



## DOL News Brief

May 27, 2010

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### “There Were 29 Miners Going to Work That Day...”

Inspiration comes to songwriters in all sorts of ways. For Mine Health and Safety Academy employee Rhonda Fox, a mine rescue worker’s



emotional account of last month’s devastating explosion at Upper Big Branch Mine compelled her to put pen to paper and words to music. “As I began to read the third page of the story, the song came to me in my head,” said Fox. She rushed home and began playing the tune on her keyboard. Less than a week later, Fox was recording the song, along with her sister, at a local recording studio in Fayetteville, W.Va. Giving credit to the Holy Spirit for helping her compose it, she expresses hope that the spiritual song’s words will bring comfort to the family members of the 29 men who perished in the mine blast.

- [Listen to Fox’s Song](#)

### Borzi on Health Care Coverage



Health reform topped the agenda for Phyllis C. Borzi, Assistant Secretary of the Employee Benefits Security Administration, during

a teleconference sponsored this week by the American Bar Association. Borzi focused on the tri-agency regulation to provide health coverage to adult children under the Affordable Health Care Act. She also encouraged people “to be early adopters,” thereby allowing adult children to keep plan coverage until the age of 26. The teleconference brought together experts from government and law firms to answer questions of legal practitioners nationwide about the health care reform law.

- [Read the Fact Sheet](#)
- [Read the Regulation](#)

## What's Hot

### \$8 Million in New Susan Harwood Training Grants

The Labor Department’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is soliciting applications for \$8 million in Susan Harwood Safety and Health Capacity Building Training Grants. “These grants will provide workers and employers with the tools they need to build the capacity to ensure safe workplaces,” said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. “They will also enable workers to gain the knowledge and the tools they need to save lives and protect their health.” Capacity building safety and health training grants will focus on training workers to recognize hazards and appropriate control measures, and to understand their rights under OSHA regulations and standards.

- [Read the News Release](#)

## DOL Working For You

### Efforts by Many Lead to Job Training For Veteran

Six degrees of separation led Marine Corps veteran Harold Irwin to a paid job training position at California’s Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.



Irwin had received DOL-funded Workforce Development career counseling in Hawaii. There, Irwin also attended a forum featuring Assistant Secretary for Veterans’ Employment and Training Services Raymond Jefferson. Jefferson implored his audience to hire more veterans, which led to a tip from local businessman Mike Gleason regarding the Livermore training program.

With the help of local veterans’ employment representative Mel Arai, Irwin polished off his resume, highlighting his education and skill sets. Soon, the experienced marine was selected by Livermore for the six month paid program as a technical trainee in the Mechanical Maintenance Division. Irwin hopes to parlay the experience into a green job.

“I am heading somewhere pretty exciting,” Irwin said about his future.

## News You Can Use

### Your Three-Minute Video Could Win You \$1,000

There is still plenty of time to enter the department’s Career Videos Challenge. Film and submit a short video of the day-to-day work of one of [15 occupations](#) (*tip: the video doesn’t have to be about your own job*) for a chance to win \$1,000. DOL is seeking videos about such in-demand careers as nursing, carpentry, solar thermal installation and weatherization. During the coming weeks the videos will be reviewed by department staff

who will narrow down the submissions to the top three in each category. The public will then vote for the very best in each of the 15 categories. Winners will each get \$1,000.

- [More About the Video Challenge](#)

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## Oates on UI Integrity

The U.S. Department of Labor is committed to stemming fraud and overspending. Assistant Secretary of Labor Jane Oates told Congress about DOL's plans to reduce improper payments in the Unemployment Insurance system when she testified before the Senate Finance Committee on Tuesday. "We're extremely pleased that the Unemployment Compensation Integrity Act of 2010 was sent to you," Oates told members of the committee. The Act, if passed, will provide states with additional funding to combat fraud and overpayments in the UI system

- [Watch and Read Oates' Testimony](#)

