



DOL News Brief

October 7, 2010

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Solis Joins in First-Ever White House Community College Summit

Community colleges are becoming the educators of choice for more and more Americans. These institutions are also an important part of



achieving President Obama's goal of making the United States the world leader in the proportion of college graduates. On October 5, Secretary Solis joined the president, Dr. Jill Biden and other officials in convening the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges. The summit brought together students with leaders in education, business and philanthropy to discuss how community colleges can help meet the training and education needs of the nation's evolving workforce.

- Read the Secretary's Remarks
• Learn More about the Summit
• View the Slideshow

What's Hot

Department Announces Competition for YouthBuild Grants

The department's Employment and Training Administration announced a solicitation for grant applications for the YouthBuild program this week. YouthBuild is an alternative education program that provides classroom instruction and construction skills training to at-risk individuals ages 16 to 24. Approximately \$130 million is available through two separate appropriations. "Education and employment are complimentary pieces of the same puzzle," said Secretary Solis. "Programs funded through these grants will serve communities across the nation and provide young people with opportunities to complete their education while participating in hands-on career preparation. That, in turn, will help these youngsters secure good jobs in skilled trades and strengthen the local and national economy."

- Read the News Release

Proposed Rulemaking on H-2B Wages

The Employment and Training Administration this week announced the publication of a proposed rule that seeks to improve the H-2B temporary nonagricultural worker program and better protect American workers. The proposed regulation would require employers to pay H-2B and American workers recruited in connection with an H-2B job application a wage that meets or exceeds the highest of: the prevailing wage, the federal minimum wage, the state minimum wage or the local minimum wage. "It is important that the H-2B program provide fair wages for both American and foreign workers," said Secretary Solis. "This proposed regulation better reflects the economic realities in the marketplace for these jobs and helps ensure that the program is utilized as it was intended."

- Read the News Release
• Read the Federal Register Notice

Solis Goes To Harvard



The next generation of America's "best and brightest" had a unique opportunity to hear Secretary Solis reflect on her decades of public service at

Harvard University last week. Solis was the featured speaker at the Kennedy School of Government's Institute of Politics forum, where she shared with students, faculty and staff her amazing journey from being the first member of her family to go to college, to being the first woman to win the prestigious John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award, to being named the first Latina to head a major agency in a president's cabinet. Earlier in the day, Solis addressed about 300 leaders gathered in Boston for the 2010 National Immigrant Integration Conference, where she updated the group on the

DOL Working For You

DOL Grant Grad Finds Employment for People with Disabilities



Deb Gentz is working to place people with disabilities in Wisconsin into good jobs. Gentz learned her new employment skills thanks to the department funding Opportunity Grants through the Workforce Investment Act. After being dislocated from her job as a hospital anesthesia technician, Gentz had her education at Wisconsin's Mid-State Technical College paid for by Opportunity Grants. She eventually received a business management degree and found full time employment with a non-profit as an exceptional needs specialist. There she counsels adults with disabilities and helps

department's various efforts to protect vulnerable workers.

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

Powered by Diversity

You can thank Pete Reyes if you like the new Ford Taurus Sedan or the F-150 Super Duty pickup truck. Reyes serves as chief engineer for



many of the company's latest and most successful vehicles. His approach? "I'm doing what I've done as long as I can remember — bringing people from different cultures and perspectives together," he says. Like Reyes, there is a growing cadre of talented and diverse American employees lending their considerable expertise and hard work to Ford's exciting projects. Secretary Solis spent Monday afternoon with several of these individuals. She spoke with them about their efforts and — as the featured speaker at the Ford Hispanic Network's "Heritage Cafecito" — fielded their questions on the nation's economic outlook. The forum was held at the company's Dearborn, Michigan site, where Solis — a longtime Mustang owner — also had the chance to experience one of Dearborn's latest thrill rides. With a little help from a 440-horsepower engine that roars comfortably under the hood of the 2012 Mustang Boss 302, one of Ford's professional drivers gave the Secretary a "few quick spins" around the company's test track.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Giving Back to Veterans



Deputy Secretary Seth Harris and Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training Service Ray Jefferson joined U.S. Chamber of

Commerce President and CEO Tom Donahue last week to launch a 14-state pilot program to educate the business community about the value of hiring veterans. At a press conference held at the USCC, Harris and Jefferson underlined the importance of giving back to the service members who have sacrificed for our nation. "When our young men and women return from serving their country, their country must stand ready to serve them in return," said Harris. "With this program, the Department of Labor and the U.S. Chamber

place them in jobs in the food service and janitorial industries. "I love working with people with disabilities" and finding them meaningful work, Gentz said, and credits her success to her DOL-funded schooling.

