



DOL News Brief

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February 27, 2014

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WINNER OF 2014 AVA DIGITAL GOLD AWARD

Black History/Our History:
Finishing the Job

On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr., was shot and killed on a motel balcony in Memphis, Tenn., robbing our nation of one of its most powerful voices for equality and justice. King had traveled to Memphis to

stand with public sanitation workers who began a strike in February of that year to protest deplorable working conditions, poverty wages, intimidation and even brutal violence. Almost 1,000 workers went on strike with the simple aim of being treated with dignity. Their message was clear: "I am a man." After the assassination, President Lyndon B. Johnson quickly dispatched Assistant Secretary for Labor-Management Relations James J. Reynolds to Memphis to help find a resolution to the crisis for which King gave his life. As more than 40,000 mourners, including King's widow and children, marched in silence through the city on April 8, Reynolds began negotiations with the city to restore justice to the strikers. One key point in the negotiations involved Memphis Mayor Henry Loeb's refusal to allow the workers to automatically deduct union dues from their paychecks. The

clever solution that Reynolds brought to the table was the intervention of a federally administered credit union as an intermediary. Workers could set up payments to the credit union, which would then transfer funds to the union. Two weeks after King's assassination, Reynolds and others reached an agreement, with the city promising to recognize the strikers' union and offering wage increases. It was a costly victory, but one that gave hard-working Americans the dignity and opportunity they deserved.



- [Read the Secretary's Blog Post](#)
- [View the Centennial Timeline](#)
- [View the Centennial Video](#)

What's New

An Income Boost for 'Real People'

Low-wage workers in Hartford, Conn., spoke directly with U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez recently on how an increase in the federal minimum wage will improve their lives. "We can talk about data, but this is about real people," Perez said in reference to studies showing how President Obama's



proposed increase would lift between one and two million people out of poverty, and directly boost the wages of millions more. "This is about people working hard and still falling behind." Kevin Burgos is one of those people. Burgos, 26, helps run a Dunkin' Donuts, has three children and is trying to save enough money for more job training. "We have to make decisions like whether to buy a gallon of gas for our car to make it to work, or buy a gallon of milk for our children," he said. Joining the secretary on Feb. 24 were Sens. Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy, Connecticut Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman and Hartford Mayor Pedro E. Segarra. Burgos posed a challenge for Blumenthal's and Murphy's colleagues in Congress: "Let's switch positions; let's see if you can survive [on our income]," he said. The president has called on Congress to raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$10.10 per hour.

- [Read About the President's Proposal](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)

Setting the Standard for Equality and Opportunity for Workers

Secretary Perez stopped by the Walgreens Distribution Center in Windsor, Conn., on Feb. 24 to highlight its efforts to train and employ people with disabilities, and pay them a fair wage of approximately \$14 per hour. Scott Sylvester, Walgreens' facility manager, led the tour of the distribution center, showing Perez new technology and accommodations provided to its workforce, such as ergonomically-designed workstations and on-staff coaches. Walgreens' philosophy is "same job, same performance," which sets the standard for equality, fairness and opportunity for all workers. Employing people with disabilities has been a top priority of the secretary. He was joined by Sens. Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy, and Eve Hill of the Justice Department.



WORKPLACE MYTH BUSTER

Myth: Jobs in the construction trades are only for men.

Not true: Women work construction, too. While the overall representation of women in the trades is small at 2.5 percent, more than 40,220 women work as construction laborers, more than 19,500 women work as carpenters, and nearly 26,700 women work as painters. In apprenticeship programs, those numbers are slightly higher, with overall representation of women in construction-related apprenticeships at about 3 percent. By law, there is a goal for women to work at least 6.9 percent of federal construction contractors' work hours. And when women work in the trades, they make good money. The mean hourly wage for these workers is \$21.61, with workers such as brick masons and electricians making \$25 an hour.

