



DOL News Brief

January 27, 2011

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Innovation on Display at Washington Auto Show



Washington D.C.'s largest public auto show had a special guest today. Secretary Solis toured the Washington Auto Show, viewing the

latest in innovation and design from the auto manufacturing industry. Solis visited with representatives from General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler who touted old favorites and new prototypes at the event, which has been around since 1921. The auto industry executives also highlighted some of the innovations and advancements that American workers are developing across the United States. New electric and hybrid vehicles the secretary visited included the 2011 Motor Trend Car of the Year Chevy Volt, and the new all-electric Ford Focus.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

File Your Taxes at One Stop Career Centers

Filing your taxes can be free and simple when you access the IRS Free File system through a computer at your local One Stop Career Center. Up to 70 percent of wage earners are eligible to use the Free File program.

- [Read the Secretary's Blog Post](#)
- [Find Out if You Qualify](#)
- [Find a One Stop Center Near You](#)

Celebrating Construction

"Today you leave here with the skills you need for the jobs of the future. You are equipped with tools for a long and prosperous career." This message



was delivered by Secretary Solis last week to the 240 graduates and their families at a Laborers'

What's Hot

MSHA Announces Results of December Impact Inspections

The Mine Safety and Health Administration announced that federal inspectors issued nearly 300 citations, orders and safeguards during impact inspections conducted at 17 mines in December. These inspections, which began in force last April following the explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine, involve mines with poor compliance history or other compliance concerns, including high numbers of violations, frequent hazard complaints, or adverse conditions such as increased methane liberation, faulty roof conditions and inadequate ventilation. "In spite of our relentless attempts to make mine operators accountable for their workers' safety and health, some continue to flout their responsibilities," said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary for MSHA. "While we are seeing improvements at a number of operations, the persistently bad behavior at others underscores the need for tougher legislation and stronger enforcement tools."

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [View the Citation Summary](#)
- [Read the Secretary's Blog Post](#)

Help for Washington State Workers Impacted by BRAC

Military bases and the communities around them share an important economic relationship. When bases close, or jobs move, local workers are impacted. This week, the department announced more than \$4.8 million to provide employment services to military spouses and civilian defense workers who lost jobs due to the Base Realignment and Closure action that resulted in the creation of Joint Base Lewis McChord. Eligible workers will receive career counseling and job training and placement services that will help them get good jobs in regional industries.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Take Three

The State of the Union



Secretary Solis answers three questions about the President's State of the Union address.

President Obama stated that to compete for the jobs and industries of our time "we need to out-innovate, out-educate and out-build the rest of the world." What does that mean for DOL?

We need to keep working with community colleges to ensure that education is more accessible and affordable than ever. It also means that we need to build on existing partnerships with local businesses so that employers can tap into this trained workforce and expand emerging industries like green jobs.

International Union of North America training center graduation in Southern California. Solis told the graduates, "The additional skills you have learned here will make you more valuable to an employer and will give you the opportunity to move up the career ladder and earn a higher salary." In addition, she specifically singled out the three women graduates for joining a field of work that is traditionally dominated by men, and was heartened by the fact that 27 more women were currently enrolled in the construction apprenticeship program.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Support for Military Families

Strengthening and supporting our military families is a top priority for the nation. President Obama hosted Secretary Solis along with several other cabinet members, members of Congress, and military personnel Monday to unveil the strategy report *Strengthening our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment*. "You have done your duty. And as a grateful nation, we must do ours," the president declared. Secretary Solis reaffirmed Labor Department support for military families noting several key pieces of the report that include departmental programs and initiatives. "Every day, U.S. service members, along with their families, make sacrifices that benefit all Americans," she said. "The president understands that providing necessary support strengthens not only these individuals but our nation as a whole. Only if we do right by them do we do right by the American people."

- [Watch the Video](#)
- [Read the President's Remarks](#)
- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the White House Release](#)

Jobs Through Recycling



Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training Jane Oates this week joined students, faculty and officials from Santa Monica College in

announcing the school's new "Jobs Through Recycling" program. Made possible through more than \$4 million in department grant funding, the program will prepare students for good jobs in recycling and resource management. Working with businesses and business associations, the school has built upon existing programs to ensure that the training and education provided will lead to credentials that are recognized by local, regional and national employers. The launch took

The president proposed some aggressive spending cuts to help rein in the deficit. How might that affect the work of the department?

