



DOL News Brief

January 13, 2011

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Exports: Pathway to Jobs



In opening remarks to the Jan. 12 meeting of the Labor Advisory Committee for Trade Negotiations and Trade Policy, Secretary Solis

discussed the department's priorities to lower the unemployment rate while creating good and safe jobs for everyone. "We remain committed to putting America back to work. Increasing exports is a proven way to grow the economy and create more jobs," Solis said. U.S. Trade Ambassador Ron Kirk and Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood also participated in the committee meeting, as well as liaisons from American labor unions.

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

Flexibility is a Win-Win

Senior Advisor MaryBeth Maxwell keynoted an event at the Center for American Progress on Thursday to highlight a new study that showcases the implementation and effectiveness of paid leave in California. In 2002, California became the first state to put into practice a paid family leave insurance program, an initiative that was introduced by then State Senator Solis. "I welcome these new studies that document the success of, and valuable lessons from, the California Paid Leave program. Especially in these tough times, working families need support as they juggle work-family responsibilities," said Secretary Solis. "This new data helps demonstrate that innovative workplace flexibility policy is a win-win; good for working families and good for US employers."

- [Read the Report](#)
- [Learn More](#)

Solis on Apprenticeship at DOL

Solid advice can form the basis of good

In Our Thoughts

The department's thoughts and prayers are with Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and all of the victims of last week's tragic event in Tucson, Arizona. "I have seen Gabby at her very best — doing what she does best — when I was with her and Rep. Raul Grijalva in Tucson last year participating in an event celebrating our nation's veterans," said Secretary Solis of her friend and former colleague. "She is deeply committed to her constituents and her country." We salute the heroism of the men and women who selflessly risked their lives to ensure the safety of others and wish the victims a swift recovery.



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

Around DOL

Solis to Establish Charter of Maritime Advisory Committee
Secretary Solis will re-establish the charter of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Maritime Advisory Committee for Occupational Safety and Health. Established in 1995, the committee is composed of approximately 15 members who are industry professionals selected to represent the interests of the maritime community. The maritime industry has been selected for special attention due to high injury and illness rates and the specialized nature of some occupations. On behalf of Secretary Solis, Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr. David Michaels may seek advice from the committee on a variety of subjects, which may include rulemaking to update regulatory requirements; development of guidance and outreach materials tailored to individual sectors of the industry; and other activities to help reduce work-related deaths, injuries and illnesses.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Take Three

Secretary Solis answers three questions on a current hot-button issue. This week's topic is The Economy.

How does DOL collect the employment statistics released each month?

Our Bureau of Labor Statistics collects information from a survey of 410,000 worksites and a separate survey of 60,000 households, done with the Census Bureau. The employer survey gives us the month-to-month change in nonfarm employment, while the household survey is used to calculate the unemployment rate.

policy decisions that strengthen already successful programs. This week, the Secretary's Advisory



Committee on Apprenticeship came together at the department. Secretary Solis joined the committee as work groups reported on their activities and thanked them for their efforts. She also reiterated her vision for expanding Registered Apprenticeship, which includes increasing opportunities for under-represented populations; and promoting new partnerships with the education and workforce systems to increase the scope of Registered Apprenticeship. Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training Jane Oates was also on hand. She thanked the group for its efforts. "This is an incredibly committed and hardworking group," said Oates. "I am impressed with their willingness to work outside of these meetings."

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

DOL at LERA

Deputy Secretary Seth Harris participated in the Labor and Employment Relations Association's 63rd Annual Meeting last Friday for the launch of the Employment Policy Research Network. Harris discussed the Labor Department's ongoing commitment to social science research and evidence-based decision making. He also challenged EPRN and the academic community to provide empirical and actionable research to impact policy discussions. "The conflict," said Harris "is about whether public policy will be driven by ideology and belief, or whether it will be guided by data, evidence, and research. I know which side of that conflict I'm on, and I know which way the Labor Department is headed." During the conference, LERA also honored DOL Chief Economist Betsey Stevenson with the John Dunlop Scholar Award for her outstanding academic contributions to research. Deputy Solicitor Deborah Greenfield participated in a panel discussion focusing on International Labor Organization Core Conventions.