- [See the Statistics](#)
- [Read About Construction Jobs](#)
- [Learn About Apprenticeships](#)

- [View the Slideshow](#)

My Brother's Keeper — A New Initiative to Help Young Men of Color

President Obama announced on Feb. 27 another key component of his opportunity agenda. "My Brother's Keeper" is an initiative designed to tackle disparities and expand opportunity for young men of color. As part of the announcement, foundations, businesses and others agreed to partner and help provide young men of color with mentoring, support networks, access to a good education and the skills they need to succeed. Foundations have made \$150 million in investments and announced that they will invest an additional \$200 million over the next five years. The Labor Department will have an active role in this initiative, already making strong investments of more than \$3 billion in programs to create and strengthen ladders of opportunity, through Job Corps, YouthBuild and Workforce Investment Act Youth Programs. On MSNBC, Perez discussed the initiative and said, "I believe that everybody is gifted and talented and it is incumbent on us to work to draw out those gifts and talents. And it is all too frequently that zip code and other circumstances in life undermine your ability to tap your full potential." Perez joined the president for the announcement in the East Room of the White House.

- [Watch the Interview](#)
- [Learn More About the Initiative](#)

(Work in Progress) The Best of Our Blog

Each week, this space will bring you the best from our ([Work in Progress](#)) blog.

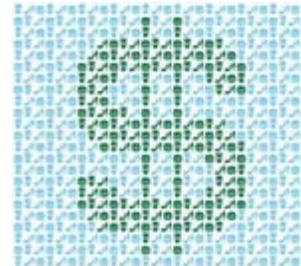
- [No More Falling Workers](#): Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels traces the disturbing trend of communications tower worker fatalities.
- [College Senior? Two Books to Read Before May](#): The Office of Public Affairs' intern Mandy Kraft recommends two books from our "Books that Shaped Work in America" project to her peers making the transition from college to the workplace.
- [Unbought and Unbossed](#): Latifa Lyles, director of the Women's Bureau, writes about the life and work of Shirley Chisholm - the first African-American woman to be elected to Congress — for Black History Month.

National News

America, Save Yourself!

America Saves Week runs from Feb. 24 to March 1. An annual opportunity for workers to assess saving habits and make plans to secure their financial futures, this year's theme is "Set a Goal. Make a Plan. Save Automatically." The Employee Benefits Security Administration has been offering tips and resources on Facebook, Twitter and the department's blog site, and on Feb. 28 at 1p.m. EST, EBSA will cohost a webcast for college seniors and young workers on budgeting, saving and planning for retirement.

- [Learn About America Saves Week](#)
- [Read the Blog Post](#)
- [Register for the Webcast](#)



• IT ALL ADDS UP •

Tapping Into Ideas to Further Financial Education and Literacy

"It's never too early to start educating people, and it's never too early to start saving," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employee Benefits Security Phyllis C. Borzi during a field hearing in Atlanta hosted by the Financial Literacy and Education Commission. The hearing, held on Feb. 25, was an opportunity for officials from the department, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Department of Treasury and the Georgia Consortium for Personal Financial Literacy to get public feedback on promising practices for delivering financial education in the workplace. Following the discussion, Borzi and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employee Benefits Security Judy Mares



Happy Birthday, John Steinbeck!

One of America's greatest authors, John Steinbeck, was born on Feb. 27, 1902. He won both the Pulitzer Prize and the Nobel Prize for literature. Two of his works, "The Grapes of Wrath" and "Of Mice and Men," were recommended for the Department of Labor's list of Books that Shaped Work in America. And for good reason. Steinbeck captures the heart and soul of

American work like no other novelist ever has. In addition to these two novels, Steinbeck wrote 14 more, as well as six non-fiction books and five collections of short stories. Much of his work focuses on themes of work. Are there other Steinbeck titles that should be included on the department's list of Books that Shaped Work in America? Send us your suggestions.