The president made it very clear that he was willing to eliminate spending in a variety of ways, but he wasn't willing to do so on the backs of our most vulnerable. I couldn't agree more. Protecting workers on the job, providing an invaluable voice in the workplace and providing job skills and training to those who need it most aren't niceties, they're necessities.

The president set a goal that by 2035, 80 percent of America's electricity will come from clean energy sources. Is this realistic?

Absolutely. I would never doubt the ingenuity and determination of the American worker to meet a challenge. I've also seen the impact of the growing green economy and the jobs these industries are capable of creating. Americans want to do well, but they also want to do good. Green jobs give you the chance to do both.

- [Read the Secretary's Blog Post](#)

News You Can Use

WHD Opens New Field Office in Alexandria, La.

The Wage and Hour Division has opened a new field office at the federal courthouse/post office building located at 515 Murray St., Room B-11, in Alexandria. "I am very pleased about the opening of another Wage and Hour Division office to better serve the people of Louisiana," said Cynthia Watson, regional administrator for the Wage and Hour Division in the Southwest. The one-stop shop, which will operate under the New Orleans District Office, will connect employees, employers and community-based organizations in the Alexandria area with the resources and assistance needed to ensure that workers in low-wage industries are paid fairly for all hours worked.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Reaching Out to Small Businesses

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has temporarily withdrawn from review by the Office of Management and Budget its proposal to restore a column for work-related musculoskeletal disorders on employer injury and illness logs. The agency is seeking greater input from small businesses on the impact of the proposal. "Work-related MSD remain the leading cause of workplace injury and illness in this country, and this proposal is an effort to assist employers and OSHA in better identifying problems in workplaces," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. "However, the proposal has raised concern among small businesses, so OSHA is facilitating an active dialogue between the agency and the small business community."

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL Working for You

Job Corps Grad Becomes Prize Fighter

John Howard entered the Loring, Maine Job Corps to become an electrician and receive a high school diploma. He left learning a skill that has him ranked as one of the leading mixed martial arts fighters in the world. A Loring instructor taught Howard, 27, a form of wrestling, which along with jiu-jitsu, judo, karate, boxing, and kickboxing make up the tactics used in martial arts fighting. While supporting himself as an electrical apprentice in Boston, Howard developed his martial arts

place during the Recycling Organization of North America's National Conference which is being hosted by the college. Oates praised those involved in creating the program noting, "In these incredibly tough financial times, thinking smarter is what's needed and is exactly what you're doing."

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Commitment to Equal Opportunity

Actions taken in the past year by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs are designed to achieve "President Obama's vision of equal opportunity for all workers," OFCCP Director Patricia Shiu told audiences Monday at two American Bar Association panels on equal employment, compensation discrimination and enforcement. As for equal pay, Shiu said "I am committed to doing everything I can during my tenure at OFCCP to eradicate pay discrimination so that all workers are valued fairly." She said an expert once told her that closing the pay gap could cut in half the number of American children living in poverty. If that were accomplished, Shiu said "Consider what a legacy that would be to leave for our children and for our country." Solicitor of Labor M. Patricia Smith joined Shiu on the opening panel. She discussed the department's litigation agenda in support of OFCCP.

Oates Celebrates JFK 50

A half-century has passed since the inauguration of John F. Kennedy as our 35th president. Over the course of this year, people across the country are celebrating the enduring legacy he left. Last week, Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training Jane Oates joined in the "Pathways to Public Service" roundtable at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., to discuss ways to attract a new generation of the "best and brightest" to public service. The event is part of a yearlong celebration and commemoration dubbed "JFK 50" that is a collaborative effort of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, the Institute of Politics at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, the Kennedy Center and members of the Kennedy family.



fighting skills in local matches. Now known as John "Doomsday" Howard because of his prolific knockout abilities, he is currently competing in the Ultimate Fighting Championships for mixed martial arts and expects to win it all within two years. Howard credits his time at Job Corps for giving him an occupational skill which supported him while he pursued his ultimate career passion. "Job Corps taught me self discipline and gave me a chance to succeed," he said.