Busy Mom Cares for Child with a Disability, Starts New Biz

Although Ali Meders-Knight is busy working as a teacher and caring for her young daughter Malena, who has a disability, she is on course to start her own business thanks to free schooling funded by the Labor Department. The Chico, Calif., resident, who is a member of the Mechoopda Indian Tribe, completed four months of courses in entrepreneurial and small business economic development offered by the California Indian Manpower Consortium of Sacramento, California. She learned valuable insights into marketing, business planning and human resources which will help her start an environmental land use company in 2011. The schooling "was vital to my success because it taught me the importance of discipline in running a business and didn't cost me anything," Meders-Knight said of the DOL-funded program.



International Scene

"Better Work" for Nicaragua



During a panel discussion at the Labor Department on Wednesday, Secretary Solis and General Alvaro Baltodano of Nicaragua discussed the significance and challenges of the "Better Work" program in creating more and better jobs in the garment industry of Nicaragua. Solis emphasized that the U.S.

cannot maintain and improve the conditions of

its workers without doing so for workers around the world, adding that a stable global economy that provides good jobs for everyone at home and abroad is needed. Baltodano thanked the Secretary for the department's support and agreed that the program was a win-win for his country.

"Nicaragua joins those countries that embrace what is considered a gold standard for the respect of labor rights in the garment sector," said Solis.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Watch the Event](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)

Competitive Solicitation for \$4 Million to Combat Child Labor in Jordan

The Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs announced a \$4 million competitive grant solicitation seeking applications from qualified organizations for innovative strategies to combat the worst forms of child labor in Jordan. Applicants will be assessed on the design of strategies that meet the scope of work criteria and includes addressing goals to combat child labor.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Learn More](#)

ILAB Meeting in Bahrain on Global Worker Issues

A delegation from the Labor Department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs recently met with officials from the Bahrain government to discuss labor rights and enforcement, including the protection of migrant workers and



of Commerce are partnering to do just that."

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Helping Save for Retirement

EBSA Assistant Secretary Phyllis Borzi told the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee this week that the Obama Administration



is committed to helping Americans save for a secure retirement. In her testimony, she discussed DOL initiatives to improve retirement security by reducing barriers to annuitization of 401(k) assets, increasing transparency of retirement fees, better transparency for target date and other default retirement investments, and reducing conflicts of interest between pension advisors and plan fiduciaries. Borzi said, "The department's regulatory initiatives combined with its education and outreach will help improve the quality of the information workers and employers receive about retirement plans and savings."

- [Read the Testimony](#)

Apprenticeship Workshop Provides Career Opportunities



Last week in Boston, more than 200 representatives and stakeholders from Registered Apprenticeship, public workforce, and education systems came together for the Collaborate for Success: Partnering with Registered Apprenticeship Action Clinic.

This was the fourth in a series of "action clinics" sponsored by the Employment and Training Administration to support state teams in leveraging registered apprenticeship as a key talent development and re-employment strategy in their public workforce and education systems. The week-long clinic resulted in the development of innovative strategies and education partnerships that can provide workers with greater training and career opportunities, while at the same time provide employers with new options for developing a skilled workforce.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Deputy Secretary Highlights Plan/Prevent/Protect

Deputy Secretary Seth Harris gave the

strategies to address the global jobs crisis. The

ILAB delegation, which included Deputy Director of the Office of Trade and Labor Affairs Tim Wedding, Senior Advisor for the Middle East in ILAB Jim Rude, International Relations Officer Ryan Carrington, and other United States officials met with the Minister of Labor, Dr. Majeed Al Alawi, and other representatives from the government of Bahrain. As part of the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement, the meeting was an opportunity to promote international labor standards and identify areas where DOL and the Bahrain Ministry of Labor can cooperate to improve the rights, conditions and livelihoods of workers.

News You Can Use

Labor Workshops for Foreign Service Officers — Coming Soon!