- [Read Harris' Remarks](#)

New Feature on MySkills, MyFuture Website



"mySkills, myFuture" users can now select a career and identify local businesses likely to hire workers in their

What were your biggest takeaways about the economy in 2010?

I'm proud of the steps we've taken. The numbers point to 2010 as a year of deepening recovery. We had five straight quarters of GDP growth and steady job gains. Job growth accelerated throughout 2010 with each quarter producing more jobs than the last.

Looking ahead, where do you expect to see growth in 2011?
More and more industries are benefiting from the growing economy and deciding it's time to start hiring again. I expect that we will see strong recovery across the board in 2011, but am especially excited about the steady growth in the health care and manufacturing sectors, especially in sustainable green industries.

News You Can Use

Aggregates Industry Gets Online Assistance from Mine Safety Agency

There are more than 9,600 sand, gravel and crushed stone mines in the U.S., Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands. Many of these mine operators are new to the industry and small in scale. The Mine Safety and Health Administration has collaborated with the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association to develop an online education and training toolbox for the aggregates industry. "Safety Pro in a Box," available on MSHA's website, includes handbooks on accident/illness reporting procedures and metal/nonmetal inspection procedures; instructor guides for conducting safety and health audits at aggregates operations; on-the-job training modules for sand, gravel and crushed stone mines; an instructor guide for establishing an occupational health program for respirable crystalline silica; and training modules on highwall hazards, personal protective equipment, hearing conservation and workplace exams.



- [View Safety Pro in a Box](#)

OLMS Seeks Public Comment on Electronic Voting

The Office of Labor-Management Standards has published a request for information notice seeking public comment to assist DOL in issuing guidance on the use of electronic voting systems in union officer elections. "Ensuring democratic standards and the integrity of the voting process in union officer elections is an essential mission of this agency," said OLMS Director John Lund. "We hope that the information we gather from this RFI will help us assess the impact of new technology on union democracy."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Website on Toxic Substances under EEOICPA Completed

In an effort that began last May, the department has completed its expansion of the Site Exposure Matrices website. This more robust public version of the SEM website provides additional ways to look for information regarding toxic substances used at U.S. Department of Energy nuclear weapons facilities covered under Part E of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act. The enhanced site also contains more data and allows users to identify interrelationships among DOE buildings, work processes, labor categories and toxic substances verified as having been on-site and used at DOE sites.

- [Visit the Website](#)

Comments Wanted on Break Time for Nursing Mothers

selected occupation.

The CareerOneStop mySkills, myFuture website now includes employer information from private businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

- [Visit MySkills MyFuture](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

We're Looking for Scholars

DOL is holding a competition for grants to carry out original research projects, which can help inform our policy formulation or execution. Topics of interest include employment and training programs, and especially impacts of the Recovery Act. Junior researchers are encouraged to apply. The competition will close on February 28, 2011, and the grants will be awarded in March. Applicants should expect to conclude their work and produce final papers by September 2011.

- [View the Full Announcement](#)
- [View the Application](#)

MSHA — 15th Professional Development Mine Safety Seminar for Supervisors

- [January 19 - 20 — Allentown, PA](#)

MSHA — Mining Blasting Safety and Application Seminar

- [January 19 - 20 — Beaver, WV](#)

MSHA — Partners in Safety: Missouri Mine Safety and Health Conference

- [January 13 - 14 — Osage Beach, MO](#)

OFCCP — 503 and the ADA

- [January 26 — Petaluma, CA](#)
- [February 17 — Los Angeles, CA](#)

OFCCP — Best Practices

- [January 26 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — Black Human Resource Network Seminar

