



DOL News Brief

October 14, 2010

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Veterans Roundtable Seeks Solutions

Secretary Solis continued the Labor Department's observance of Hispanic Heritage Month last week with a roundtable discussion



focusing on Latino and female veterans and their families. The meeting explored ways to close the gap between current services available and those still needed to better serve veterans. Solis was joined by several DOL officials. The roundtable and live webcast allowed stakeholders to share ideas and highlight priorities in the service of our nation's veterans.

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

What's Hot

MSHA Announces Proposed Rule to Help Protect Miners' Health



Marking another step in its "End Black Lung — Act Now!" campaign, the Mine Safety and Health Administration announced Thursday a proposed rule to protect coal miners' health. Cases of black lung are increasing, even among younger miners, and MSHA's proposed rule would limit the levels of permissible coal mine dust exposure, as well as institute the use of Continuous Personal Dust Monitors and single, full-shift samples to determine compliance. In addition, medical surveillance would be expanded, so that miners can take proactive steps to monitor their health. The

proposed rule is one element of the campaign that also includes enhanced education and outreach to the entire mining community. "Protecting miners' health is a priority of the Department of Labor," said Secretary Solis. "This proposed rule takes concrete steps to end the terrible disease of black lung and will improve miners' lives."

- [View the Proposed Rule Video](#)
- [View the Comprehensive Campaign to End Black Lung Video](#)
- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the Fact Sheet](#)

DOL Leads Federal POWER



President Obama has tasked the Department of Labor with leading federal agencies in reducing their injuries, improving their workplace safety and ensuring "that those workers who are injured are provided the best opportunity to return to work as timely as possible," Deputy Secretary

Seth Harris told a stakeholder meeting on the Protecting Our Workers and Ensuring Reemployment (POWER) initiative this week. "The POWER initiative not only builds on the successes of past federal health, safety and re-employment efforts, it challenges federal agencies to focus on the most serious injuries with longer disability durations to make sure we are doing all we can to help these workers recover and get back to productive employment," added Office of Workers' Compensation Programs Director Shelby Hallmark. POWER sets measurable agency goals that focus on health, safety and injury case management as well as analyzing data associated with the most frequent

EBSA Unveils Fee Disclosure Rule

An estimated 72 million participants covered by 401(k)-type retirement plans will receive better information regarding the fees and expenses associated with their plans under a final regulation announced this week by the Employee Benefits Security Administration. This rule will ensure that all workers who direct their plan investments have access to the information they need to make informed decisions regarding the investment of their retirement savings, including fee and expense information. "This rule provides uniform disclosure to workers about what they pay for investment options in their retirement plans," said Secretary Solis. "For the first time, workers will have at their fingertips important and accessible investment-related information to comparison shop among the plan options available to them."

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the Fact Sheet](#)
- [View the Sample Comparative Chart](#)
- [Listen to the Conference Call](#)

DOL and Puerto Rico Department of Labor Sign Partnership Agreement

The Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division and the Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources, Labor Standards Division,

and severe injury cases and improving return-to-work outcomes.

- [Watch the Slideshow](#)
- [Read the Secretary's Memo](#)

NDEAM to NY

Continuing the celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Disability Employment Policy Kathy Martinez gave remarks to more than 200 Equal Employment Opportunity Specialists and Coordinators representing more than 50 agencies in New York City this week. Martinez' message focused on enhancing the employment of people with disabilities in New York City government. "This is not about 'us' and 'them' — this is about all of us. I would like to challenge each of you to step out and step ahead of the regulations and be advocates so that your agencies can be model employers of people with disabilities," said Martinez.

Job Corps Students Pitch in to Help Kentucky Flood Victims



A devastating Kentucky flood served as a call to action for local Job Corps students. More than 50 students from the Carl D. Perkins Job Corps

Center in Prestonburg, Ky., have been working with Codell Construction to construct temporary housing for local flood victims. Teams of students from Job Corps' carpentry, facility maintenance, masonry, electricity, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning programs have been spending four days a week in Pikeville converting the former Days Inn hotel into 14 two-room apartment units for families displaced by the July 17 flood.