Stimulus Funding, DOL Grant Helps IT Pro



Massachusetts native Lynne Carmody turned financial adversity into a new cutting edge technology job thanks to DOL-funded training. Because of the recession, Carmody and her family experienced difficult times after being laid off from her IT job at a mutual fund company. Then Carmody heard about and enrolled in the local Employment & Training Resources career center, funded by a combination of stimulus money and a national emergency grant. She received career counseling advice and then took intensive certification classes in cutting edge information technology. She now

manages the testing, deployment and support of software systems for a local health insurance company. Carmody said the training she received helped her focus on a new, burgeoning career field and "gave me an edge" in competing for employment.

Around DOL

OWCP's Hallmark Retires



DOL will bid farewell this week to long-time Director of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs Shelby Hallmark. After a stint as a letter carrier in San Francisco and the District of Columbia's Unemployment Insurance Agency, Hallmark came to the Labor Department in 1980. He climbed the ranks of the department throughout the 1980s until being named Deputy Director of OWCP in 1990 and Director in 2001. A distinguished civil servant, Hallmark is a member of the National Academy of Social Insurance, and has received both the President's Meritorious Executive

Rank Award (2000) and the President's Distinguished Executive Rank Award (2004). "Over the course of his career, Shelby has worked to give the voiceless a voice and has helped the most vulnerable workers get what is rightfully theirs," said Secretary Solis. "He truly embodies what it means to be a public servant."

Sights, Sounds and Tastes of Diversity in Chicago

Department employees in the Chicago area celebrated the "Sights, Sounds and Tastes of Diversity" during its first Diversity Day, Jan. 19, which featured music, entertainment, art and foods of various cultures. "Diversity Day was an opportunity to get the staff together and celebrate the diversity of our culture and our workplace," said Anne Baird-Bridges, Regional Administrator for Wage and Hour Division, Midwest Region. "One of the

CHCI One-on-One With Secy



Students with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Fellowship program sat down with Secretary Solis this week to talk about

DOL's priorities and her role as the Secretary of Labor. "Every one of you here has a role to play in helping to make this country better," said Secretary Solis. "Use this opportunity to gain hands-on experience and leadership skills that will help you now and in the future," she added. The fellows have the opportunity to work in congressional offices and federal agencies depending on their areas of interest.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

Check out the grant opportunities with DOL.

[Open Funding Opportunities](#)

Event Spotlight

The department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration will conduct a regional Latino workforce outreach and education conference Tuesday, Feb. 1 in Oakland, Calif., for stakeholders, partners, organizations and institutions that represent and/or provide services to workers. Free health and safety workshops will be provided, as well as informational booths.

Latino Workforce Outreach and Education Conference

- [February 1 — Oakland, CA](#)

MSHA — Arkansas Mine Safety and Health Conference

- [February 3-4 — Hot Springs, AR](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [February 10 — Yazoo, MS](#)
- [February 10 — Seattle, WA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Supply and Service Contractors

- [February 2 — Nashville, TN](#)
- [February 3 — Memphis, TN](#)
- [February 8 — Itta Bena, MS](#)
- [February 8 — Mountainside, NJ](#)
- [February 9 — Orange, CA](#)

things we hoped would come out of the event is a greater sense of community within the Department of Labor here in Chicago."

ODEP and WB Advance Workplace Flexibility



Nearly 40 workplace flexibility experts participated Monday in "Advancing Workplace Flexibility Policy and Practices," a roundtable co-hosted by the Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Women's Bureau. The dialogue focused on creating solutions for the changing workforce, especially for working mothers, people with disabilities, and those

who are living longer and working more hours. Proposed suggestions from the event will be used to create an electronic toolkit for employers, disability-service providers, family support services and policy experts. "It is important that we make changes and create opportunities in the workplace to meet the needs of all individuals," said Secretary Solis.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

DOL in Action

DOL Helps Restaurant Workers Recover \$420,000

The department has recovered \$420,000 in back wages and liquidated damages for 83 underpaid restaurant workers at Super China Buffet in Shoreline, Wash., and Great Dragon Inc., doing business as King Buffet restaurants in Everett and Marysville, Wash. The agreement resolves a lawsuit filed by the department after an inspection by the Wage and Hour Division found violations of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. "Vulnerable, low-wage workers have a legal right under the FLSA to be paid the required minimum wage and overtime by their employers," said Secretary Solis. "When employees are deprived of their rightful wages, employers should know that the Labor Department will not hesitate to use all enforcement tools at its disposal, including litigation when appropriate."