- [January 20 — Jackson, MS](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [January 20 — Huntsville, AL](#)
- [January 20 — Los Angeles, CA](#)
- [January 26 — San Jose, CA](#)
- [January 26 — Orange, CA](#)
- [January 26 — Gulfport, MS](#)

There is still time to comment on the Break Time for Nursing Mothers Law. The law would require employers to provide nursing mothers with reasonable break time and a private space for expressing milk while at work. "What the department is seeking to do is to develop guidance for employers that will assist them in complying with this new law and that will support women who choose to continue nursing once they return to work," said Secretary Solis. The department will be accepting public comments in response to the request for information for the next 40 days. Comments must be received on or before Feb. 22, 2011.

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL Working For You

Veteran Helps Veteran Find Meaningful Employment

When a 65-year-old Navy veteran felt he was too old to find work, Veteran Employment Representative James Thompson offered him a message of hope and comprehensive services that eventually lead to a full-time job. Thompson, who works in Spartanburg, SC, helped his client receive intensive career guidance in resume preparation and computer classes, plus job training in occupations such as forklift operations.

Eventually the veteran received a full-time job offer in a local warehouse and distribution operations center. "The stereotype is that if you are over 40, you are too old to work," said Thompson, a Navy veteran himself. "We let employers know that these are veterans and that — no matter their age — they can still do the job."



Nevada Traffic Improved by Job Corps Graduate



By combining current technology with the skills he learned at the Phoenix, Ariz., Job Corps center, state transportation planner Israel Lopez is helping to improve traffic flow and relieve congestion on Nevada roadways. Lopez, 38, studied office administration and earned his GED at Job Corps, worked in the private sector, finished his college studies and even did a stint in the military. The office skills he learned from Job Corps serve him every day, he said, because in order to design fiber optic systems that balance traffic flows, "the majority of the time I am developing, writing or reviewing reports."

Lopez attributes his daily success to Job Corps: "Job Corps helped me focus on what I needed to do," he said.

DOL in Action

DOL Recovers Nearly \$160,000 for 110 Los Angeles Garment Workers

The Labor Department has recovered \$158,952 in back wages for 110 Los Angeles garment workers. Sewing contractor Angel's Finishing Inc., which worked exclusively for Commerce, Calif.-based Joe's Jeans, finished the garments that were later sold at major department stores including Macy's, Neiman Marcus, Dillard's, Bloomingdale's, Saks Fifth Avenue and Nordstrom. "This company was enjoying high profits on the backs of vulnerable workers who were not even paid the minimum wage or overtime," said Secretary Solis. "We expect employers to take responsibility to ensure that anyone manufacturing their products follows the law, and if they do not, we will take necessary actions to ensure that they do." Joe's Jeans agreed to conduct periodic monitoring of its contractors for Fair Labor Standards

- [January 26 — Portland, OR](#)
- [February 10 — Yazoo, MS](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Supply and Service Contractors

- [January 20 — Memphis, TN](#)
- [January 25 — Mountainside, NJ](#)
- [January 25 — Jacksonville, FL](#)
- [January 26 — Nashville, TN](#)
- [February 2 — Nashville, TN](#)
- [February 8 — Itta Bena, MS](#)
- [February 8 — Mountainside, NJ](#)
- [February 9 — Orange, CA](#)
- [February 9 — Nashville, TN](#)
- [February 9 — Birmingham, AL](#)
- [February 22 — Jacksonville, FL](#)
- [February 23 — Portland, OR](#)
- [February 23 — Orange, CA](#)
- [February 23 — Nashville, TN](#)

OFCCP — Community Connections

- [January 18 — Columbia, SC](#)
- [January 26 — Jackson, MS](#)
- [February 2 — Raleigh, NC](#)
- [February 9 — Charlotte, NC](#)
- [February 15 — Columbia, SC](#)
- [February 15 — Raleigh, NC](#)
- [February 17 — Kosciusko, MS](#)
- [February 18 — Tougaloo, MS](#)

