



DOL News Brief

April 8, 2010

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More Than 900 Plan to Attend April 14-15 Latino Summit

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is bringing together more than 900 people including workers, community advocates, faith leaders, employers, union leaders and members, consulate staff, medical professionals, health and safety professionals, and government representatives. The goal of the Summit is to reduce injuries and illnesses among Latino workers, while enhancing the knowledge of their rights and the ability to exercise these rights. The Summit will help OSHA leverage resources through increased partnerships and collaborations with community and faith-based organizations to reach Latino workers. It will include 20 workshops to showcase effective educational materials and programs that can be used by employers, community organizations and others to reach Latino workers with critical health and safety information.

- [Read about the Summit](#)

Solis Speaks with Retirees

On Monday, Secretary Solis addressed members of the Alliance for Retired Americans at their annual convention in Las Vegas. She told a crowd of more than 400 that DOL is protecting employer-sponsored programs and improving 401(k) plans fee transparency by rooting out conflicts of interest; increasing access to sound unbiased investment advice; and increasing pension plan participation rates. Solis also highlighted DOL's enforcement efforts against employers who withhold 401(k) and health plan contributions, but fail to forward them to the appropriate destination.



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

Oates in Seattle



Earlier this week, Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration Jane Oates joined U.S. Senator Patty Murray

Latest News

MSHA Appoints Investigative Team for Mine Explosion

The Department's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) has appointed a team to investigate the April 5 explosion at the Upper Big Branch South Mine (Performance Coal Co.) in Whitesville, W.Va. "Twenty-five hardworking men died unnecessarily in a mine Monday," said Secretary Solis. "The very best way we can honor them is to do our job. MSHA's investigation team is committed to finding out what happened, and we will take action." MSHA mine safety professionals will evaluate all aspects of the accident, including potential causes and the operator's compliance with federal health and safety standards. MSHA will summarize the findings and conclusions of the investigative team and any contributing violations of federal mine safety standards that existed will be cited at the conclusion of the investigation.

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

DOL Working for You

Young Woman Builds New Life Thanks to Job Corps

Twenty-four-year-old Mercedes Thompson wanted to finish her education, get a good job and totally rebuild her life. The Wolf Creek Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center in Oregon gave her the tools to complete all three.



Seeking to leave behind both a broken home and a bad personal relationship, Thompson enrolled in Job Corps and graduated last year with a construction laborers certificate. As an apprentice with a construction company, she is helping to rebuild many of the most important roads and bridges travelled in Oregon.

"Job Corps changed my life, it gave me the confidence and skills I needed to push harder and succeed," Thompson said. "I am a female union worker thanks to Job Corps," she added.

National News

Obama Administration Marks Major Open Government Milestone

On Wednesday, the DOL joined agencies across the federal government in releasing a plan to make operations more transparent while expanding opportunities for public participation and collaboration. This effort is part of President Obama's call for an "unprecedented level of openness in government" through the White House



in Seattle, Wash. They visited the Seattle

Vocational Institute where programs in construction and dental hygiene are educating and placing individuals in high-growth jobs. With a job placement rate of 100%, the dental program serves as a model nationwide. Oates also visited Casa Latina to meet community leaders working to ensure that there are job training programs available for women. Her final stop was the Tulalip reservation to see the successful efforts being made to spur economic development: the reservation is increasing job opportunities by leasing tribal land to retail outlets. Additionally, they have managed the construction of their health centers, tribal centers and promoted community building efforts in partnership with unions.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

'We Can Help' — Around the USA

Outreach events by the Department's Wage and Hour Division continued around the country to educate workers about the 'We Can Help Campaign.' This



national effort launched last week in Chicago, seeks to educate and encourage workers to report employer abuses. In Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia, Denver, Dallas, San Francisco and Seattle, investigators visited day labor centers, Mexican Consulate offices, met with advocacy groups and held information sessions that amplified the message sent by Secretary Solis: "If you work in this country, you are protected by our laws. And you can count on the Department of Labor to see to it that those protections work for you."