This fall, the Bureau of International Labor Affairs will team up with the State Department's Office of International Labor and Business and Human Rights to co-host a series of workshops in Cairo, Egypt; Miami, Florida; and Bangkok, Thailand. ILAB Deputy Undersecretary Sandra Polaski and the State Department's Special Representative for International Labor Affairs Barbara Shailor participated in the workshop in Miami, Florida. The workshops provide foreign service officers posted at U.S. embassies throughout the world with knowledge about labor-related issues and skills that they can take back to their respective posts.

Around DOL

Talent Has No Boundaries!



Last week, Secretary Solis issued a statement in support of National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2010. "People with disabilities are an integral part of our diverse workforce, and access to fair employment for everyone must remain a priority for our nation," she said. Throughout the month of October, the Labor Department will hold events such as

sign language classes and film screenings to educate employees about disability issues. The theme for this year is "Talent Has No Boundaries: Workforce Diversity Includes People with Disabilities."

- [Read the President's Proclamation](#)
- [Read the Secretary's Statement](#)
- [Download the Poster](#)

"I Can" PSA Hits the Big Screen

During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, DOL's Campaign for Disability Employment is collaborating with AMC Entertainment to bring the "I Can" public service announcement to select movie theaters nationwide. The "I Can" PSA features seven people with disabilities sharing what they can do on the job when given the opportunity and reminds everyone that at work, it's what people CAN do that matters. The Campaign for Disability Employment is a program funded by the DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy and is a collaborative effort among leading disability and business organizations that seek to promote positive employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

- [Visit the Campaign for Disability Employment Site](#)
- [See the "I Can" PSA](#)

Worker Protection Senior Leadership Convenes

distinguished Ben Aaron Lecture at the University of California, Los Angeles on October 6. The event is held annually in honor of its namesake, Ben Aaron, one of the founders of the modern field of American labor and employment law. The deputy secretary's remarks included discussions of the National Labor Relations Act and Fair Labor Standards Act, as well as the Department's Plan/Prevent/Protect regulatory strategy. "The goal is very simple: Plan/Prevent/Protect is designed to assure that employers and other entities regulated by the Labor Department will take responsibility for employment law compliance, just as Congress required," said Harris. "This is our best bet of leveraging limited resources while responding to the still rising demand for Labor Department involvement in employment law disputes."

OSHA's New Direction is About Getting Back to the Basics

In a speech at the United Steelworkers Health, Safety and Environment Conference in Pittsburgh, Pa., this



week Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michael's said the agency's "new direction" is a return to the basics of "establishing up-to-date workplace safety and health regulations based on strong science and emphasizing strong and fair enforcement of those standards." Dr. Michaels also spoke about a new regulatory effort announced earlier this year that would require employers in America to implement an effective Injury and Illness Prevention Program tailored to hazards in their workplaces. "This regulation represents a fundamental change in how employers think about worker safety. Instead of waiting for a government inspection or a workplace tragedy to address workplace hazards, employers would be required to develop a plan to find all of the safety and health hazards in their facilities that might injure or kill workers -- and then fix those hazards," he said.

- [Read Michaels' Remarks](#)

OSHA and MSHA Talk Worker Safety at Safety Council Expo

Taking part in a panel discussion at the National Safety Council's 2010 Congress & Expo in San Diego, Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels and Assistant Secretary for Mine Safety and Health Joe Main discussed the progress their agencies have made in the area of workplace safety. Michaels discussed the importance of getting

Senior leadership from the department's worker protection agencies met in Philadelphia, Pa., last week to discuss DOL's new 2011 - 2016 Strategic Plan, enforcement strategies, and each agency's 2011 operating plan. Deputy Secretary Seth Harris welcomed the participants by encouraging them to embrace innovative and shared strategies that will positively impact American workers. "As we work to transform the department to better serve American workers, the worker protection agencies will be at the forefront of our efforts. By focusing on measurable outcomes, increased accountability, and data and evidence-driven budget development and program planning, these agencies will make significant strides toward that goal," said Harris. One of the conference highlights was the increased cooperation between the Solicitor's office and the enforcement agencies, including discussing strategies to implement an enterprise-wide enforcement model. More than 220 DOL leaders attended the conference.



- [View the Slideshow](#)
- [Read More about the Strategic Plan](#)

Green Scene

Job Corps Students Go Green



The Job Corps program "is preparing young people for self-sustaining employment" with equipment and curricula reflecting green technology, skills and practices embraced by green workforce employers, National Director Edna Primrose told sustainability leaders at a Green Gov Symposium on Wednesday.

