



DOL News Brief

March 14, 2013

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WINNER OF AVA DIGITAL 2013 GOLD AWARD - INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION / E-NEWSLETTER -

Women's History/Our History: The Remarkable Bessie Margolin



Every female attorney today probably owes a debt of gratitude to former Labor Department Associate Solicitor Bessie Margolin. Sadly, most do not even know who she was. Efforts like Women's History Month

are out to change that. Margolin was a pioneer for advancing women in the legal profession, particularly at the department and throughout government. She grew up in New Orleans' Jewish Orphans' Home. After receiving a law degree from Tulane University, she became the first woman awarded Yale University's prestigious Sterling Fellowship, and the very first female lawyer employed by the Tennessee Valley Authority, created as part of President Roosevelt's "New Deal."

Margolin came to the department in 1939 and three years later was promoted to assistant solicitor by Secretary Frances Perkins. In 1945, Margolin argued the first of an astounding 28 cases on behalf of the department before the U.S. Supreme Court.



And even more astounding: She prevailed in all but three. She was promoted to associate solicitor in 1963, and argued the first Equal Pay Act appeal in 1969. She convinced the Third Circuit that the act required jobs be "substantially equal" — but not identical. The Supreme Court declined to review the case. At her retirement in 1972, Chief Justice Earl Warren praised her extraordinary work, saying "the flesh and sinews" that were developed around the bare bones of the Fair Labor Standards Act were her great contribution to millions of working people.

- View the Centennial Timeline
• View the Centennial Video
• View the Centennial Milestones

What's New

Listening to Workers on Raising the Minimum Wage

When acting Secretary of Labor Seth D. Harris asked a room full of low-wage workers in Tampa if anyone "had to skip a bill, or make the tough decision between paying for food or rent, medicine or school supplies," nearly every hand went up. Like others Harris has met with around the country, these



workers face hardships in not being able to make ends meet on their current income. The low-wage workers had a chance to sit down with the acting secretary on March 13 to join in a national conversation on raising the federal minimum wage. At a similar event earlier in the day in Atlanta, Harris heard from Amelia Mitchell who said, "It's just so hard trying to explain to my 5-year-old that he can't play this sport or meet up with his friends because mommy has to pay bills." Harris has been traveling around the country and listening to workers tell him how a raise in the federal minimum wage will benefit them and their families. Last month, President Obama proposed raising the federal minimum wage from its current rate of \$7.25 per hour to \$9 per hour by 2015. Harris plans more minimum wage roundtables in the coming weeks.

- View the Slideshow
• Read the Blog Post
• Read the President's Proposal

National News

Grant Competition Seeks Better Data to Build a Stronger Workforce

Access to high-quality, long-term data, will help states build a workforce system that better meets the needs of workers and employers. Helping states develop the tools to collect and analyze this data is the goal of the Workforce Data Quality Initiative. On March 11, the department announced the availability of approximately \$6 million to enable more states to improve database capacity and to link workforce and educational data. "Better data means better guidance for consumers, practitioners and policymakers. Better guidance means stronger workforce programs and a stronger U.S. workforce," said Jane Oates, assistant secretary of labor for employment and training.

- Read the News Release

Partners Come Together for Disability Employment Initiative

MINIMUM WAGE MYTH BUSTER

Myth: Raising the minimum wage will only benefit teens.

Not true. *The typical minimum wage worker is not a high-school student earning weekend pocket money. In fact, less than 20 percent of those who would benefit from a federal minimum wage increase are teenagers, and 60 percent are women. Plus, those workers who would benefit from a minimum wage increase brought home 46 percent of their household's wage and salary income in 2011.*

• [Subscribe for Minimum Wage Updates](#)

(Work in Progress) The Best of Our Blog

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

• [Back on the Road: Living with the Minimum Wage](#):

Acting Secretary Harris recaps his visits to Atlanta and Tampa, part of his continuing effort to highlight the struggles of minimum wage workers. "I believe that sharing these personal stories of immense fortitude in the face of economic challenges will help convince Americans that President Obama's proposal to raise the federal minimum wage is the right thing to do," Harris writes.

• [Minimum Wage Is a Women's Issue](#): Latifa Lyles, acting director of the Women's Bureau, and Mary Beth Maxwell, acting administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, write about the effects of the minimum wage on working women and describe the two agencies' work for women in the past century in a post commemorating International Women's Day.

• [Fair Garments... Forever](#): Patricia Smith, the solicitor of labor, explains why a recent court decision is important to the department's efforts to ensure compliance with wage and hour laws. "In order to protect workers, we must first examine a company's practices and get the information we need to determine whether wrongdoing has occurred," Smith writes.

