



DOL News Brief

August 12, 2010

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Interns "On The Job"

The Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) partnered with the American Society of Hispanic Economists to create a new program this year that provided internships to current undergraduate and graduate students. Under the program, four highly qualified graduate students were awarded 10-12 week internships with EBSA and BLS. The interns worked with experienced economists and researchers and engaged in joint training opportunities, including local seminars, conferences and congressional hearings on issues relating to health insurance reform and retirement issues. Javier Celis presented observations about the program on behalf of the internship participants at the department's July 23 Intern Meet and Greet Event with Secretary Solis. "We hope to continue this exciting program throughout the next several years," said Solis.



What's Hot

BP to Pay Record Fine of \$50.6 Million

BP Products North America Inc. has agreed to pay the full penalty of \$50.6 million stemming from the 2005 explosion at its Texas City, Texas, refinery that killed 15 workers and injured 170 others. "The size of the penalty rightly reflects BP's disregard for workplace safety and shows that we will enforce the law so workers can return home safe at the end of their day," said Secretary Solis. The agreement resolves failure-to-abate citations issued after a 2009 follow-up investigation by the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration. In addition to paying the record fine, BP has agreed to take immediate steps to protect those now working at the refinery, allocating a minimum of \$500 million to that effort.

- [Read the News Release](#)

\$22 Million for Disability Employment Initiative

A \$22 million solicitation for grant applications to fund programs that will improve educational, training and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities was announced by the department this week. "At the U.S. Department of Labor, we are committed to the goal of 'good jobs for everyone' — in its entirety. After all, America's workers are the nation's number one resource. They are also our wisest investment," said Secretary Solis. "To be truly competitive in the global economy, we must leverage and foster the professional skills and talents of every single worker, including the millions of working-age people with disabilities across our country." The new Disability Employment initiative is a joint project of the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration and its Office of Disability Employment Policy.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Backpacks for Back to School



With the back to school rush comes the purchase of new clothing, sneakers and school supplies for children. Every year the Central Union

Mission conducts "Operation Backpack" to help low-income children return to school confident and prepared to learn and succeed. This year the Labor Department's International Association of Workforce Professionals and American Federation of Government Employees, Local 12 joined in the effort. Thanks to the generosity of department staff, the groups were able to provide backpacks and school supplies to 40 third and fourth graders in the DC Metropolitan area. These children will start the school year with the realization that there are people who care about them and want them to succeed.

Unemployment Insurance Turns 75

For three-quarters of a century one program has been there when workers lose jobs through no fault of their own. The federal-state unemployment insurance program was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on August 14, 1935. It came at a time of great economic challenges and since then millions of workers facing layoffs have received benefits through the program. "This week we recognize both the anniversary of this important program, and the men and women in the federal-state unemployment system whose hard work guarantees that workers facing layoffs get the help they need," said Secretary Solis. "We at the U.S. Department of Labor know that this support can never replace a job, and we will continue to work diligently to ensure that our employment and training programs prepare participants for good careers in promising fields."



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

Interagency Pilot Program Places Youth at Historic Sites

Interagency collaboration leads to better training and employment opportunities for America's workers. The U.S. Departments of Labor, Interior and Agriculture have begun partnering on a number of initiatives including a pilot program to increase outdoor employment opportunities for youth. Through this program young people took part in work experiences at national parks and forests, conservation areas, historic sites and tribal lands. In New York City, one local program partnered with the National Parks Service to place participants at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island National Monuments where they are working as park aides. These young people greet visitors at the park library, and assist librarians with processing research materials, archives and photograph collections.



- [View the Slideshow](#)
- [Learn More About the Partnership](#)

Personal Dust Monitor Ranks High in HHSinnovates Program



Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced the winners of the HHSinnovates program last week. The

program was created as part of the secretary's commitment to celebrating innovative thinking throughout HHS. After nearly 10,000 votes cast by employees for the 126 innovations submitted, the top six projects were revealed. Among the secretary's top three picks was a Personal Dust Monitor. In partnership with the Labor Department's Assistant Secretary for Mine Safety and Health Administration Joe Main and other labor industry experts, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) developed a personal monitor to measure a miner's exposure to respirable dust that causes black lung.

