Oates focused her remarks on the numerous training programs offered by the Department of Labor to support those out of work and under the poverty line and the Secretary's priority to create opportunities that will lead to good jobs for everyone.

Agricultural Employer Forum Brings Together Multiple Federal Agencies

On March 4, Wage and Hour Assistant District Director in Georgia, Larry Benjamin, spoke to 130 agricultural employers and farm labor contractors about upcoming changes in H-2A rules, as well as



DOL enforcement of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA) and child labor. Sponsored by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service and the Farm Labor Forum at the Tobacco Exchange Warehouse in Alma, Ga., the event brought together representatives from the Labor Department, Social Security, Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services. Forums like this allow employers to hear information from a number of different labor-related agencies, so they can better understand how agencies' rules will affect their use of temporary employees during the upcoming growing and harvesting seasons.

Standards" pocket guide that provides occupational health professionals with an overview of OSHA requirements on medical screening and surveillance. It describes what physical examinations and tests, such as chest x-rays, lung function tests and blood tests, are required to measure worker exposure to chemicals such as hexavalent chromium and benzene, and other workplace hazards such as noise and bloodborne pathogens. The guide also points to the appropriate standards for more specifics.

- [Order Copies of the Guide](#)

DOL in Action

High Injury and Illness Employers Receive Letter from OSHA

About 15,000 workplaces received letters identifying them with the nation's highest rates of workplace injuries and illnesses through employer-reported data. "Receipt of this letter means that workers in that particular establishment are being injured at a higher rate than in most other businesses of its kind in the country," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for the OSHA David Michaels. "Employers whose businesses have injury and illness rates this high need to take immediate steps to protect their workers." The letter also offered assistance in reducing workplace injuries and illnesses by suggesting, among other things, the use of OSHA's free safety and health consultation services provided through the states.

- [Read the News Release](#)

TAA for 4,600 in 14 States

The Department announced that approximately 4,600 workers from companies in 14 states are eligible to apply for Trade Adjustment Assistance. Those who apply may receive case management and re-employment services, training in new occupational skills and trade readjustment allowances that provide income support for workers enrolled in training. Some workers may also receive job search and relocation allowances, and the Health Coverage Tax Credit.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Bigger Fine for Faulty Mine

An Administrative Law Judge with the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission took the unusual step of increasing penalties assessed by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) against a coal mine operator. The judge raised the fines against Shelby Mining Co., from \$7,684 to \$10,000. The company's Coke Mine #1 near Montevallo, Ala., received citations in November 2007 for the operator's failure to follow the ventilation plan and failure to conduct an adequate preshift examination. "Before the inspector issued the citation and order in dispute, the mine had experienced six previous methane ignitions, one of which resulted in serious burns to two miners," said MSHA assistant secretary Joseph A. Main. "Those ignitions should have raised sufficient concern for the mine operator to take the necessary steps to protect its miners."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Around DOL

World Will Soon Come to DOL

On Monday, Secretary Solis held a meeting with U.S. labor and business organizations in preparation for the upcoming G20 Labor and Employment Ministers Meeting. This April will be the first time in history that the Labor and Employment Ministers from the G20 nations will meet. "This meeting comes at a critical moment, as the global economic crisis has left behind a job crisis," Solis noted. "We have a broad mandate, a huge responsibility, and an unprecedented opportunity."



- [Find Out More About MSPA](#)

International Women's Day

In celebration of International Women's Day, Secretary Solis addressed nearly 300 attendees at an event hosted by the UN Information Center Washington, the UN Foundation and the Women's Foreign Policy Group. "As a product of the women's movement, the social justice movement and the civil rights movement, I have seen how far we have come in advancing the role of women in our country and around the globe," said Solis. "I also see how much further we have yet to go in supporting women and girls to ensure equality and opportunity in our workplaces, our schools and in our communities as a whole." The event was one of many held around the world that called for greater support to women, particularly in developing countries.

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

Innovative Workforce Solutions



On Wednesday, Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training Administration Jane Oates traveled to Philadelphia to meet with a myriad of local organizations, including Jobs For the

Future, the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board, District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund, the Job Opportunity Investment Network, and the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Literacy. She toured a union training facility which prepares both members and non-members for careers in healthcare. Oates moved on to the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania where she addressed more than 100 business leaders and joined in a panel on local job creation efforts. The event coincided with Philadelphia's Workforce Solutions Week, which brings together workers, employers, public officials, and educators to examine innovative approaches to national workforce development.

- [Learn about Workforce Solutions Week](#)
- [Learn about Training & Upgrading Fund](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

EBSA — Health Benefits Laws Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [March 16, 2010 — Las Vegas, NV](#)

ETA — Reporting Requirements for Grantees Webinar

- [March 12, 2010 — Online Event](#)

MSHA — Communications & Tracking Workshop

- [March 17, 2010 — Triadelphia, WV](#)

- [View the Slideshow](#)

WB Hosts Delegation in Celebration of International Women's Day



Last week, the Department's Women's Bureau Director Sara Manzano-Diaz hosted an international delegation of women attorneys, judges, and academics to discuss women and justice issues. The distinguished group came from across the globe — Algeria, Cape Verde, Germany, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Liberia, Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, the People's Republic of China, Rwanda, and Turkey — to share and learn about the status of women's lives. Manzano-Diaz led a spirited exchange on the Women's Bureau's vision to empower all working women to achieve economic security, with the visitors sharing stories about conditions for women in their countries. Topics varied, including violence against women, age and gender discrimination, microcredit, and maternity and family leave; yet the commonality of issues was clear to all, and the women discussed possible solutions.

