



DOL News Brief

May 20, 2010

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Auto and the Next Economy



Secretary Solis joined fellow co-chair of the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers Larry Summers, and the

Council's Executive Director Ed Montgomery on Tuesday, at the "Auto Communities and the Next Economy" conference. The event was co-sponsored by the U.S. Labor Department, the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers, and the Brookings Institution. "I know how important a vibrant auto industry and manufacturing sector are to the communities and workers from Michigan to Los Angeles. I'm here to tell you we're open for business and we want to work with you," Solis told the packed house of elected officials, community leaders, foundation and federal agency representatives. She also praised the Council's annual report, released at the conference, and the newly announced framework that will invest \$800 million to speed the cleanup and redevelopment of shuttered auto facilities resulting from the GM bankruptcy. The framework will put the facilities back into productive use, creating jobs and economic growth in communities across the country.

- [View the Slideshow](#)
- [Read the Council's Annual Report](#)
- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Learn More](#)

Migrant Work, Modern Day Slavery

Fulfilling a pledge made during her first week in office, Secretary Solis visited Immokalee, Florida early this week. The area has been dubbed by many as "ground zero" for modern day slavery as a result of low wages paid to migrant workers there. During her visit, Solis sat for an interview at the Coalition of



What's Hot

Better Coordination = Improved Service

States across the nation will soon have the ability to link information from various education and workforce programs, thanks to a DOL competition for more than \$12 million in grants to create or expand longitudinal workforce databases. This will lead to more targeted workforce services for individuals. It will also afford consumers access to user-friendly information to assist them with the selection of training and education programs that best suit their needs.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the Grant Solicitation](#)

Senate Appropriators Focus on Mine Safety

"Investing in Mine Safety: Preventing Another Disaster" was the topic of a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing Thursday afternoon. Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary for the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), testified before the subcommittee on a panel that included Patricia Smith, solicitor of labor; Mary Lu Jordan, chairman of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission; and Dr. John Howard, director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. A second panel featured Cecil Roberts, United Mine Workers of America president, and Donald Blankenship, chairman and CEO of Massey Energy. The hearing was held to address MSHA resource concerns in the wake of the April 5 explosion that killed 29 miners at the Upper Big Branch Mine in southern West Virginia. Although funding was the issue, Main stressed that his agency's needs are not just about money. "No matter what level of resources the Committee is willing and able to appropriate for MSHA, MSHA cannot be in every mine, every day, on every shift. It is the mine operator's responsibility to provide a safe mine and to protect its miners whether an MSHA inspector is standing in that mine or not. Only when we change the culture of safety in the mining industry – and when all mine operators live up to their responsibilities – will all miners be safe."

- [View the Video and Testimony](#)

DOL Working For You

Job Corps Helps Student Get Automotive Career in Gear

Eighteen-year-old Nathan Herron has become a renaissance man because of Job Corps.

A high school dropout, Herron studied at the Montana Kicking Horse Job Corps Center, earning both his GED and automotive repair certificate. He also found time to research his interests in automotive engineering, locksmithing and building computer circuit boards. He was so "dedicated and

Immokalee Workers (CIW) community radio show, where she spoke about DOL's "We Can Help" campaign. "If you work in this country, you are protected by our laws. You can count on the Labor Department to see to it that those protections work for you!" she reiterated. Later, she toured CIW's Florida Modern-Day Slavery Museum. The museum is a replica of a truck used from 2005 to 2007 to house 12 men who were forced to pick tomatoes in the nearby fields. The display inside the truck tells the stories of modern day slavery cases in Florida. The Secretary also met with workers and advocates during a roundtable discussion, where workplace safety was her main message, and ended her visit with a tour of the Immokalee Housing & Family Services Community Center.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

VETS Chief Urges Business Execs



Simplifying the transition of military veterans to a civilian workforce is one of the key goals of the Veterans' Employment and Training Services' (VETS), Assistant

Secretary Raymond Jefferson told an audience of business leaders on Wednesday. Speaking on a panel which included the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Accenture and Booz Allen Hamilton, and hosted by Business Executives for National Security, Jefferson said VETS is attempting to "change the culture about what military men and women have to offer." This is being done, he said, at the same time the department is attempting other initiatives, such as working with human resource professionals to match military skills with current business employment openings. The ultimate outcome he said, "is to connect the demand for talent with the supply of talent."