- [View the We Can Help Web Site](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)

Montgomery and Elkhart Leaders Discuss Recovery Act Progress



Last week, Dr. Ed Montgomery, executive director of the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers met with Mayor Dick Moore,

and other local business and community officials in Elkhart, Ind. to discuss how Recovery Act projects are working in their community. While in town, Montgomery also took a spin in the new street-ready Think electric vehicle to be built in Elkhart. The visit also coincided with the release of the March employment statistics, which reported that 162,000 jobs had been created nationwide. In response to questions from the local press, Dr. Montgomery, former Chief

Open Government Initiative. The Department's plan includes a number of commitments to release additional data through the federal government's online data catalog – Data.gov. "This plan is not just a response to the president's call. The actions and initiatives we have announced are also a substantive recognition of the changing needs and expectations of working people," said Secretary Solis. Highlights of the plan include, the launch of a new online enforcement database, which provides a single entry point for previously unavailable enforcement data of five Department of Labor agencies, as well as a new interactive map of our grant funding for the past year.

- [Download the plan](#) [PDF]
- [View our Open Government Page](#)
- [View the Enforcement Database](#)
- [View the Grant Map](#)

DOL Announces Grants Serving Young Adult Offenders and High School Dropouts

The Department announced the availability of \$20 million for two grants to provide employment services to young adult offenders and high school dropouts ages 18 to 24 in high-poverty, high-crime communities. "Reaching young people with the training and employment services they need to get good jobs is a critical part of helping them build successful careers and lives," said Secretary Solis. Through job placement, subsidized jobs, on-the-job training, mentoring and community service projects, these grants seek to prepare individuals for employment and reduce recidivism among participants. Each grantee will be required to competitively select local sub-grantees to operate programs in a minimum of five high-poverty, high-crime communities in at least two different states.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [View the Full Solicitation](#)

News You Can Use

Miners and Their Families Benefit from Health Care Reform

When President Obama signed the healthcare reform bill on Tuesday, March 23, several provisions amending the Black Lung Benefits Act became effective immediately. One provision relieves certain widows of miners who were entitled to receive federal black lung benefits from having to prove that the disease caused the miners' death in order to receive survivor's benefits. Another eases the burden of proof for miners who have fifteen or more years work in the coal mines and totally disabling respiratory impairments. Discussions have begun to develop a coordinated strategy to identify all potentially affected claims pending anywhere in DOL and the Federal Courts of Appeals and apply uniform procedures for the application of the amendments to them. New awards of benefits to widows payable from the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund have already started to be issued.

- [Read the FAQ](#) [PDF]

Around DOL

DOL Hosts Employer Dialogue on Disabled Veterans' Hiring

Last week, DOL and the National Chamber Foundation engaged a group of human resource professionals and hiring managers in a candid discussion about Veterans' employment issues, including those specific to returning injured and wounded service members. Facilitated by Assistant Secretary for the Office of Disability Employment Policy Kathleen Martinez and the Assistant Secretary for the Veterans' Employment Training Services

Economist at the Labor Department, noted that "this kind of progress is suggestive of a strengthening economy, a stronger economy. But we've got more to do."

- [View the Slideshow](#)

OSHA Forms Alliance

The Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) held a signing ceremony on March 25 in their Seattle Regional Office to recognize an alliance with the Mechanical Contractors Association, the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry Locals 26 and 32. "OSHA is pleased to join forces with the Mechanical Contractors Association and organized labor to find new ways to prevent injuries, illnesses and fatalities in the construction industry," said Richard Terrill, OSHA's regional administrator in Seattle. The alliance will provide employers and their workers in western Washington state with information about programs and training to help reduce workplace hazards and will include several outreach activities.

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

MSHA — Mine Inspector Job Fair

- [April 10, 2010 — Ina, IL](#)
- [April 11, 2010 — Evansville, IN](#)
- [April 16-17, 2010 — Plainfield, IN](#)

OFCCP — AAP Development and Implementation

- [April 10, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance - Basic Supply and Service Technical Assistance with ARRA Updates

- [April 15, 2010 — Seattle, WA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance for Construction Contractors

- [April 9, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [April 14, 2010 — Burlington, VT](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance for Supply and Service Contractors

- [April 16, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — EEO Obligations of Construction Contractors

- [April 15, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OLMS — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [April 13, 2010 — Orlando, FL](#)

OSHA — Advisory Committee on

Raymond Jefferson, the event offered employers an opportunity to share their concerns with senior Labor Department officials and get answers to questions about the challenges and confusion surrounding Veterans' hiring and retention. The issues raised in the dialogue will help DOL continue to combat stigma and strengthen DOL's Veterans' employment programs moving forward.