- [Read more about Dust Monitor](#)

Borzi Talks Health at ABA

Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Employee Benefits Security Administration Phyllis Borzi participated in a panel

- [Download the 75th Anniversary Poster](#)

News You Can Use

De-mystifying Retirement Planning for Women

Women can face unique challenges in planning for a secure retirement. DOL's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) will host a workshop on August 23 in Boston to help women who are within 10-15 years of retiring achieve their financial goals. The workshop is jointly sponsored by EBSA, the Pension Action Center and the University of Massachusetts Boston Human Resources Employee Benefits Group. The workshop is just one of many ways EBSA is working to unravel the mystery of retirement planning. Nearly a month ago EBSA also sponsored a webcast discussion on ways all women can increase their financial fitness and save for retirement, including making the most of employer-based retirement savings plans.

- [Register for the workshop](#)
- [Read the Retirement Publication](#)
- [View the Webcast Archive](#)

DOL Working For You

DOL Helps Experienced Nurse's Aide Return to Work



At seventy-two years young, Valda Lydon is back at work thanks to schooling received through an American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) grant funded by the Labor Department. Although she had 50 years experience as a nurse's aid elsewhere, Valda learned that to find employment in her new home state of Florida she needed to retrain and upgrade her job skills to receive an updated nursing certification. Thanks to DOL's Senior Community Service Employment Program funding, AARP provided her with that training through a full scholarship and even paid her minimum wage while she learned. With her new certification, Valda now works as a home health aide assisting senior citizens. Valda said the program "helped me get back into the work force, gain my independence, and let's me help people and myself."

Around DOL

Flexibility: Policy, Practice, and Impact

A Memorandum of Agreement to expand and promote the use of flexible workplace strategies was signed by Women's Bureau (WB) Director Sara Manzano-Diaz and Assistant Secretary for the Office of the Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Kathy Martinez on Monday. In Fall 2010, the WB and the ODEP will jointly organize and host a one-day workplace flexibility roundtable titled Universal Flexibility for All: Policy, Practice, and Impact. The forum will be an opportunity for the two agencies to discuss best practices with federal and state agencies, disability organizations, nonprofit organizations and the private sector. Stay tuned for more updates over the next few weeks.



- [Read the Memorandum of Agreement](#)



discussion during the American Bar Association's (ABA) annual meeting in San Francisco on Saturday. Borzi discussed the Affordable Care Act regulation for "grandfathered health plans." The regulation lets American families and businesses keep the health coverage that was in place when the Act was passed and adds additional patient protections.

- [Read the Fact Sheet](#)

Joliet Among Best in Nation



Students at the Job Corps Center in Joliet, Ill., were greeted by U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin, and State Sen. A.J. Wilhelmi on

Tuesday to recognize their ranking among the top five (out of 122) Job Corps Centers nationally. Joliet is the highest performing center in the Chicago Region with an overall rating of 109.2 percent. The center exceeds expectation and goals in the following areas: percentage of students obtaining a GED/HSD, career technical training graduates, literacy and numeracy learning gains, the job training placement rate, the graduate placement and wage rates, six month follow-up placement and wage rates. Stay tuned to next week's newsletter. We'll provide more on the top 10 Job Corps Centers across the country.

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

ODEP — Construction: Nuts & Bolts

- [Aug 18, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — 12 Reasons Why Contractors Get in Trouble

- [Aug 13, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Complaint Investigation

- [Aug 17, 2010 — Portland, OR](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [Aug 17, 2010 — Dallas, TX](#)

OFCCP — From Recruitment to Hire: Avoiding Pitfalls in the Employment Process

- [Aug 18, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — Preparing for an OFCCP

DOL in Action

Fired Massey Employee May Get Day in Court

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) has filed a complaint of retaliation with the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission on behalf of a coal miner discharged from his job at a West Virginia coal mine. Ricky Lee Campbell had worked as a shuttle car operator and bolter at several mines owned by Massey Energy. After fewer than three weeks at Marfork Coal Co., he was fired for alleged complaints about safety conditions. His complaint of retaliation seeks permanent reinstatement to his job, back wages, a civil penalty of \$20,000 and other appropriate relief. "While this case is being tried, we want to send a clear message that operators who punish employees for expressing concerns about safety conditions should be held accountable for their actions," said MSHA Assistant Secretary Joseph A. Main.

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL Recovers \$868,000 for Timeshare Company Employees

A Wage and Hour investigation into pay practices at Central Florida Investments, which does business in nine states under the name of Westgate Resorts, has resulted in 1,065 employees receiving a total of \$868,443 in back wages. The timeshare properties company agreed to make the payments after an investigator found that employees who scheduled tours of timeshare properties for the company were not paid at least the federal minimum wage for all the hours they worked. Additionally, premium pay for the workers did not include commissions, and overtime pay was incorrectly computed. "Employers should know that when workers are deprived of their rightful wages, the Labor Department will not hesitate to take action to recover those wages," said Secretary Solis. "It's not just the right thing to do, it's the law."