- [Read the Blog Post](#)
- [Books that Shaped Work in America](#)

toured the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and attended a meeting with staff from Operation HOPE to discuss financial dignity and education. The events are part of America Saves Week, an annual opportunity for organizations to promote good savings behavior and for individuals to assess their savings habits.

- [Learn About the Financial Literacy and Education Commission](#)
- [Learn About Operation HOPE](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)

Focusing on Tower Worker Deaths

Continuing efforts to curb fatalities in the communication tower industry, Dr. David Michaels, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health, delivered video remarks on Feb. 25 to the National Association of Tower Erectors national conference. More communication tower workers were killed in 2013 than in the previous two years combined, and four more tower-related deaths already have occurred in 2014. Michaels stressed the preventable nature of these deaths and committed to improving safety for tower workers. "We are very concerned about this sharp rise," Michaels said. "The fatality rate in this industry is extremely high — and tower workers have a risk of fatal injury perhaps 25 to 30 times higher than the risk for the average American worker. This is clearly unacceptable."



- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the Blog Post](#)
- [Watch the Video](#)

DOLA TO Z

Learn About the Labor Department



This week's phrase is the Davis-Bacon Act. This law ensures that federal contracts promote good jobs and fair wages. The act requires contractors and subcontractors working on federally funded or assisted construction projects to pay their employees no less than the local prevailing wage for similar work in the area.

- [Learn About the Davis-Bacon Act](#)
- [See All the A-Z terms](#)

LULAC Honors Secretary

At their annual gala on Feb. 26, the League of United Latin American Citizens, one of the premier Latino civil rights organizations in America, presented



Secretary Perez with its National Service Award. In receiving the honor, Perez returned the praise, saluting LULAC for its leadership "on so many critical issues involving access to opportunity, not simply for Latinos but for everyone trying to realize the American Dream." Perez discussed key items in President Obama's agenda, including implementation of the Affordable Care Act, wage fairness and comprehensive immigration reform, thanking LULAC for its efforts and asking for its help in achieving these goals.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Workers Say Raise the Wage

Low-wage workers in Colorado and Nevada met with the principal deputy administrator for the Wage and Hour Division, Laura



Fortman, on Feb. 26 in Denver. According to Fortman, a family of four being supported by a minimum wage earner is living below the poverty line. "No one who is working 40 hours a week should live in poverty," she said. "A fair day's work deserves a fair day's

Around DOL

Forum on Workforce Development

As part of an ongoing effort to improve the workforce system, approximately 20 workforce development organizations traveled to Washington D.C. on Feb. 26 for a listening session on innovative approaches to skills development and to hear ideas on how to address the long-term unemployment issue.



Secretary Perez opened the session and welcomed leaders from national advocacy organizations, training providers and other non-governmental organizations. Eric Seleznow, acting assistant secretary for employment and training, moderated the discussion. Topics ranged from increasing access to training and employment services for businesses and job seekers, taking advantage of flexibility allowed in laws and regulation to encourage more innovation in service and delivery, and improving the collaboration between agencies to break down barriers and scale up successful programs.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Enhancing the Black Lung Program

Nearly three dozen members of the National Coalition of Black Lung and Respiratory Disease Clinics gathered at department headquarters on Feb. 24, along with representatives from the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs and the Mine Safety and Health Administration. Gary Steinberg, acting director of OWCP, announced several changes to the Federal Black

pay." One day later, in Las Vegas, Fortman heard from Beualeen Manuel, a mother of three who works in the fast food industry. Manuel told Fortman that her insufficient income has made housing nearly unaffordable. "We are drowning. Raise the minimum wage," she pleaded.

• [Learn More About the Minimum Wage](#)

Coming Together for Workers



Regional and local representatives from the Wage and Hour Division in Portland, Ore., met on Feb. 19 in Salem to discuss forming an alliance to

fight labor violations in the workplace, including wage theft. Participants included more than 20 representatives from federal and state agencies, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, advocacy groups and community-based organizations. "We all win when government, non-profit and private entities engage together to find solutions to pervasive problems of injustice and inequality," said Juan Coria, acting Regional Administrator for Wage and Hour, who attended the meeting. "United we stand when collectively we work together to protect America's workforce."