Council Moving Forward

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) held its second full council meeting on Wednesday. Secretary Solis, Assistant



Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration Jane Oates, and Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Veterans' Employment and Training Service John McWilliam attended. The meeting focused on final steps to complete the



positive," said Center official Shelly Fyant that he was asked to serve as a role model and motivate other students.

Herron now studies at Utah's Clearfield Job Corps, taking advanced automotive excellence repair programs taught by the United Auto Workers. One of six siblings, Herron said his plans include college and a good job designing cars to help him support his family. "Job Corps prepared me for my future," he said.

News You Can Use

More Details about Upcoming Mine Safety Public Hearings

Public hearings in the wake of the April 5 fatal explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine will take on several forms: The first one will involve questioning witnesses with in-depth knowledge of the underground coal mine and events leading up to the blast. Next, a public hearing that focuses on the technical aspects of the explosion based upon physical examination of the mine. At least two additional public meetings are in the works, including a public forum in which the family members of the deceased have an opportunity to express their thoughts about the explosion, the response, the investigation and potential reforms in mine safety and health laws. The primary purposes of these public hearings will be to explore possible causes of the explosion and identify and develop corrective actions, procedures and strategies to prevent the occurrence of similar accidents. "MSHA is committed to ensuring that the process moves forward in a timely and transparent manner, and will also make sure that its investigative process does not hinder any potential ongoing criminal investigations into the tragedy that happened at the Upper Big Branch Mine," said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. At least seven days prior to any public hearing, MSHA will publish a notice in the Federal Register announcing the date, time and location.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Show Us What You Do and Win \$1,000

The Career Videos Challenge is underway -- with a chance to win \$1,000! Just submit a brief video about one of 15 in-demand occupations. Not employed in one of the featured careers? Don't worry, you can still participate. Grab your camera – or borrow one from a friend – and find someone in your neighborhood who is employed as a medical assistant, energy auditor or any of the other careers listed on the challenge site.

- [Check Out Our "How to" Video](#)
- [Learn More](#)

Around DOL

AAPI Leaders at the Table

More than 1300 people across the country had a "seat at the table" (via the internet) along with Secretary Solis and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community leaders



Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent Homelessness and initial steps toward implementation. Building on an “unprecedented level of engagement,” USICH announced that they are close to finalizing the strategic plan that will serve as a roadmap for joint action by the 19 USICH member agencies to prevent and end homelessness in America.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

OSHA Joins With NCCER



The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has entered into an agreement with the National Center for Construction Education and Research

(NCCER) in which the agency will recognize crane operator certifications issued by NCCER as OSHA compliant. Assistant Secretary for OSHA David Michaels signed the agreement at a meeting at the Labor Department. It’s part of an overall effort to improve crane safety in the construction industry. The agreement states that “an accredited certification program that attests to the qualifications of crane operators will provide employers and OSHA with a valuable tool in determining whether a crane operator is ‘qualified’ to operate a particular crane.”

Changes in Petrochemical Industry

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Jordan Barab spoke at the National Petrochemical and Refiners Association National Safety Conference in San Antonio, Texas, on Wednesday. He discussed the recent number of serious — sometimes fatal — incidents at refineries. “We are tracking these catastrophes and looking for trends, including problems resulting from aging facilities,” Barab said. What do the various incidents at refineries have in common? “They point to process safety-related problems and, most likely, systemic safety and health problems in the company and in the entire industry,” he added.

- [Read Barab's Remarks](#)

Graduates Challenged

Employee Benefits
Security Administration
Assistant Secretary
Phyllis Borzi told new graduates of the

during a roundtable discussion held at DOL this week. The forum was organized by Cindy Chen, DOL's Office of Public Engagement's representative to the AAPI community. The event included: Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement Tina Tchen, Cabinet Secretary and Assistant to the President Chris Lu, and Executive Director of the White House Initiative on AAPI Kiran Ahuja. The group and the public discussed challenges facing AAPI workers, especially those in high-risk and low-wage industries, including taxi driving, domestic work, and garment production. Tchen applauded DOL for hosting the enlightening discussion, adding that the program was important not only to highlighting AAPI month, but also as an opportunity to bring awareness to the variety of issues affecting this community.