Trainer Exchange

Representatives of recipients of the 2012 Occupational Safety and Health Susan Harwood Training Grant Program convened for a Trainer Exchange event at the department's headquarters on March 12-13. The 72 nonprofit organizations that received



The goal of the national Disability Employment Initiative is to improve the employment outcomes of adults and youths with disabilities who go to American Job Centers or state workforce agencies for assistance. So far, 23 states have received funding through the congressionally mandated



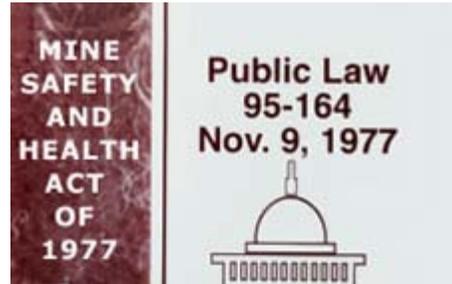
grant program, which is a joint initiative of the department's Office of Disability Employment Policy and its Employment and Training Administration. On March 12 and 13, approximately 200 people — including grantee staff, representatives from local workforce investment boards and regional department staff — gathered at the department to share knowledge and best practices about the initiative. "The idea of the DEI is that all levels of government are partnering to build the capacity of America's Job Centers to provide what adults and youth with disabilities really need to get to work," said Kathy Martinez, assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy. Gerri Fiala, deputy assistant secretary for employment and training, stressed "the importance of DOL's partnerships with the Social Security Administration and the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services." Acting Secretary Harris also took part in the conference, emphasizing the importance of more follow-up with customers, new strategies for customer outreach and better prepared staff.

• [Read the Acting Secretary's Remarks](#)

• [View the Slideshow](#)

A Mine Safety Law That Is Saving Lives

On March 9, the Mine Safety and Health Administration commemorated the 35th anniversary of the implementation of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977. Like previous mining laws, this legislation was born out of mining injuries, illnesses, deaths and terrible mining disasters.



Congress decided that more needed to be done to end these tragedies and to provide miners in the metal/nonmetal sector with the same protections as coal miners. The law also represents a significant milestone in the department's centennial observances — it transferred mine safety and health enforcement authority from the Interior Department to the Labor Department. "In 1977, there were 273 mining fatalities in the United States," said MSHA Assistant Secretary Joseph Main. "Last year, we brought that number down to 35. Simply stated, the 1977 Mine Act is an act that saves lives."

• [Learn About the 1977 Act](#)

• [Read the Blog Post](#)

Take Three: Mine Act Turns 35

The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 called for a number of increased protections for the nation's miners. Joseph Main, who heads the Mine Safety and Health Administration, answers three

grants conduct programs that provide quality training materials and education for workers and employers in high-risk industries and small businesses. Workshops led by grantees facilitated the exchange among 150 participants, covering best practices for providing education and training to vulnerable populations. During opening remarks, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels underscored their critical role in training day laborers and temporary workers to identify job hazards and to know their rights under the law. He cited the example of Sandy recovery efforts in New York where OSHA worked with grantee organizations to reach day laborers with vital health and safety training.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Energizing Job Training

With the energy sector playing a key role in strengthening the nation's global competitiveness, ensuring that the nation has a highly-skilled workforce remains a major priority for the department, said Jane Oates, assistant secretary of labor for employment and training. Her remarks were made during the 2nd Annual Eagle Ford Consortium Conference in San Antonio, Texas, on March 8. Eagle Ford is the home of one of the country's largest shale oil extraction efforts. Oates discussed the successful collaboration between industry partners, local workforce investment boards and community colleges to recruit and train workers for this growing industry. The model is being replicated around the country, in part with the support through the department's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grant initiative.

- [Learn About TAACCCT](#)

Coal Mine Symposium

Several hundred coal mine industry officials, along with lobbyists and government representatives, gathered last week in Charleston, W.Va., for the 40th annual West Virginia Mining Symposium. Joseph Main, assistant secretary of labor for the Mine Safety and Health Administration, joined a line-up of speakers during the three-day event that included West Virginia Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and Rep. Nick Rahall. Topics included environmental, legal and regulatory challenges facing the mining industry. In his remarks, Main noted that, since arriving at MSHA in late 2009, safety and health are indeed improving in the



questions about the '77 Mine Act and why it has proven to be landmark legislation.

What were the most important provisions of the law?

While all miners gained new protections under the act, the greatest impact was felt in the metal and nonmetal mining industry. The legislation called for four annual regular inspections at underground

mines and two annual inspections at surface mines. The law also transferred the Interior Department's Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration to the Labor Department, thus creating today's Mine Safety and Health Administration.