• [View the Slideshow](#)

Advancing Inclusion



More than 75 Washington, D.C.-area business advocates and allies came together on Feb. 21 at an LGBT Power Symposium sponsored

by the Capital Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. In providing the event's closing remarks, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy Kathy Martinez talked about the commonalities between people with disabilities, the LGBT community and other populations with a history of discrimination and economic inequality, noting that progress for any one group has a cascading effect. "When we advance inclusion for any underrepresented community, it benefits all of us. We rise together," Martinez said.

Drumming for Women Veterans

Three universities, six community colleges and five community-based organizations learned the value of the trauma-informed care approach to services



for women veterans at workshops organized by the Women's Bureau regional office in San Francisco on Feb. 19 and 20. The training was

Lung Program, including a pilot program aimed at strengthening the department-sponsored pulmonary evaluation. He also discussed enhanced collaboration with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. "We believe that these changes will enhance the quality and timeliness of OWCP's claims adjudication activities, and that the end result will benefit those who have been afflicted by black lung disease and their families," Steinberg said. Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health, noted that in 2013, for the first time ever, the coal industry saw the lowest yearly average underground mine dust levels.

• [Read the Blog Post](#)

Of Note

Treasure Island Job Corps Receives First Lady Recognition

With an assist from Secretary Perez, students from the Treasure Island Job Corps Center in San Francisco received recognition from First Lady Michelle Obama for their work in building and maintaining a fruit, herb and vegetable garden at a farm on center premises. Perez visited and



toured Treasure Island in January and had his picture taken with students at the garden named *The Michelle Obama Treasure Island Job Corps Green Acre*. Students asked the secretary to deliver a letter to the First Lady, telling her about their achievements and inviting her to a future visit and tour. It included the garden photo. During a departmental/Joining Forces event for veterans in Washington, D.C. on Feb.10, Perez gave the Job Corps letter and photo to the First Lady. She inscribed it with the words: "Keep up the great work! Michelle Obama." Treasure Island received the photo this week where it will be displayed with great pride.

• [Read the First Lady's Note to Job Corps](#)

• [Read the Job Corps Letter to First Lady](#)

DOL Working for You

Job Training Program Helps Web Company Find Talent



New Hampshire's CommonPlaces, Inc., is a fast-growing web development and digital marketing company that was in search of talented employees. That's when the company's president, Ben Bassi, turned to an On-the-Job-Training Program funded by a National Emergency Grant from

the Employment and Training Administration. Through the program, NH Works — part of the American Job Center network — acts as a matchmaker, screening the resumes of unemployed individuals and connecting them with potential employers. These employers, in turn, provide on-the-job learning opportunities and receive financial assistance through grants to help pay the wages of new workers. After making the investment in training, many employers hire OJT participants to permanent positions. Bassi said, "In today's economy, finding people who have been out of work, who want to work, and have the desire and willingness to be retrained is

held at San Jose State University and at California State University Stanislaus. Following the training, women veterans and service providers took part in a ceremonial drum circle led by the San Francisco-based Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits and the Merced, Calif.-based Turtle Women Rising community organizations.

- [Read the Trauma Guide](#)
- [Learn About the Women's Bureau](#)
- [Read A Guide to Women's Equal Pay Rights](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)

California Outreach



Representatives from the Wage and Hour Division in West Covina, Calif., attended a news conference in Hacienda Heights on Feb. 20 to announce

three upcoming free labor law seminars for Asian American and Pacific Islanders small business owners in Southern California. Paul Chang, the division's assistant district director in West Covina, gave an overview on the upcoming seminars, including detailed information and compliance assistance regarding labor law provisions under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Hundreds of small business owners from the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities are expected to attend the seminars, which are scheduled to take place in San Gabriel on Feb. 27, Irvine on March 6 and Ontario on March 13.