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## Around DOL

### Taking Dogs For a Walk (and Vice Versa)

DOL went to the dogs – literally – this week when 25 employees from various agencies volunteered to walk Humane Society Shelter dogs around the Capitol and Monument grounds. The effort – dubbed the "People Animal Cardio Klub" – was organized by the Department of Labor Fitness Association (DOLFA). This "is exercise and fun for both



people and animals" said DOLFA's Karen Krieg and is in keeping with President Obama's "Feds Get Fit" campaign and his call for volunteerism. "I volunteered because I love animals," said DOL employee Marsha Daniels, while her colleague Michele Amodeo added "I wanted to help the shelter." Their partner dogs, Angelique and Noel, had no comment but looked very happy.

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## 'HerSTORY' a Hit in Chicago



Women's Bureau Director Sara Manzano-Diaz hosted a "Women Working Together, writing the next chapter of 'herSTORY'" mentoring and networking

conference for hundreds of women and girls in Chicago last week. Joining Manzano-Diaz was U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, Rainbow Push Coalition Chairperson Emeritus Rev. Willie Barrow, Bernarda Wong, Dr. Carol Gill, and Elizabeth Ortiz. "The event was a wonderful opportunity to share and encourage more intergenerational dialogue and mentorship," said Manzano-Diaz. "It was a distinct honor to host this conference and have these very accomplished women share their stories, and encourage women of diversity to break barriers and build better lives."

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## DOL in Action

### OSHA Publishes Proposed Slips, Trips and Falls Rulemaking

Improved worker protection is the theme of the proposed rulemaking announced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. If passed, the new standard would require improved safety measures against tripping, slipping and falling hazards in workplaces. "This proposal addresses workplace hazards that are a leading cause of work related injuries and deaths," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr. David Michaels. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) describes revisions to the Walking-Working Surfaces and Personal Protective Equipment standards to help prevent an estimated 20 workplace fatalities annually, and more than 3,500 injuries serious enough to cause people to miss work. A public hearing on the revised changes will be held after the public comment period for the NPRM.

- [Read the News Release](#)

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## Cooperation is Key

The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) announced a cooperative agreement competition for \$750,000 to assist in maintaining and improving homeless veterans programs. This funding will allow the National Technical Assistance Center to continue to provide training, technical assistance, research and other support services to more than 150 existing Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) grantees. "Reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment is a vital and pressing part of ending homelessness among the men and women who have worn our nation's uniform," said VETS Assistant Secretary Raymond Jefferson. Current HVRP grantees include service organizations, state and local workforce investment boards and faith-based organizations that work with homeless and at risk veterans.

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

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## Congressional Hearing Delves into Cause of West Virginia Mine Disaster

The House Education and Labor Committee traveled to Beckley, W.Va., Monday for a public hearing on the devastating explosion that killed 29 miners April 5 at the Upper Big Branch Mine in nearby Montcoal. The purpose of the hearing, according to Committee Chairman George Miller, was to "hear from families who are grieving and looking for answers to our nation's most devastating mine tragedy in forty years." A common theme wove through the testimony of six family members of five miners who perished in the blast. The witnesses expressed their loved ones' concern for safety deficiencies at the mine where they had worked. Secretary Solis, who had first met with dozens of family members during the nearly week-long rescue and recovery efforts, returned to southern West Virginia with a pledge of continued support. "We can honor these miners by ensuring justice is served and that an accident of this magnitude never happens again," she said.

- Listen to the Remarks and Testimony
- [DOL News Release about the Court Ruling on Public Hearings](#)

## Good, Green and in the City

Getting more workers into good green jobs is a priority for the Labor Department. That was the message of Assistant Secretary Jane Oates to attendees of the



Institute for Sustainable Communities Climate Leadership Academy on Tuesday. Oates discussed the Department's goals of preparing more workers for green jobs, and the role that cities and metropolitan areas can play in creating green career opportunities.