Looking Back and Moving Forward



On Wednesday, Secretary Solis hosted her first town hall meeting at the Department. Before a standing room only crowd of employees and departmental officials, she outlined DOL's accomplishments, noting that even her boss, President Obama, gives a year-end review. She solicited "good ideas" to ensure that the Department is doing everything it can to assist working families during these challenging

times. The Secretary also took a moment to highlight the work of several individuals who have gone above the call of duty — including braving the recent blizzard!

- [View the Slideshow](#)
- [Watch the Video](#)

DOL Working For You

Dollars and Cents Add Up for Woman's Bureau Wi\$eup Entrepreneur

Esther Fernandez of Massachusetts has not only gained control over her finances, but also started a real estate investment company. She credits her success to the knowledge and savvy gained from the Wi\$eUp financial education program funded by the Women's Bureau.



Fernandez, a divorced mother of two, took courses in financial planning, investing, and entrepreneurship which she said gave her renewed confidence in her abilities and helped her set and reach goals of financial independence and starting a business. She also offers advice to help distressed homeowners who face financial problems with their lenders.

"Before I was fearful about financial challenges I faced," Fernandez said, "but the Wi\$eup program motivated me, gave me confidence, and allows me to help others."

Recovery Highlights: Emergency Grants

MSHA — Spring Thaw Workshop

- [March 17, 2010 — Sacramento, CA](#)

OFCCP — ADA and Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended Seminar

- [March 19, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — ARRA Webinar for Federal and Federally-Assisted Construction Contractors

- [March 16, 2010 — Alaska](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance for Construction Contractors

- [March 17, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [March 18, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminars

- [March 17, 2010 — Boston, MA](#)

OFCCP — Community Outreach Day Job Fair

- [March 18, 2010 — Blackwood, NJ](#)

OFCCP — Construction Technical Assistance with ARRA Updates

- [March 18, 2010 — Seattle, WA](#)

OFCCP — Town Hall Meeting

- [March 17, 2010 — New Orleans, LA](#)

OFCCP — Supply and Service Compliance Seminar

- [March 18, 2010 — Portland, OR](#)

OSHA — Safety Day

- [March 17, 2010 — Sugar Grove, IL](#)

OWCP — Town Hall Meetings to assist nuclear weapons workers

- [March 16, 2010 — Kennewick, WA](#)

WB — 5th Annual Daly City Women of Excellence Awards Event

- [March 18, 2010 — Daly City, CA](#)

WB — Womenomics Conference

- [March 20, 2010 — Media, PA](#)

WB — Why is Green Good for Women?

- [March 15, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

WB — Young Women, Strong Leaders Conference

- [March 19, 2010 — Ypsilanti, MI](#)

Minnesotans Affected by Defense Industry Layoffs Awarded Grant

A grant in the amount of \$786,901 made available through the Recovery Act will assist 183 workers affected by layoffs at BAE Systems Inc. in Fridley, Minn. "While we are seeing positive signs in our economy, we won't be satisfied until all unemployed workers are able to quickly prepare for and enter good jobs that lead to long-term careers," said Secretary Solis. "This grant will provide these Minnesotans with the re-employment and retraining services necessary to find new jobs in promising industries."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Grant for Jobless Workers with Health Coverage Assistance

A \$297,000 grant will provide an estimated 280 jobless workers in Georgia with partial premium payments for health insurance coverage. "Unemployment should not affect a family's health and safety," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training Jane Oates. "This grant will help provide peace of mind by assisting eligible workers with health insurance premium payments while they look for new jobs." Awarded to the Georgia Department of Labor, the grant will be used to make "gap filler" payments for unemployed individuals who are receiving Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits and are eligible for the Health Coverage Tax Credit program. The grant was made available through the Recovery Act.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Spotlight on States: Arkansas

Workers in Arkansas are receiving a National Emergency Grant in the amount of \$341,844 to assist in clean-up and recovery efforts in the wake of severe storms and flooding that occurred in Arkansas in December 2009. "Arkansas has not recovered fully from the damage inflicted by storms and flooding in December. This grant will provide temporary employment to workers by supporting their efforts to restore impacted communities," said Secretary Solis.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Opportunities are Open: ILAB

Join the team! DOL's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) works to increase employment opportunities globally and provide workers a fair share of their productivity and voice in their work lives. As a member of the ILAB team, you can help shape U.S. policies and design innovative projects to improve global livelihoods and protect vulnerable people, including women and children. Explore the positions below or [view all](#) the exciting and rewarding opportunities at DOL.

1. Positions in Washington DC Metro Area
[International Relations Officer — GS-0131-12/13](#)
DE-10-HRC-ILAB-046
Close: 03/19/2010
2. Positions in Washington DC Metro Area
[International Economist — GS-0110-12/14](#)
DE-10-HRC-ILAB-035
Close: 03/19/2010
3. Position in Washington DC Metro Area
[International Relations Analyst — GS-0131-09/12](#)
DE-10-HRC-ILAB-040
Close: 03/19/2010

Follow USDOL on 

[Previous Issues](#) | [Follow us on Twitter](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Send Feedback](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