- [Read About the AAPI Initiative](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)

The Reality of 'Wage Theft'

Students from the University of Washington engaged in an informative discussion on the realities and challenges posed by wage theft at



an academic event on Feb. 20. The event co-hosts in Seattle were the university's Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, the Law School's student labor and employment justice group, and the Evans School of Public Affairs' labor discussion group. Attendees listened to Wage and Hour Division district director Donna Hart, who served as a panelist. "Wage theft affects workers when their work hours are not recorded and paid, when they work for cash paid 'under the table' and when they are simply not paid when payday comes," said Hart. "Often it is difficult to get workers to speak about the problems because they are either intimidated or afraid."

- [Read About the Event](#)

Helping Trapped Miners

Global positioning systems have greatly enhanced

both gratifying and good for business." He eventually hired three employees through the OJT program. One of them, Gary Locke, was laid off from his video production job and remained unemployed for more than a year, even after sending out more than 180 resumes. Locke applied for the OJT program at his local American Job Center, and Bassi offered him a job as a digital marketing analyst. Locke called the OJT program a "win-win solution" because "businesses acquire the talent they need to grow and the unemployed get training and good jobs."

- [Learn About OJT](#)
- [Learn About NEGs](#)
- [Read the Blog Post](#)

Army Veteran Finds Employment Through Volunteers of America

Following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, Erik Rivera knew he wanted to serve his country. He finished high school, joined the Army and served in Iraq and Afghanistan. When he returned stateside, Rivera fell on tough times and could not find work and became homeless. In his native Massachusetts, he sought help from the Volunteers of America, a departmental grantee under the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. Veterans' employment case manager Angela Eberle helped Rivera rewrite his resume, translating his military security training into "civilian-friendly language." An interview with a local security company was quickly arranged and, 24 hours later, Rivera was hired into a full-time security guard position.



DOL in Action

\$1.2 Million in Re-employment Assistance for Laid-off Mass. Workers

Approximately 175 workers affected by layoffs at Mersen USA, a manufacturer located in Newburyport, Mass., and Philips Lightolier, a lighting company located in Wilmington, Mass., will receive assistance after the department announced a \$1,222,904 National Emergency Grant for training and other services. "For many workers, the ability to obtain jobs in in-demand industries after a layoff takes an investment in gaining new skills after years in the workforce," said Secretary Perez. "This federal grant will provide the services these workers need to help them find success in new occupations." The grant was awarded to Massachusetts's Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, \$641,983 of which will be released initially.

- [Read the News Release](#)

New Jersey Spa Agrees to Correct Hazards After Worker Fatality

Super King Sauna NJ LLC has agreed to correct hazards found during a July 2013 investigation conducted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. OSHA determined that a 68-year-old employee died while working in a Bulhanjeungmok, a Korean-style sauna known for extremely high temperatures. The fatality occurred at the company's Palisades Park, N.J., spa and fitness facility. Employed at the facility for 10 years, the worker was responsible for setting up and maintaining the sauna. OSHA cited eight serious violations and one other-than-serious health and safety violation, including the company's failure to implement a heat stress illness prevention program and provide personal protective equipment to employees who work in excessive heat.

the accuracy and timeliness of surveying. However, when inclement weather renders satellite-linked GPS data collection slow or inoperable, what are the alternatives during a mine emergency? According to a Program Information Bulletin re-released by the Mine Safety and Health Administration, conventional surveying methods must be used. Good planning on the part of mine operators will help determine where surface borehole drilling should take place if miners become trapped underground and the GPS link is lost.

- [Read the Program Information Bulletin](#)

Oil and Gas Industry Safety



On Feb. 25, Occupational Safety and Health Administration Assistant Secretary Dr. David Michaels met with Minister Juan José

Guerra Abud and a delegation from Mexico's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources at department headquarters. The discussion was focused on ways to increase communication and technical support on issues of mutual interest regarding worker safety in the oil and gas industry.