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## Upcoming Deadlines & Events

The U.S. Department of Labor along with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will hold a second meeting of the Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program and Employer Sponsored Coverage Coordination Working Group. The event, which is open to the public, will take place on June 14 at the Washington Grand Hyatt at 1000 H St. NW. from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EDT.

- [Read the News Release](#)

## Open Grant Opportunities

### EBSA — Getting It Right: Know Your Fiduciary Responsibilities Webcast Part I

- [June 9, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

### EBSA — Getting It Right: Know Your Fiduciary Responsibilities Webcast Part II

- [June 10, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

### EBSA — Getting Started with EFAST2 and Preparing Your 2009 Form 5500 Webcast

- [June 3, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

### EBSA — The Basics and More: Compliance Assistance Workshop

- [June 10, 2010 — Birmingham, AL](#)

### MSHA — 22nd Annual Indiana State Mine Rescue and Bench Contest

- [June 2-3, 2010 — Vincennes, IN](#)

### MSHA — Best Practices for Controlling Respirable Dust in Coal Mining

- [June 2, 2010 — Grand Junction, CO](#)

### MSHA — Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association 2010 National Meeting and Training Seminar

- [June 8-10, 2010 — Virginia Beach, VA](#)

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

## Flood Follow-up: Funding to Tennessee to Help with Recovery

Temporary job opportunities are being made available to Tennesseans working to recover from recent flooding and severe weather. The Department has announced more than \$4.6 million in National Emergency Grant funds to provide employment to individuals who are engaged in cleanup and recovery efforts across 30 counties throughout Tennessee. Funds will be administered by the state's Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

[Read the News Release](#)

## SD Wheat Growers Assoc. Fined More Than \$1.6 Million for Violations

The department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has fined the South Dakota Wheat Growers Association of Aberdeen, S.D., more than \$1.6 million. The fine follows the death of a worker at the company's McLaughlin, S.D., grain handling operation. OSHA's investigation found that the worker was killed after being engulfed by grain in one of the facility's bins. Five additional workers were also at risk when attempting to dig out the victim. "The company's intentional disregard for its safety and health responsibilities put its workers at risk, and more egregiously, led to an unnecessary loss of life. Worker safety must be a top priority," said Secretary Solis.

[Read the News Release](#)

## OSHA Issues Citations Following Explosion That Killed Bystander

Following an explosion at NDK Crystals Inc. in Belvedere, Ill., DOL's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued \$510,000 in fines for alleged egregious, willful and serious violations of federal workplace safety standards. The explosion at the company's crystal manufacturing building took the life of a truck driver parked at a nearby service station. "The employer knowingly operated high pressure vessels even after being warned of the potential for a catastrophic failure," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr. David Michaels. "This simply is unacceptable, and OSHA will use the full extent of the law to ensure the company is held accountable for its actions."

[Read the News Release](#)

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## Spotlight on States: Montana

### Montana Receives \$1.8 Million to Aid Dislocated Timber Workers

Nearly 450 workers affected by layoffs at Western Montana's Plum Creek Timber Co. Inc. and Smurfit-Stone Container Corp. will benefit from a \$1.8 million DOL grant. "Montana's timber and wood products industry saw a marked downturn during the recession," said Secretary Solis. "This grant will help workers enter training that will allow them to compete for and find jobs in new and emerging industries." Awarded to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, the grant will provide dislocated workers with access to "wrap-around" and supportive services, which include dependent care and transportation assistance.