- [View the Slideshow](#)
- [View the Webcast](#)

And the WINNER is...

You are reading an award winning newsletter. The Department of Labor swept the National Association of Government Communicators’ (NAGC) Blue Pencil & Gold Screen Awards Banquet earlier this week. In addition to the newsletter, the Opportunities Are Open recruitment brochure, weekly elevator poster campaign, security campaign, and Disability.gov website received top prizes. Every year NAGC recognizes local, state and national government agencies for their outstanding communication and marketing efforts.



DOL in Action

OSHA Distributes Oil Cleanup Safety Guides

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is distributing thousands of safety guides and fact sheets to employees involved with the oil spill cleanup along the Gulf Coast. The materials supplement OSHA-required training individuals must receive before they can be hired to engage in the cleanup effort. The safety guides and fact sheets are available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese and will be made available by BP’s education contractor, PEC, as well as by OSHA officials at staging areas.

- [Read the Fact Sheets](#)
- [Read the News Release](#)

Shipbuilder Fined \$1.3 Million for Exposing Workers to Toxic Vapors

VT Halter Marine Inc., a shipbuilder, has been fined \$1,322,000 following a November 2009 explosion and fire that killed two workers and seriously injured two others. The incident occurred in the inner bottom void of a tugboat that was being constructed at the company’s Escatawpa, Miss., facility. “This was a horrific and preventable situation. The employer was aware of the hazards and knowingly and willfully sent workers into a



George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Sciences to “Choose Service, Make History, and Change the World” during her May 15 commencement address. Pointing to the work ahead on the Affordable Care Act of 2010, she challenged them to use their public health studies to improve the lives and health of ordinary Americans. Two days later, Assistant Secretary for the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service Ray Jefferson delivered a similar message at the commencement address for Columbia University’s School of Social Work. Jefferson spoke to the class about the importance of social work in our nation and encouraged the students to follow their aspirations, even through tough times.

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

[Open Grant Opportunities](#)

EBSA — Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program Workshop

- [May 26, 2010 — Westbury, NY](#)

MSHA — Mine Inspector Job Fair

- [May 22-23, 2010 — Reno, NV](#)

MSHA — Seek Refuge: Your Third Line of Defense/A Technology Transfer Seminar on Refuge Alternatives for Underground Coal Mines

- [May 27, 2010 — Greensburg, PA](#)

OFCCP — AAP Development & Preparing for a Desk Audit

- [May 27, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [May 21, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)
- [May 28, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Educational and Outreach forum

- [May 27, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — EEOC NJ Seminar

- [May 21, 2010 — New Brunswick, NJ](#)

OFCCP — Public Forum

- [May 18-21, 2010 — Dallas, TX](#)

OSHA — Stakeholder Meeting on Modernization of OSHA's Injury and

confined space with an explosive and toxic atmosphere,” said Secretary Solis. “Loss of life can never be something considered acceptable or as a course of doing business.” Following its investigation, DOL’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited the company for 17 willful, 11 serious and eight other-than-serious violations.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Employee Rights Poster Issued for Federal Contractors

Federal contractors and subcontractors will soon be required to provide employees notice of their rights under the National Labor Relations Act. The final rule, posted this week on the federal register, will require federal contractors and subcontractors to post employees’ rights to form, join, and assist a union and to bargain collectively with their employer. The rule also provides examples of unlawful employer and union conduct that interferes with those rights; and it includes information on how to contact the National Labor Relations Board with questions or complaints.

- [View the Poster](#)
- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the Fact Sheet](#)

Fighting Fraud — Unemployment Compensation Integrity Act of 2010

The department has sent Congress an important piece of legislation that, if passed, will help states fight fraud and overpayments in unemployment insurance systems. The Unemployment Compensation Integrity Act of 2010 would permit states to use up to five percent of unemployment compensation overpayments recovered from claimants to prevent and detect future problems. It also allows states to use up to five percent of contributions collected due to employer fraud or evasion to combat these issues.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Who You Gonna Call? The Wage and Hour Division!