Pressing Economic Priorities

Dr. Jenny Hunt, the department's chief economist, met recently with several organizations to discuss a host of vital economic issues. On Feb. 20, she met with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies to deliberate the state of the labor market, the pace of the recovery and what could help speed the recovery. On Feb. 24, Hunt participated in a panel discussion on the economic impact of immigration reform, hosted by the National Association of Business Economics, in which she explained how immigration reform will help to strengthen the national economy, lead to employment growth and improve the fiscal health of the nation. Finally, on Feb. 25, she attended the American Society for Civil Engineers' Geo Institute Conference in Atlanta, where she discussed how to increase economic growth by increasing innovation among women and minorities, who are currently underrepresented in the relevant science and engineering fields and jobs.

- [Watch the Immigration Reform Discussion](#)

Poultry Worker Safety

Representatives of the department hosted a listening session on Feb. 26 with workers from poultry plants in several states, including North Carolina, Mississippi and Arkansas. A worker delegation and participating organizations shared testimonials to increase awareness about worker safety and the issues that affect them daily. One of the delegates worked at the same poultry plant where her mother had worked for 30 years. She

- [Read the News Release](#)

Amputation Hazards Found at Milwaukee Stamping Plant

E.R. Wagner Manufacturing Co. has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for 14 safety violations, carrying proposed penalties of \$106,000. OSHA initiated an inspection of the Milwaukee plant in August 2013 under the Site-Specific Targeting Program, which focuses on facilities with a higher-than-average illness and injury rate. One willful violation was cited for lack of machine guarding on a metalworking machine, which exposed workers to amputation hazards. Seven serious safety citations were issued to the company, four of which involved lack of machine guarding.

- [Read the News Release](#)

New Classification for Nuclear Weapons Workers

Following a new classification designated by the Department of Health and Human Services for people who became ill as a result of working in the nuclear weapons industry, more than 700 current and former employees of the Rocky Flats Plant in Golden, Colo., attended one of several town halls on Feb. 19 and 20 to learn about benefits eligibility. Staff from the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, along with members of the Joint Outreach Task Group, were on hand to answer questions and assist with claims filing. To date, \$304.1 million in compensation and medical benefits under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act has been paid to 2,347 Rocky Flats Plant claimants, while more than \$10.1 billion has been paid nationwide.

- [Learn About the EEOICPA](#)
- [Learn About the JOTG](#)

Pennsylvania Foundry Faces Penalties for Safety Hazards

Domestic Casting Co. LLC has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for 26 alleged safety violations found at its Shippensburg, Pa., foundry. The company faces \$163,240 in proposed penalties for seven repeat, 16 serious, and three other-than-serious safety violations. The violations included open-sided floors and platforms that were not guarded with standard railings and other safety features; workers exposed to struck-by, fall, amputation, electrical and tripping hazards; and damaged equipment parts. OSHA initiated an inspection in August 2013 in response to a complaint.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Coal Mine Refuge Safety Alert Issued

The Mine Safety and Health Administration has issued a safety alert reminding coal mine operators of the requirements associated with maintaining refuge alternatives in underground coal mines. Refuge alternatives are prefabricated self-contained units that are intended to provide a life-sustaining environment for persons trapped underground when escape is impossible. Since the rule became effective in March 2009, refuge alternatives have been placed in underground coal mines across the country. On Jan. 1, underground coal mine operators were required to have MSHA-approved refuge alternative components in place for breathable air, harmful gas removal and air monitoring to provide miners with additional protections.

- [Read the Safety Alert](#)

Aspen Skiing Co. to Pay Back Wages to 300 Employees

Aspen Skiing Co. in Aspen, Colo., has agreed to pay \$108,796 in back wages and liquidated damages to 300 employees after an investigation by the Wage and Hour Division found violations of the minimum wage, overtime and record-keeping provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The investigation was conducted under an enforcement initiative focused on strengthening compliance in Aspen's hospitality industry. That industry

and the other representatives shared their experiences, advocating for improved working conditions throughout the industry.