According to Primrose, the Recovery Act had funded \$10 million towards developing and implementing green career technical training such as weatherization, renewable resources, solar energy and smart grid technologies, for targeted industries including construction automotive and advanced manufacturing. Meanwhile, \$240 million in Recovery Act funds was invested into improving the physical infrastructure, facilities and operations of Job Corps centers nationwide, aligning them with DOL's Sustainability Plan. She added that centers are providing students with skills and training that teach them "more broadly about environmental stewardship, green living and how individual actions have larger impacts."

- [Read Primrose's Remarks](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)
- [Watch Green Training Ad Videos](#)
- [Watch Green Career Pathways Video](#)

Green Jobs On Display at DOL

YouthBuild is one of the department's best programs. Green jobs are one of the biggest issue areas. Bringing the two together is a perfect opportunity to get more young people into exciting career opportunities. This week Secretary Solis welcomed more than 100 YouthBuild staff and trainers to the Frances Perkins Building to participate in a four-day



Federal Learning Exchange with one day was dedicated to hands-on training in green construction techniques. YouthBuild staff will take what they learned back to their programs. Passing on this knowledge will help more young people get the skills they need to enter careers in promising fields

companies to develop an Injury and Illness Prevention Program requiring employers to develop a plan to find safety and health hazards and fix them. "To save workers lives, we want every employer to find and fix their hazards," he said. Main discussed recent action the agency has taken to improve miner safety and health and enhance prevention efforts, including proposals that would require mine operators to conduct pre-shift examinations, lower miners' exposure to coal dust, and an initiative to target mines with chronic and persistent violations of significant health and safety regulations.

- [Learn More About the Expo](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

[Open Funding Opportunities](#)

Check out the grant opportunities with DOL. MSHA — 6th Annual Joint Western Regional Mine Safety and Health Conference

- [October 26 — Reno, NV](#)

MSHA — 2010 TRAM (Training Resources and Materials) National Mine Instructors Seminar

- [Oct. 12-14, 2010 — Beaver, WV](#)

MSHA — Public Meeting on Mine Safety and Health Management Programs

- [Oct. 8, 2010 — Arlington, VA](#)
- [Oct. 12, 2010 — Sacramento, CA](#)
- [Oct. 14, 2010 — Pittsburgh, PA](#)

OFCCP — AAP Development & Preparing for a Desk Audit

- [Oct. 14, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)
- [Oct. 28, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OFCCP — Best Practices

- [Oct. 20, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [Oct. 15, 2010 — San Antonio, TX](#)
- [Oct. 19, 2010 — Dallas, TX](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for ADA

- [Oct. 15, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [Oct. 12, 2010 — Mountainside, NJ](#)
- [Oct. 14, 2010 — New York, NY](#)

such as green construction, energy retrofitting and weatherization.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

DOL in Action

Investigation Results in Court Order Against Landscaping Companies

Barlen Contracting Inc. and Barlen PG Inc., two landscaping and snow removal companies in Farmington Hills, Mich., have been court-ordered to pay \$173,000 in back wages to 16 employees following an investigation by the department's Wage and Hour Division. The investigation disclosed that the companies violated the Fair Labor Standards Act by requiring employees to register as independent contractors and then paying them straight time for hours worked beyond 40 in a week. "An employer cannot avoid paying rightful wages simply by calling its employees independent contractors," said James Smith, district director of the Wage and Hour office in Detroit.

- [Read the News Release](#)

OSHA Orders Florida Trucking Company to Reinstate Whistleblower

The department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has ordered Zurla Trucking of Fort Myers, Fla., to reinstate a truck driver discharged for calling attention to safety issues. Finding that the company violated the Surface Transportation Assistance Act, OSHA has ordered the trucking firm to pay back wages plus interest and compensatory damages and delete from the employee's personnel file any adverse references related to the discharge. Additionally, the company must pay the employee \$125,000 in punitive damages.