Teleperformance USA, which provides over-the-telephone customer service for clients including Sprint Communications, Verizon Wireless, and Dell Computers, has been ordered to pay nearly \$2 million in back wages to more than 15,000 employees. The Utah-based call center violated overtime regulations under the Fair Labor Standards Act when employees were not paid for breaks and time waiting for open work areas once their shift had begun. DOL’s Wage Hour Division in Salt Lake City reported that the company is cooperating fully and working to quickly and effectively resolve all identified issues.

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL Updates Protections for Young Workers in Non-Agricultural Work

The publication of final regulations updating protections for young employees in non-agricultural work for the 21st century economy was announced this week. New rules protect young employees from dangerous machines and tools, excessive work hours and other hazards at work. They also expand opportunities for young workers to gain safe, positive work experience in diverse fields, as well as school-supervised work-study programs. “We cannot put a price on the health and safety of a child, or on the value of a positive work experience,” said Secretary Solis.

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

Illness Data Collection Process

- [May 25, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

WB — Annual Small Business and Minority Business Conference – “Accessing the New Economy”

- [May 21, 2010 — Seattle, WA](#)

WB — Girls in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Summit

- [May 21-22, 2010 — Sarasota, FL](#)

WB — Green Jobs Roundtables

- [May 26, 2010 — Rifle, CO](#)

WB — Help Wanted on Main Street: Green Jobs and Growing Industries Conference

- [May 25, 2010 — Seattle, WA](#)

WB — National Association of Workforce Agencies - Unemployment Insurance and the Workforce Technology Conference

- [May 19-21, 2010 — Seattle, WA](#)

WB — Real Women Wear Dog Tags: AZ Military Women's Conference

- [May 21, 2010 — Phoenix, AZ](#)

WHD — Stakeholder Forum

- [May 21, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

Recovery Highlights

Recovery Funds for New Mexico's Unemployed

Secretary Solis joined Senator Jeff Bingaman on Wednesday to announce more than \$26 million in Unemployment Insurance Modernization funding for New Mexico. The state is receiving the final two-thirds of its allotment for updating UI laws to allow certain part-time workers to receive benefits, and for providing additional compensation to UI claimants with dependents. Made available through the Recovery Act, the funds will be used to pay benefits to UI claimants and, if appropriated by the state legislature, to administer New Mexico's UI program.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Listen to the Conference Call](#)

The Green Scene

Women and Green Jobs Get Connected

How can we better connect women with career opportunities in green industries? Next Tuesday, May 25, Women's Bureau Director Sara Manzano-Diaz will host the third teleconference in a seven-part series that focuses on recruiting and retaining women in green jobs training and employment. Speakers representing Wider Opportunities for Women, Austin Community College, and Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles will discuss techniques for outreach, recruitment and retention of women in green fields, as well as strategies to help women overcome barriers or concerns that may block their path to success.

- [Learn More and Register](#)

Follow USDOL on

- Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report [05/20/2010] <http://bit.ly/c2ACSt> about 9 hours ago
- DOL's OSHA cites VT Halter Marine more than \$1.3 million for willfully exposing workers to toxic vapors in a confi... <http://bit.ly/d2unWA> 1 day ago

Opportunities are Open: Safety First

Safety is first! At the Department of Labor we all share in Secretary Solis' vision of “Good Jobs for Everyone.” And a good job is a safe job. DOL's Occupational Safety and Health Administration works hard to prevent injury and illness in the workplace, as well as ensure that employers comply with safety laws and regulations. Explore the positions below or [view all](#) the exciting and rewarding opportunities with DOL.

1. Positions in the Kansas City Metro Area, MO
[Safety & Occupational Health Specialist — GS-0018-09/12](#)
DE-10-CHI-OSHA-0099A
Close: 05/24/2010
2. Position in Aurora, IL
[Management and Program Assistant \(Spanish\) — GS-0344-06/07](#)
DE-10-CHI-OSHA-0098
Close: 05/26/2010
3. Position in Washington, D.C.
[Investigation and Compliance Specialist — GS-1801-12/13](#)
DE-10-OSHA-102
Close: 05/28/2010

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