What other protections were called for?

The law enhanced anti-discrimination provisions and, for the first time, provided miners an opportunity for temporary reinstatement to their jobs while pursuing complaints. Also for the first time, it required mine operators to provide training for new miners and newly hired experienced miners, as well as annual safety retraining of miners during normal working hours and at normal compensation rates. It created effective enforcement tools to address mine operators with chronic violations.

How are today's miners impacted by the '77 Mine Act?

Today, more than ever before, miners are vigorously exercising their rights by speaking out about unsafe conditions at their mines. MSHA, in turn, has increased its efforts to enhance miner protection from discrimination, particularly by filing complaints on their behalf, including requests for temporary reinstatement. Enhanced enforcement initiatives, such as monthly impact inspections of problem mines and pattern of violation notifications, are making a positive difference. Mine operators are getting the message, and their compliance continues to improve.

International Scene

Eliminating Child Labor in the Chocolate and Cocoa Industry

As part of its efforts to reduce and eliminate child labor, the department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs is working closely with Sen. Tom Harkin, Rep. Eliot Engel, business representatives and senior officials from Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana to address child labor in the chocolate and cocoa industry. This week, Associate Deputy Undersecretary Eric Biel and other ILAB staff members attended a meeting convened by the Child Labor Cocoa Coordinating Group. At a separate stakeholder briefing, governments and industry representatives discussed initiatives to significantly reduce the worst forms of child labor in cocoa growing areas of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana with civil society representatives, academics and other experts. "We are encouraged by the efforts being made to reduce child labor in the cocoa sector in West Africa," said Biel. "We have seen important signs of progress in the past year. At the same time, substantial challenges remain if we are to



nation's mines. Main also called attention to the 35th anniversary of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, which went into effect on March 9, 1978. "That legislation — simply put — improved mine safety and health, reduced injuries and illnesses and saved lives," he said.

- [Read Main's Remarks](#)

Investing in Workers

At the National Association of Workforce Boards Forum 2013: Dialogue for Workforce Excellence, acting Secretary of Labor Harris addressed a crowd of several hundred. He thanked the group on March 13 for their grass-roots efforts to give American workers the tools they need to succeed in the middle-class jobs of the 21st century. "An economy that grows not from the top down, but from the middle out — that's America at its strongest — and skills development for American workers is essential to getting us there." Harris also outlined five Obama administration principles for reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act and noted that the automatic spending cuts known as sequestration will diminish the services that the department can deliver to job-seekers and others.

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

Learn by Taking the Bus

New fall prevention posters are being displayed on public buses throughout Montgomery County, Md. The posters educate passengers, drivers and workers about fatal falls, which are the leading cause of death in the construction industry. As part of the nationwide outreach campaign, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health have partnered with the Montgomery County Worker Health and Safety Commission. The bus system, which has a ridership of 30 million per year, will carry the posters for several months in 200 buses, providing riders with OSHA's contact and website information.



- [Learn About the Fall Prevention Campaign](#)

Colorado Roundtables

The frontier spirit drove Ben Seigel, deputy director of the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, across Colorado March 6 and 7 to discuss the economy, skills training and President Obama's minimum wage proposal. In Denver, he and the secretary's regional representative Dusti Gurule met with 15 faith leaders. A roundtable hosted by Pastor Jude Del Hierro of Confluence Ministries and Butch Montoya of the Confianza Multicultural Faith Alliance focused on how an increased minimum wage and key investments in job training would

reach our goal of a 70 percent reduction by 2020. Eliminating child labor remains one of ILAB's top priorities."

- [Read the Framework to Implement Harkin-Engel Protocol](#)

Assessing Workforce Skills and Policy

The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies is a survey that can help governments assess workforce knowledge and skills. Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training Jane Oates welcomed about 60 representatives from government, business, organized labor, academia and think tanks to a March 13 meeting on PIAAC. She told the group that "PIAAC results will help to inform the department's data-based approach to workforce policy." Oates was joined by Brenda Dann-Messier, assistant secretary of education for vocational and adult education, and Demetra Nightingale, the department's chief evaluation officer. Chief Economist Jennifer Hunt spoke at an afternoon session featuring Bill Spriggs of the AFL-CIO and Charles Fadel of the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. "This rich set of information will allow many facets of the U.S. to be put into international perspective, shedding light on issues including the rise in wage inequality," Hunt said.