- [Read the News Release](#)

OSHA Reaches Out to Prevent Distracted Driving

In conjunction with Drive Safely Work Week, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration launched an education campaign calling on employers to prevent work-related distracted driving, with a special focus on prohibiting texting while driving. "Year after year, the leading cause of worker fatalities is motor vehicle crashes," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. "There's no question that new communications technologies are helping businesses work smarter and faster. But getting work done faster does not justify the dramatically increased risk of injury and death that comes with texting while driving." Part of OSHA's education outreach is a new Web page to inform workers of their rights, and employers of their responsibility to provide safe workplaces, and offer best practices and policies on achieving safe workplaces in motor vehicles.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Visit the Website](#)

Safety and Health Management Programs for Mines Public Meetings

The Mine Safety and Health Administration is seeking input about successful safety and health management programs in our nation's mines. The agency will hold three public meetings for the purposes of information gathering to help develop a proposed rule, which will enable miners and mine operators to be more proactive in their approach to health and safety matters. "Year after year, many mine operators successfully achieve low injury, illness and violation rates," said Joe Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. "It is obvious there are some mines that need to change the culture of safety and health within their organizations,"

[Oct. 14, 2010 — Hartford, CT](#)

- [Oct. 14, 2010 — Buffalo, NY](#)
- [Oct. 21, 2010 — San Juan, PR](#)
- [Oct. 22, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)
- [Oct. 26, 2010 — Mountainside, NJ](#)
- [Oct. 28, 2010 — Buffalo, NY](#)
- [Oct. 28, 2010 — Hartford, CT](#)
- [Oct. 28, 2010 — New York, NY](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Supply and Service Contractors

- [Oct. 8, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)
- [Oct. 13, 2010 — Nashville, TN](#)
- [Oct. 14, 2010 — San Juan, PR](#)
- [Oct. 20, 2010 — Nashville, TN](#)
- [Oct. 21, 2010 — Buffalo, NY](#)
- [Oct. 21, 2010 — Hartford, CT](#)
- [Oct. 21, 2010 — New York, NY](#)
- [Oct. 27, 2010 — Nashville, TN](#)

OFCCP — How Do You Respond, Prepare for Audit?

- [Oct. 21, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)

OFCCP — National Association of Women in Construction

- [Oct. 22, 2010 — Miami, FL](#)

OFCCP — Reasonable Accommodations Under the ADA

- [Oct. 29, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OLMS — Conducting Union Officer Elections Seminar

- [Oct. 15, 2010 — Buffalo, NY](#)
- [Oct. 19, 2010 — Albany, NY](#)

Follow USDOL on 

- Statement of Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis on September employment numbers - 10-1433-NAT - [10/08/2010] <http://bit.ly/aOEJoE> about 6 hours ago
- MSHA issues 11 closure orders during surprise inspection at West Virginia coal mine [10/07/2010] <http://bit.ly/b8n17V> 1 day ago

he added. "Hopefully, hearing about successful management programs will encourage them to move in the right direction."

- [Read the News Release](#)

MSHA Inspectors Issue Multiple Closure Orders at WV Coal Mine

Federal mine inspectors, acting on reports of illegal mining activities, launched a surprise inspection last week at Elk Run Coal Co.'s Seng Creek Powellton Mine in Boone County, W.Va. The mine operator was cited for violating a number of federal standards, including taking extended, illegal cuts into the coal seam; operating without proper ventilation; and not completing required air readings. Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health Joe Main, noting that this week marks the six-month anniversary of the tragic explosion at Upper Big Branch Mine, said, "Rather than learn from this tragedy, some mine operators continue to put their workers at great risk of injury or illness. Those who persist in refusing to follow the safety and health regulations in place can expect these kinds of inspections to continue."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Coca-Cola's Bottler Settles Discrimination Charge

Coca-Cola Bottling Company Consolidated has settled charges brought by the department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs that it discriminated in the hiring of sales support positions at its plant in Charlotte, N.C. The settlement agreement includes payment of \$495,000 to 95 African-American and Hispanic job seekers who were denied employment in 2002. In addition, Coca-Cola's second largest bottler will offer employment to the 95 applicants as sales support positions become available until at least 23 interested class members are hired. "The Labor Department is firmly committed to ensuring that those who do business with our government do not discriminate in their employment practices," said OFCCP Director Patricia A. Shiu. "Being a federal contractor is a privilege that comes with an obligation to ensure equal opportunity in employment."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Opportunities are Open: Aloha

While many people may think of the Aloha state, Hawaii, as a popular vacation getaway, at the Labor Department it is a land of opportunities. Explore the positions below or [view all](#) the rewarding careers at the department.

1. Positions in Honolulu, Hi. [Veterans' Program Specialist](#)
DE-10-SF-VETS-123
Close: 10/22/2010
2. Position in Honolulu, Hi. [Veterans' Employment Representative](#)
DE-10-SF-VETS-118a
Close: 10/26/2010

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