- [Read the News Release](#)

OSHA Cites Defense Contractor for 22 Safety and Health Violations

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has cited AAR Summa Technology in Huntsville, Ala., with 22 safety and health violations and proposed penalties of \$191,500. After receiving a complaint about hazards at the military aircraft parts manufacturing facility, an OSHA inspection revealed two willful and 16 serious safety violations along with three serious and one repeat health violation. "Management needs to show a commitment to worker safety and health consistent with this company's ranking as one of the top defense contractors in the world," said Roberto Sanchez, OSHA's area director in Birmingham, Ala.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Texas Contractors to Pay \$136,000 in Back Wages

Contractors working on the Margret Hunt Hill bridge project in Dallas, Texas, have agreed to pay \$136,679 in back wages to 140 current and former construction workers. Following an investigation by the department's Wage and Hour Division, prime contractor Williams Brothers Construction in Houston and subcontractors Cimolai USA and Cosme were found in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Davis-Bacon Act and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act. By federal law, work financed in part by the federal government must comply with applicable federal labor laws.

Review

- [Aug 18, 2010 — Columbia, SC](#)

OFCCP — Construction Seminar - New York City

- [Aug 18, 2010 — New York, NY](#)

OFCCP — EEO Obligations of ARRA Construction Contractors

- [Aug 19, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OSHA — Seminar on Florida's Workers' Compensation Laws and Workplace Safety

- [Aug 13, 2010 — West Palm Beach, FL](#)

OSHA — Seminar on Florida's Workers' Compensation Laws and Workplace Safety

- [Aug 18, 2010 — Jacksonville, FL](#)

OSHA — Tri-State Small Business Forum (Mississippi/ Arkansas/ Tennessee)

- [Aug 19, 2010 — Southaven, MS](#)

WB — Learn More Now to Earn More Later: Understanding Your Rights and the Skills to Achieve Equal Pay

- [Aug 16, 2010 — New York, NY](#)

WB — Building Business Success in a New Economy

- [Aug 18, 2010 — Arlington, TX](#)

WHD — WHD ARRA Division B Internet Presentation

- [Aug 19, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

- [Read the News Release](#)

Recovery Highlights

\$15.6 Million in UI Modernization Funds Released to Rhode Island

The department has certified for release \$15,640,385 in unemployment insurance modernization incentive funds to Rhode Island. The state qualified for the remaining two-thirds of its funds available through the Recovery Act by updating state unemployment insurance laws to include certain family-friendly provisions. "Rhode Island is providing additional benefits to unemployed workers with families, and it is extending eligibility to those who leave jobs for compelling family reasons. These are important steps to help working families," said Secretary Solis. "These workers need and deserve our assistance as they seek out new employment, or strive to get the training needed to enter promising new careers."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Spotlight on States: South Carolina

Department Releases Funds To Modernize SC UI

The Labor Department has released \$97,459,490 in unemployment insurance modernization incentive funds to the state of South Carolina. The state qualified for the funding available through the Recovery Act by enacting a variety of provisions that allow more displaced workers to receive unemployment compensation. "By updating state unemployment insurance laws, South Carolina has acknowledged the needs of so many workers who would otherwise have gone without assistance," said Secretary Solis.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Opportunities are Open: ETA Programs

Seventy-five years after the unemployment insurance (UI) program was signed into law, DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) continues to provide displaced workers with the unemployment benefits they deserve. The UI program is one of many services ETA employees are making available to our nation's workforce. Explore the positions below or [view all](#) the rewarding careers with DOL.

1. Position in Washington, D.C. Metro Area
[Procurement Analyst](#)
DE-10-ETA-121
Close: 08/16/2010
2. Position in Washington, D.C. Metro Area
[Management and Program Analyst](#)
DE-10-ETA-169
Close: 08/18/2010
3. Position in Washington, D.C. Metro Area
[Workforce Analyst](#)
DE-10-ETA-160
Close: 08/20/2010

Follow USDOL on

- BP to pay \$50.6 million to resolve US Labor Department litigation; Penalty stems from 2005 explosion at Texas City...
<http://bit.ly/9TbXeN> about 20 hours ago
- DOL's ERISA Advisory Council to hold meeting Aug. 31 to Sept. 2 and solicits nominations
<http://bit.ly/a8GHNN> about 21 hours ago

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