- [Learn About PIAAC](#)

Protecting Laborers' Rights

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights convened two briefings on March 12 to address human rights violations related to human trafficking and foreign labor recruitment programs such as H-2A and H-2B. In a briefing on human trafficking, Office of Public Engagement Director Gabriela Lemus highlighted the department's role in federal anti-trafficking efforts, such as the monitoring of forced labor and forced child labor overseas. In a briefing on human rights and labor recruitment, Michael Hancock, assistant administrator for policy of the Wage and Hour Division, described department efforts "to protect the rights of H-2 workers and, in particular, to guard against prohibited recruitment practices."

News You Can Use

Disability Employment Data

Information on disability and employment is readily available, thanks to a new data tool from the U.S. Census Bureau. On March 14, the bureau announced the Disability Employment Tabulation, sponsored by the Labor Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs. The tabulation shows that people with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed and to hold lower wage jobs than those without disabilities. "Reliable, accurate data on disability employment is an essential tool for furthering education, research and policy initiatives that improve employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities," said acting Secretary of Labor Harris.

- [View the Tabulation](#)
- [Read the Census Bureau News Release](#)

Caring for Women Veterans

The Women's Bureau is conducting a series of workshops nationwide to train the staff of veteran, health, community and service organizations on how to use the agency's trauma guide to better serve women veterans who are homeless or facing homelessness. "Hands-on training with the people who serve women veterans is key to helping these veterans transition back into civilian life," said acting Women's Bureau Director Latifa Lyles. Through the workshops, participants work with the bureau's staff to design programs that address traumas faced by female veterans. Approximately 250 representatives from service organizations in California, Massachusetts, New York and Washington, D.C., attended the first training sessions last

benefit returning veterans and youth in low-income neighborhoods. The next stop was Golden for a roundtable at Jefferson County Workforce with local community organizations, small businesses and chambers of commerce. From there, Seigel went to Boulder to meet with the Sacred Heart of Mary Christian Career Circle job club. The final stop was Fort Collins for a roundtable with the NoCo Faith Builders for Job Seekers at Timberline Church.

Update for Safety Professionals

Members of the American Society of Safety Engineers and the American Industrial Hygiene Association convened for their annual update from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration at a joint chapter meeting on March 11 in Washington, D.C. Dr. David Michaels, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health, discussed the effectiveness of OSHA's compliance assistance programs for small businesses and an independent study that found OSHA inspections reduce workplace injuries. Michaels stressed the importance of training programs' outreach to vulnerable working communities and the challenges posed by a growth in temporary workers. "Training must be in a language and vocabulary workers can understand," Michael said.

San Antonio Outreach

Outreach efforts that link diverse and qualified workers with government contractors are among the most important activities of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs. Last week, OFCCP, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services co-sponsored a community outreach event in the San Antonio area aimed at employers and job applicants. The event featured a job fair for job seekers with disabilities, including veterans with service-related disabilities. More than 100 job seekers attended an educational symposium that connected them with 31 prospective employers.

- [Learn About OFCCP](#)

Weekly UI Claims

The department reported the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial Unemployment Insurance claims was 332,000 for the week ending March 9, a decrease of 10,000 from the previous week. The four-week moving average was 346,750, down 2,750 from the previous week's revised average.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

[Open Funding Opportunities](#)

week.

- [Read the Trauma Guide](#)
- [Information on Future Events](#)

It Happened On The Hill

Moving Forward With Job Corps

The Job Corps program served more than 39,000 students on March 1, providing unique opportunities for disadvantaged young people to take control of their lives and steer them in a positive direction, the department said in testimony on March 12 to the Senate employment and workplace safety subcommittee. "Today's competitive job market and unemployment rates among young adults ages 16 to 24 make Job Corps more important than ever," Jane Oates, assistant secretary of labor for employment and training, told the subcommittee. The hearing, chaired by Sen. Robert P. Casey Jr. of Pennsylvania, focused on budget challenges facing Job Corps and a temporary suspension of student enrollment. Oates said the department is undertaking a comprehensive review of the program's management, budget and contracting.

Around DOL

Winning by Giving Back

Congratulations to the department for winning the 2012 Combined Federal Campaign National Capital Area's Contest for Best Poster or Display. Winners were honored at an awards ceremony on March 14 in Washington, D.C. CFC is a workplace charity campaign that provides all federal employees with the opportunity to give back. The department surpassed its 2012 goal and raised more than \$1.1 million. Overall, nearly \$62 million was raised by CFC in the National Capital area. The department's "My Reason for Giving" posters featured three of the department's Eagle Award winners and the CFC Campaign manager sharing why they give to the CFC.