OFCCP — Contractors Connecting with Recruitment Sources

- [February 1 — Anchorage, AK](#)

OFCCP — Information Session with Native American CBO's

- [February 9 — Denver, CO](#)

OFCCP — National Council of Negro Women

- [February 19 — Jackson, MS](#)

OFCCP — New York Construction Union Education Exchange Forum

- [February 28 — New York, NY](#)

OFCCP — Pro-Active Equal Employment Practices for Federal Contractors

- [January 18 — Dallas, TX](#)

OFCCP — Workforce Development Agency

- [January 18 — Atlanta, GA](#)

OSHA — National Advisory

Act compliance.

- [Read the News Release](#)

More Than \$1 Million for Employees of US Army Contractor

The Wage and Hour Division has resolved an investigation against a contractor and two subcontractors providing language, intelligence and information technology services to the U.S. Army at Ft. Irwin, Calif. "Contractors and subcontractors hired to perform services for the U.S. military have a clear obligation to comply thoroughly and consistently with federal law," said Secretary Solis. "As we do with all employers, we will hold these businesses accountable for paying their workers for all hours, including any overtime, spent on the job." Prime contractor CALNET Inc. of Reston, Va., and subcontractors Acclaim Technical Services Inc. of Huntington Beach, Calif., and McNeil Technologies of Springfield, Va., have paid 865 employees a total of just over \$1 million.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Welch Foods Agrees to Pay More Than \$14,000 After Violating FMLA

The department has settled a Family and Medical Leave Act claim against Welch Foods Inc. of Lawton, Mich., for the unlawful termination of an employee after she requested a reduced work schedule because of a serious health condition. The company will pay the employee \$14,110 in back wages, has agreed to future compliance with the FMLA and will fully notify its employees of their rights and responsibilities under the act.

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL Investigation Nets \$1.3 Million for Federal Contractor

Following an investigation by the Wage and Hour Division, the department has recovered \$1,368,946 in back wages and fringe benefits for 140 employees of Total Enterprise Inc., a bus transportation company providing services to TSA workers at Chicago O'Hare Airport. "This action underscores the Labor Department's commitment to ensuring that proper prevailing wages and benefits are paid to the many men and women working on federal contracts," said Secretary Solis. "It should be a signal to all federal contractors that, when violations are found, this department will take appropriate legal action to ensure workers receive the wages they've worked hard for and deserve."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Mining Disaster Propels MSHA into Action

Last year was an extremely difficult one for the mining community. In addition to the deaths of 29 men at Upper Big Branch Mine in April, 42 miners lost their lives in on-the-job accidents. This followed a year marked by the fewest deaths in the history of mining in the U.S. Propelled to action by the worst mining disaster in 40 years, the Mine Safety and Health Administration launched a number of initiatives focusing on enhanced enforcement, outreach and rulemaking to reduce the number of mining fatalities, accidents and illnesses. "Increasing our efforts to ensure a safe and healthy workplace for our nation's miners is the best way to honor the memory of those who died," said MSHA Assistant Secretary Joe Main. "No miners should have to die on the job just to earn a paycheck."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Spotlight on States: Iowa

\$775,000 to Assist Iowa Workers Affected by Manufacturing Layoffs

Committee on Occupational Safety and Health Meeting (NACOSH)

- [January 19 - 20 — Washington, DC](#)

OSHA — Public hearing on Walking-Working Surfaces and Personal Protective Equipment

- [January 18 — Washington, DC](#)

The department has provided a \$775,351 National Emergency Grant to assist 115 workers affected by layoffs at 5 companies in northeast Iowa. "Only another job can replace a job lost," said Secretary Solis. "Training and employment services provided through today's grant can help these workers open doors to new careers that offer good wages and opportunities for advancement." Awarded to Iowa Workforce Development, the grant will provide these dislocated workers, many of whom are also certified as eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance, with access to "wrap-around" and supportive services.

- [Read the News Release](#)

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