DOL in Action

DOL Sues Florida Vegetable Broker For More Than \$3.7 Million

Following an investigation conducted by DOL's Employee Benefits Security Administration, the Office of the Solicitor has sued fiduciaries of the Orrin H. Cope Produce Inc. Employees' Profit Sharing Plan to restore more than \$3,780,000 in plan assets. "Our suit puts plan officials on notice that the department will not tolerate the diversion of workers' hard-earned retirement assets for the benefit of employers," said Secretary Solis. The lawsuit alleges that the company illegally benefited from withdrawals from the Miami-Dade County, Fla., vegetable broker's profit sharing pension plan.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Department Releases New Rule to Improve Funding and Process for Allocating TAA

The Department has unveiled the first substantive rulemaking on the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program in more than 15 years. The rule will implement changes to the TAA funding formula that will improve the way the Department provides TAA funding to states. It also requires that TAA-funded personnel administering services and benefits to workers protected by certifications be state employees covered by a merit system of personnel administration. Additionally, this regulation reflects an increase in training funds, allowing DOL to provide states with up to \$575 million in training funds in a fiscal year, replacing a previous limit of \$220 million per year.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Find More Details About The Rule](#)

OSHA Orders NJ Transit to Pay More than \$500,000 to Whistleblower

A whistleblower investigation by the Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) found that New Jersey Transit violated the Federal Railroad Safety Act when it retaliated against an employee for reporting a work-related illness. As a result of its findings, OSHA has ordered New Jersey Transit to take corrective actions, including expunging disciplinary actions taken against the employee and references to them from various records, as well as compensating the worker for back pay, lost benefit payments, interest, compensatory damages and attorneys' fees totaling almost \$500,000. In addition, OSHA has ordered the railroad to pay the complainant \$75,000 in punitive damages.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Recovery Highlights

Health Care Careers Are Going Virtual

This week, the Department announced a competition for approximately \$13.2 million in grant funds for the creation and implementation of a virtual service-delivery platform and to promote career exploration in the healthcare sector. "Increasing access to information and resources on healthcare careers will help more workers enter this growing industry," said Secretary Solis. Funded through the Recovery Act, the grants will be awarded in two categories: Healthcare Virtual Career Platform and Enhancing the Ability of Community- and Faith-Based Organizations to

Construction Safety and Health Meeting

- [April 14, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)
- [April 16, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

OSHA — National Action Summit for Latino Worker Health and Safety

- [April 14-15, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

OSHA — “We Can Help” Safety Fair

- [April 17, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

WB — Young Women, Strong Leaders Conference

- [April 9, 2010 — Allendale, MI](#)

Deliver Virtual Career Exploration Services, including Healthcare Careers.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [View the Full Solicitation](#)

More Than \$964,000 to Assist Workers in Oregon

The Department announced a \$964,762 grant to assist 210 workers affected by layoffs at the International Paper Co. in Albany, Ore. "This grant will provide Oregonians with retraining and re-employment services that will help them secure the good jobs that they need and deserve," said Secretary Solis. The grant will provide covered dislocated workers — all of whom also have been certified by the Labor Department as eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance — with access to "wrap-around" and supportive services, including dependent care and transportation assistance.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Follow USDOL on

- Mark McDermott named regional representative of US Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis [04/08/2010] <http://bit.ly/cA06Lq> about 15 hours ago
- DOL certifies approximately 4,000 workers in 10 states as eligible to apply for Trade Adjustment Assistance [04/08...] <http://bit.ly/c3n8Kq> about 15 hours ago

Spotlight on States: New York

\$5.6M to Aid New Yorkers Impacted by Financial Industry Layoffs

The Department has announced a \$5,594,913 National Emergency Grant to New York to continue to provide services for 5,500 workers affected by layoffs in New York's financial industry. "The greed and outlandish excesses of some on Wall Street may have distorted the notion of what it means to work in finance, but thousands of working class Americans — accountants, receptionists, and back-office workers — played by the rules and still lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Helping these workers across the Empire State is the right thing to do," said Secretary Solis.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Opportunities are Open: OSHA

Next week, the Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will host the National Action Summit for Latino Worker Health and Safety. This is just one of several ways that OSHA is working to protect workers. View the OSHA positions below or [view all](#) the exciting and rewarding opportunities at DOL.

1. Positions in Washington DC Metro Area
[Health Scientist — GS-0601-09/12](#)
DE-10-OSHA-72
Close: 04/12/2010
2. Positions in Fort Lauderdale, FL
[Industrial Hygienist \(Spanish\) — GS-0690-09/09](#)
DE-10-OSHA-91
Close: 04/21/2010
3. Position in Washington DC Metro Area
[Economist — GS-0110-14/14](#)
DE-10-OSHA-86
Close: 04/22/2010

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