- [Read the News Release](#)

OSHA and Wage Hour Cite Illinois Grain Elevator Operators

OSHA has fined Haasbach LLC in Mount Carroll and Hillsdale Elevator Co. in Geneseo and Annawan, Ill., following the deaths of three workers, including two teenagers. The workers were killed when they suffocated after being engulfed by grain. A Wage and Hour Division investigation found that Haasbach violated Child Labor standards by requiring workers under the age of 18 to perform hazardous jobs. "The tragic deaths could have been prevented had the owners and operators followed the occupational safety standards and child labor laws," said Secretary Solis. "It is unconscionable to allow a minor to work in any high-hazard area. Haasbach's and Hillsdale's disregard for the law and commonsense safety practices has led to devastation for three families." The fines to both companies total \$1,352,125

- [Read the News Release](#)

New Hampshire Paper Company Cited After Worker Killed

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has cited APC Paper Company in New Hampshire for multiple violations of workplace safety and health standards following the July death of a worker at the company's paper mill in Claremont. OSHA alleges the company showed a willful disregard for safety by not addressing and abating hazards associated with operating a paper roller. The agency also issued the company serious citations for lacking proper machinery guardrails, not properly training employees, and not addressing work-related hearing loss.

[February 9 — Nashville, TN](#)

- [February 9 — Birmingham, AL](#)
- [February 10 — Memphis, TN](#)
- [February 16 — San Marcos, CA](#)
- [February 17 — Memphis, TN](#)

OFCCP — Community Connections

- [February 2 — Raleigh, NC](#)
- [February 2 — Atlanta, GA](#)
- [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 — Increasing Employment Opportunities for Disabled Individuals and Veterans

- [February 8 — Millington, TN](#)

OFCCP — Information Session with Native American CBOs

- [February 9 — Denver, CO](#)

OFCCP — National Council of Negro Women

- [February 19 — Jackson, MS](#)

OLMS — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [February 15 — Springfield, IL](#)
- [February 18 — Burr Ridge, IL](#)

OSHA — Annual Safety Day

- [February 15 — Cincinnati, OH](#)

- [Read the News Release](#)

OSHA Renews Partnership to Protect Electrical Workers

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has renewed a strategic partnership with the Electrical Transmission and Distribution Construction Contractors, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and other trade associations to reduce injuries, illnesses and deaths among electrical transmission and distribution industry workers. Partnership objectives also include establishing the causes of injuries, illnesses and deaths in the industry and recommending best practices to reduce such incidents; ensuring that industry workers are properly trained; and establishing a strategy to evaluate and ensure that the goals of the partnership are met.

- [Learn More About the Partnership](#)

More Than \$282,000 for 53 Emergency Transportation Workers

As a result of the department's legal actions, 53 drivers and dispatchers of Bayou City E.M.S. Group Inc. and Willowbrook E.M.S. Group Inc. in Houston will receive \$282,594 in overtime compensation as required by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employees from both companies were working for one enterprise, were required to work 24-hour shifts for both companies totaling 96 hours a week, but did not receive overtime premium pay. "There is no excuse for denying workers their rightful wages, and this lawsuit demonstrates that the Labor Department will not hesitate to take action to protect workers when labor laws are not being implemented correctly," said Cynthia Watson, regional administrator of the department's Wage and Hour Division in the Southwest.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Spotlight on States: Wisconsin

Help for Wisconsin Workers

Sometimes layoffs cannot be stopped. When this is the case, workers may need help to get back on track to long-term careers in growing industries. This week the department announced more than \$2 million in grant funds to continue to provide employment services to Wisconsinites impacted by layoffs in the manufacturing sector.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Follow USDOL on

- MSHA announces results of December 2010 impact and regularly scheduled inspections [01/27/2011] <http://bit.ly/gTUBFG> [about 5 hours ago](#)
- DOL announces supplemental grant funding to continue serving Wisconsin workers affected by manufacturing sector ... <http://bit.ly/dLKDle> [about 5 hours ago](#)

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