Walk This Way

The Washington, D.C. metropolitan area is known for having some of the nation's most bustling streets — especially during rush hour. Thanks to the installation of new audible crossing signals at the entrance of the Labor Department's national office, visitors and employees alike can feel safe when crossing the busy intersection. The new system emits an audible tone so that its actuating button may be located. After the button is pressed, the audible message "walk sign is



have partnered to ensure compliance among employers in Puerto Rico with both federal and the commonwealth's labor laws. A key element is the commitment to conduct joint investigations, when appropriate, of the regulated employer community in Puerto Rico. To leverage resources, investigators will be cross-trained about the laws and regulations enforced by both agencies. Besides providing compliance assistance to the business community, the agencies will work together to provide employers and employees with information and access to training resources that will help protect the wages, safety and health of Puerto Rico's workforce. "Puerto Rico's workers deserve to be protected fully by the labor laws that are enforced by both the federal government and by the commonwealth," said José Vazquez, director of the Wage and Hour Division's Caribbean District Office in Guaynabo. "This agreement simply seeks to ensure that goal by formalizing cooperation and the exchange of information between the two agencies."

- [Read the News Release](#)

News You Can Use

Health Central

The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Treasury published guidance this week to clarify the exemption for group health plans with fewer than two current employees. Two "Frequently Asked Questions" were published in response to questions from stakeholders regarding the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

- [Read the FAQs Affordable Care Act](#)

WHD Releases New Work Hours Calendar



A new "Work Hours Calendar" in English and Spanish has been developed to help workers make sure they are properly paid at the end of the work week. The calendar helps workers track their rate of pay, when they start and stop working, and arrival and departure times. This information would prove invaluable during an

investigation where an employer has failed to maintain accurate employment records. Designed for use by those who are the most vulnerable workers in the country, the calendar includes easy-to-understand information about worker rights and how to file a wage violation complaint. The calendar can be ordered by calling 1-866-4US-WAGE (866-487-9243).

- [Download the Calendar \(English\)](#) / [\(Spanish\)](#)

DOL Working For You

Workforce Recruitment Program Helps Student Land Hi-Tech Job

Consecutive summer internships through the Office of Disability Employment Policy's Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) lead 22-year-old Alexander Forbes to a full-time job with Prudential Financial, a large New Jersey financial and insurance company. Alex, who has cerebral palsy, provides analysis and technical support on important financial data required under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act regulating financial and corporate governance. Alex landed the job after interning with Prudential the last two summers through the WRP. The program connects federal and private sector employers with highly motivated students with disabilities seeking employment. Alex said he hopes one day to become an expert on cyber security. He credits



on," which is synchronized with the visual "Walk" icon, can be heard. This initiative was spearheaded by Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy Kathy Martinez, and is just one of the many projects she has unveiled during National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

- [View the Audible Signal Video](#)

Job Corps Students Win Olympics



Carl D. Perkins Job Corps Center, located in Prestonburg, Ky., recently competed against five other centers to win the 2010 Philadelphia

Regional Academic Olympics final competition in Ocean City, Md. The winning team received Gateway laptops donated by Adams & Associates Inc. Competition questions covered language arts, social studies, science, spelling and mathematics, with bonus rounds in popular culture and career training. Thirty-five teams participated in district competitions in late August, and Carl D. Perkins, Keystone, Potomac, Shriver, Red Rock, and Old Dominion Job Corps centers were all chosen to advance to the finals.

Community Colleges Work

Just days after President Obama's Community College Summit, the discussion continued on Thursday at Passaic County Community College in



Patterson, N.J., where Deputy Secretary Seth Harris spoke about the critical role that America's community colleges play in the nation's economic recovery. "We must continue to invest in community colleges, just as we have over the past 18 months, while making college more affordable, and bringing together businesses, nonprofits and schools to train America's men and women for the jobs of a new century. That's what this administration is committed to, and that's what the Passaic County Community College has demonstrated is possible," said Harris.

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

[Open Funding Opportunities](#)

Check out the grant opportunities with DOL.

MSHA — 6th Annual Joint Western Regional Mine Safety and Health Conference

WRP with giving him confidence in his skills and providing his co-workers with "the ability to look beyond my disability and see the talent that was there."

WIA Helps Student Overcome Disability on Way to Gates Scholarship



Something as simple as earning a driver's license through the Workforce Investment Act has helped Sigourney Walker overcome obstacles from a traumatic brain injury and transported her to success. After recovering from a biking accident, the 22-year-old Fairbanks, Alaska, resident found time to mentor fellow WIA students who had more

severe disabilities, while also job shadowing at a local hospital. She has begun her junior year at the University of Alaska, majoring in biochemistry and was also awarded a Bill and Melinda Gates Millennium Scholarship, given to outstanding, low-income minority students. (Sigourney is a descendant of Athabasca Native Americans.) Becoming independently mobile thanks to the WIA program was important for her desire to help others. Mentoring "was a successful way to give back to my peer group – a lot of my identity resides in the disability community, I wanted to give back to others and apply my skills," she said.