Grantees Conference in Orlando

Recipients of Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training program grant funding and leaders from employers, government and the workforce development communities gathered in Orlando, Fla., on Feb. 23 and 24. The discussion was based on how community colleges are building their capacity to offer education and training programs. Eric Seleznow, acting assistant secretary of labor for employment and training, participated in a luncheon session with Mark Mitsui, deputy assistant secretary at the Department of Education, and Mindy Feldbaum, CEO of the Collaboratory. Seleznow noted that in the first two rounds of the TAACCCT program, more than 1,000 community college-based training programs had been created.

Weekly UI Claims

The department reported that the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial Unemployment Insurance claims was 348,000 for the week ending Feb. 22, an increase of 14,000 from the previous week. The four-week moving average was 338,250, unchanged from the previous week's revised average.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

[Open Funding Opportunities](#)

EBSA — Take Charge of Your Financial Future Webcast

- [February 28 — Washington, DC](#)

OFCCP — AAP: Creating an Inclusive Workforce

- [March 12 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — Affirmative Action Program Development for Small or First-Time Supply and Service Contractors

- [March 20 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OFCCP — "Common Problem Areas" Compliance Assistance Session for S&S Contractors

- [March 27 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Session for Construction Contractors and Subcontractors

- [March 6 — Omaha, NE](#)

OFCCP — Construction Compliance

includes various businesses, such as hotels and restaurants that employ low-wage workers. Wage and Hour historically has found significant labor violations in such establishments. In fiscal year 2013, the division's Denver District Office conducted 45 investigations as part of this initiative, resulting in more than \$500,000 in back wages for more than 1,000 workers.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Additional Funding to Assist Illinois With Storm Recovery

The department has announced a \$646,534 National Emergency Grant incremental award to assist with the continuing cleanup and recovery efforts in the wake of severe storms that affected 40 counties in Illinois last April and May. The funds are being awarded to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and will provide for the continuation of temporary employment for eligible individuals to assist with the cleanup of affected areas. "Recovery work continues in Illinois as a result of last spring's severe weather," said acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training Eric M. Seleznow. "Today's funding from the U.S. Labor Department will assist in keeping those efforts going, particularly with the debris removal required in parks and drainage districts." This National Emergency Grant was awarded in June 2013, for up to \$2,000,000, with \$708,444 released initially. This incremental funding will bring the total NEG funds awarded for this project to \$1,354,978.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Assistance for Laid-off Workers at Oregon Manufacturer

A \$275,517 National Emergency Grant announced by the department will assist approximately 90 workers affected by layoffs at Blount International Inc., located in Milwaukie and Portland, Ore. The grant, awarded to the Oregon Department of Community College and Workforce Development, will provide assistance in conjunction with training and supportive services the former workers will receive as a result of their eligibility for Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits. "Today's grant will provide these former Blount International workers with re-employment services that are vital to ensuring that they re-enter the Oregon workforce as quickly as possible," said acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training Eric M. Seleznow.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Worker's Foot Severed at Wisconsin Job Site

County Materials Corp., which manufactures precast concrete products, has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for 18 serious safety violations. The citations arose after a truck driver had his foot severed and femur crushed at an Elderon, Wis., job site last September. OSHA's investigation determined the incident occurred when a cable on a trolley boom crane broke, pinning the driver against a concrete riser. Many of the violations involved OSHA's standards on cranes and derricks in construction. The company also was cited for placing employees close to suspended loads. OSHA has proposed fines of \$56,700.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Worker Exposed to Chlorine Gas at Smelting Plant

Beck Aluminum Alloys Ltd., which operates Beck Aluminum Racine, has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for 13 serious violations, carrying proposed penalties of \$77,472. OSHA initiated an inspection of the Racine, Wis., aluminum plant last September after receiving a referral that a worker was sickened by exposure to hazardous chlorine gas while changing cylinders. The inspection also found that company officials did not remove other workers from the area after exposure to the gas was known and failed to evaluate the danger to life and health. Six of the citations involved violations of OSHA's respiratory protection standards.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Evaluations in 16 Steps