- [Read the News Release](#)

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## Recovery Highlights

### \$11.8 Million in UI Modernization Funds to South Dakota

DOL has certified for release a total of \$11,765,089 in unemployment insurance (UI) modernization incentive funds to the state of South Dakota. South Dakota qualified for the remaining two-thirds of its funds available under the Recovery Act by expanding UI eligibility to certain part-time

- [June 2, 2010 — Pittsburgh, PA](#)

#### OFCCP— AAP Development & Preparing for a Desk Audit

- [June 10, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

#### OFCCP — Agency Update: NJ ILG Meeting

- [June 4, 2010 — Newark, NJ](#)

#### OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [May 28, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)
- [June 4, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)
- [June 11, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

#### OFCCP — Compliance Seminar

- [June 10, 2010 — Los Angeles, CA](#)

#### OFCCP — Employer Outreach and Educational Forum

- [June 9, 2010 — New Orleans, LA](#)

#### OFCCP — How To Comply With Executive Order 13496 Webinar

- [June 3, 2010 — Webinar \(AK\)](#)

#### OSHA — Stakeholder Meeting on Injury and Illness Prevention Program

- [June 3, 2010 — East Brunswick, NJ](#)

#### OSHA — Stakeholder Meeting on Modernization of OSHA's Injury and Illness Data Collection Process

- [June 3, 2010 — Arlington Heights, IL](#)

#### OFCCP — Updates for ILG

- [June 10, 2010 — Honolulu, HI](#)

#### OSHA — Stakeholder Meeting on Injury and Illness Prevention Program

- [June 10, 2010 — Fort Worth, TX](#)

### Follow USDOL on

- Statement by Solicitor of Labor M. Patricia Smith regarding ongoing investigation of Upper Big Branch Mine explo... <http://bit.ly/gyS3YZ> 4 days ago
- Mining deaths rise in 2010 [01/13/2011] <http://bit.ly/g77s3S> 4 days ago

workers and by providing additional weeks of benefits to individuals enrolled in training or education programs. "The updates that allow South Dakota to qualify for this funding are a testament to this state's legislators and governor recognizing the needs of modern workers," said Solis.

- [Read the News Release](#)

#### Recovery Grant Offers Employment Services for Wisconsin Workers

The Department of Labor has announced a \$1,753,905 National Emergency Grant increment to Wisconsin to provide continued employment services for 1,334 workers affected by layoffs at multiple companies in Wisconsin. Workers will continue to receive services including retraining, skills assessment, career counseling, job search assistance, and job placement assistance. This final grant increment will be awarded to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

- [Read the News Release](#)

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## The Green Scene

### Recruiting and Retaining Women

Connecting women with career opportunities in green industries is a central part of Director Sara Manzano-Díaz' commitment as head of DOL's Women's Bureau. At a recent DOL-sponsored teleconference, Manzano-Díaz focused on DOL's green jobs initiatives designed to recruit and retain women workers. The teleconference — one in a series of seven on the topic of women in green jobs — broached green training projects across the country. It also highlighted DOL's upcoming "A Woman's Guide to Green Jobs," which is due out in the fall of 2010. Manzano-Díaz was joined on the call by several experts who honed in on the challenges — as well as strategies for success — to helping women access opportunities in the 21st century green economy. Materials discussed during the teleconference, along with a full transcript and audio recording of the session, will be available on the Women's Bureau website.

- [Learn the "Green" Facts](#)
- [Access the May 25, 2010 Teleconference Materials](#)
- [More Information on the Green Jobs Teleconference Series](#)

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## Opportunities are Open: Nationwide

Although, the U.S. Department of Labor is headquartered in the Nation's Capital, opportunities to work for DOL are open nationwide! From the midwest on Main Street to the west coast or Wall Street, the department is seeking talented individuals to promote the welfare of our nation's workers. Explore the positions below or [view all](#) the exciting and rewarding careers at DOL.

1. Position in Picayune, MS  
[Economic Assistant — GS-0119-05/05](#)  
DE-10-DAL-BLS-0148  
Close: 06/18/2010
  2. Position in Charleston, WV  
[Supervisory Veterans' Program Specialist — GS-0301-13/13](#)  
DE-10-PHIL-VETS-0065  
Close: 06/14/2010
  3. Positions in Los Angeles, CA  
[Wage and Hour Assistant \(OA\) — GS-1802-05/06](#)  
DE-10-SF-WHD-67  
Close: 06/03/2010
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