Around DOL

MSHA, NSSGA Renew 7-Year-Old Safety Alliance

The Mine Safety and Health Administration and the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association have renewed their 2003 commitment to prevent injuries and illnesses at U.S. aggregate operations. In a signing ceremony at NSSGA's Fall Board of Directors meeting last week in San Diego, the parties agreed to continue working closely on the promotion of safe working conditions, development of effective miner training programs and expansion of mine safety and health outreach and communication. "The MSHA-NSSGA Alliance has been very fruitful," said Joe Main, MSHA assistant secretary. "The support of the industry is indispensable in reaching our ultimate goal of sending every miner home safe and healthy and whole at the end of every shift, every day."



DOL in Action

Funding for Retraining Following Arizona Layoffs

Help is on the way for a group of Arizonans who lost jobs due to layoffs in multiple industries in Pima County, Ariz. A \$2,912,436 National Emergency Grant will allow these workers to access services including skills assessment, basic skills training, individual career counseling and occupational skills training. Affected workers will be able to transition to careers in high-demand industries of the area's economy, such as aerospace and defense, hybrid vehicle repair and maintenance, information security, machining and supply chain management.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Ohio Steel Industry Workers to Receive Assistance

The department has announced a \$984,248 grant to assist 132 workers affected by layoffs at five Severstal locations – four in Ohio and one in West Virginia – and one supplier, Kinder-Morgan, located in Pennsylvania. The grant will be operated by the Belmont County Department of Job and Family

- [October 26 — Reno, NV](#)

OFCCP — AAP Development & Preparing for a Desk Audit

- [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. 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. 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 

- US Department of Labor announces more than \$984,000 to

Services and the Jefferson Community Action Council Inc. Funds will provide these dislocated workers, most of whom are also certified as eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance, with access to wrap-around and supportive services.

- [Read the News Release](#)

OSHA Fines Metal Recycler for Exposing Workers to Lead Hazards

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration fined Simsmetal East LLC, doing business as Sims Metal Management, for workplace safety violations at its Claremont Terminal site in Jersey City. OSHA cited the company for three willful and 10 serious violations for infractions such as not determining if workers were exposed to unhealthy levels of airborne lead and failing to implement a respiratory protection program. Proposed penalties total \$188,500.

- [Read the News Release](#)

More than \$485,000 for Employees of NYC Dollar Store Chain

A chain of dollar stores located throughout the boroughs of New York City has been ordered to pay 120 employees more than \$485,000 in minimum wages, overtime pay, liquidated damages and post judgment interest as the result of a lawsuit filed by the Labor Department. The suit followed an investigation by the New York City District Office of the Wage and Hour Division, which found that employees working at the companies' retail stores often were paid at hourly rates less than the federal minimum wage, and were required to work more than 40 hours in many weeks without being properly compensated. The investigation also found that the companies failed to maintain adequate and accurate records of their employees, wages, hours and other conditions of employment.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Spotlight on States: Delaware

Delawareans to Get Help Following Refinery Layoffs

Layoffs hurt, but training and employment programs can help. The department has announced a \$3,511,254 grant to assist approximately 546 workers affected by layoffs at Valero Energy Corp. located in Delaware City, Del. Awarded to the Delaware Department of Labor, this grant will provide affected workers with access to dislocated worker services, including individual career counseling and occupational skills training.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Opportunities are Open: Safety First

A good job is a safe job. At the Department of Labor, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Mine Safety and Health Administration are working to protect one of our nation's most valuable resources — the American worker. Explore the positions below or [view all](#) the rewarding careers at the department.

1. Position in Washington, D.C.
[Investigation and Compliance Specialist](#)
DE-11-OSHA-01
Close: 10/22/2010
2. Multiple Duty Locations
[Coal Mine Safety and Health Inspector](#)
FCIP-10-MSHA-010-CO-D9
Close: 10/25/2010
3. Position in Boston, MA.

assist Ohio residents affected by
steel industry layoffs [1...
<http://bit.ly/d2ie1n> about 4 hours ago

[Civil Engineer \(Structural\)](#)
DE-10-BOS-OSHA-219
Close: 10/24/2010

- US Department of Labor and
Puerto Rico Department of Labor
sign partnership agreement
[10/14/2010] <http://bit.ly/cYpdAo>
about 6 hours ago

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