- [March 18 — Birmingham, AL](#)
- [March 18 — Jackson, MS](#)
- [March 25 — Atlanta, GA](#)

OFCCP — Moving Toward Compliance with Section 503 and VEVRAA

- [March 6 — Webinar](#)

OFCCP — Understanding the Nuts and Bolts of Construction

- [March 12 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — What to Expect During an OFCCP Audit

- [March 12 — Chicago, IL](#)
- [March 18 — Atlanta, GA](#)

OLMS — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [March 25 — Hurst, TX](#)

OSHA — Whistleblower Protection Advisory Committee Meeting

- [March 10 — Washington, DC](#)
- [March 11 — Washington, DC](#)

WHD — Prevailing Wage Seminar

- [March 4 — Manchester, NH](#)
- [March 5 — Manchester, NH](#)
- [March 6 — Manchester, NH](#)
- [March 18 — Phoenix, AZ](#)
- [March 19 — Phoenix, AZ](#)
- [March 20 — Phoenix, AZ](#)

Targeted Mine Inspections Net Nearly 200 Violations

During January impact inspections, the Mine Safety and Health Administration issued 198 citations and orders at 14 mines around the country. One operation, Norlite LLC's Cohoes Mine and Mill in Albany County, N.Y, received 41 citations and orders. Federal enforcement personnel began their inspection on Jan. 13 at the shale operation. On two different occurrences, a miner was observed under a suspended load of materials. Miners were exposed to inadvertent contact with a rotating conveyor tail pulley due to a missing guard, and a miner was observed moving an air compressor with a forklift without securing it with safety chains.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Safety Violations Include Failure to Train Workers at Georgia Plant

Nichiha USA Inc., a manufacturer of fiber cement exterior claddings, has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for four repeat and three serious safety violations following a September 2013 inspection at the company's facility in Macon, Ga. The violations included the employer's failure to train workers on the energy control program when performing equipment servicing and maintenance, failure to use a group lockout procedure for each worker to prevent equipment startup, exposing workers to caught-in hazards by not locking out all of the energy sources on equipment, and not accounting for all workers before removing locks and energizing equipment. The company has been placed in OSHA's Severe Violator Enforcement Program, which mandates follow-up inspections to ensure compliance. Proposed penalties total \$138,600.

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Crushing Injuries at Houston Company Lead to Proposed Penalty

Following an incident where a machine operator's arms were crushed, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited Custom Rubber Products LLC in Houston with eight willful, egregious violations with a proposed penalty of \$560,000. The company created a dangerous work environment by failing to guard machines, which exposed workers to life-threatening hazards. OSHA's Houston North Area Office began the inspection last September in response to a complaint that a worker was severely injured while operating an unguarded machine. During the inspection, OSHA became aware of two other incidents that occurred previously at the facility; both involved severe injuries to employees while operating similar machinery. "In an instant, moving machine parts can crush workers or amputate fingers or limbs," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. "Safeguards are essential to protect workers from these preventable injuries."

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OSHA Reaches Settlement With GEO Group

The GEO Group Inc., based in Boca Raton, Fla., has entered into a corporate-wide settlement agreement with the department that requires the company to implement comprehensive procedures and policies to better safeguard its workers against the hazards of workplace violence in every correctional and adult detention facility that it manages. In June 2012, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited the company for workplace safety violations at a prison facility it managed in Meridian, Miss. Under a three-year agreement, a willful citation was reclassified as a serious violation and the company will pay a \$13,600 fine. Additionally, the company is required to hire a third-party consultant to develop and maintain a workplace violence prevention program and conduct on-site workplace violence safety audits at each of the 42 correctional and adult detention facilities that it manages across the country.

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