DOL Working for You

Army Veteran Makes a Connection, and Lands a Job



Army veteran Jonathan Nobles moved to North Dakota to find his fortune in that state's booming energy industry. But finding a job proved more difficult than he imagined, and Nobles went through his savings and was on the verge of becoming homeless. That's when another veteran came to his rescue — Joe Hall, a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialist for Job Service North Dakota and an Army National Guard veteran of the first Gulf

War. Hall interviewed Nobles and learned he had almost 10 years of experience in heating, ventilation and air conditioning. Hall recalled a co-worker mentioning that his sister worked for a HVAC company that provided

EBSA — Affordable Care Workshop
• [March 20 — Philadelphia, PA](#)

OFCCP — Analyzing Personnel Activity Data
• [March 21 — Omaha, NE](#)
• [April 3 — Columbus, OH](#)

OFCCP — Analyzing Your Compensation Data
• [March 27 — Milwaukee, WI](#)

OFCCP — Annual Lunar New Year Celebration
• [March 20 — Quincy, MA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Seminar
• [March 21 — Monroe, OH](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Seminar and Job Fair
• [April 12 — Lakewood, WA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar: Supply & Service Contractors
• [March 21 — Memphis, TN](#)
• [March 27 — Nashville, TN](#)

OFCCP — Connecting the Dots- Outreach Obligations of Federal Contractors
• [March 19 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Construction Requirements
• [April 4 — Omaha, NE](#)

OFCCP — Developing Written Affirmative Action Programs/ Workplace Accommodations
• [March 22 — Columbus, OH](#)

OFCCP — HireAbility Community Outreach Day Fair
• [March 21 — Blackwood, NJ](#)

OFCCP — How to Avoid Costly Employment Practices
• [April 17 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — Internet Applicant Record Keeping
• [April 17 — Orange, CA](#)

OFCCP — Individuals with Disabilities Seminar
• [April 3 — Milwaukee, WI](#)

services for more than 600 buildings across the Northern Plains. He arranged a job interview for Nobles, who accepted a position that includes full benefits. "Joe hooked me up — I was down in the dumps, but he got it done for me," Nobles said. Hall also called a local homeless shelter to alert it "that a vet was coming" and seeking temporary housing. Nobles got a place to stay for a month before moving into his own apartment. "My only goal in life is to make sure veterans are helped," Hall said.



DOL in Action

Court Orders Forever 21 to Surrender Subpoenaed Information

A federal court has ordered Los Angeles-based apparel retailer Forever 21 to produce documents demanded by an administrative subpoena issued by the Wage and Hour Division. U.S. District Court Judge Margaret Morrow found that the subpoena was part of a "lawful investigation within the authority of the secretary." The order is the latest in a series of actions to arise from the department's continuing effort to address the Southern California apparel industry's widespread violations of minimum wage, overtime and record-keeping rules. "The order underscores that everyone in the supply chain has a responsibility to ensure that workers receive the federal minimum wage and earned overtime, and it demonstrates our commitment to enforcing those protections despite tactics designed to obscure the employment relationship," said Solicitor of Labor M. Patricia Smith.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the Court Order](#)
- [Read the Blog Post](#)

Union Pacific Railroad Ordered to Reinstate Employee

Union Pacific Railroad Co., headquartered in Omaha, Neb., has been ordered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to immediately reinstate an employee who was terminated in violation of the Federal Railroad Safety Act. An OSHA investigation upheld the employee's allegation that the railroad terminated his employment in retaliation for reporting a work-related injury. The company will pay more than \$350,000 in back wages with interest, compensatory and punitive damages. The employee had more than 30 years of service when he was dismissed from the railroad and twice had received the railroad's World Class Employee Award.

- [Read the News Release](#)

43 Violations Found at Poultry Plant Following Fatality

Southern Hens Inc. has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for 43 safety and health violations following the death of a worker at the company's Moselle, Miss., facility. While cleaning an unguarded screw conveyor, the worker slipped and fell into the conveyor. The violations include failing to provide personal protective equipment for employees and a lack of machine guarding on several pieces of equipment.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Additional Help for Louisiana and Texas Cleanup

The department awarded National Emergency Grant increments on March 11 to continue cleanup and recovery efforts in Louisiana and Texas. The Louisiana Workforce Commission received a \$1,119,339 grant increment

OFCCP — Meet and Greet for Federal Contractors & CBOs

- [March 20 — New Orleans, LA](#)

OFCCP — Meeting of the State Consumer Advisory Board

- [April 16 — Boston, MA](#)

OFCCP — Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory Program Public Forum

- [March 15 — Washington, DC](#)

OFCCP — Preparing for Construction Contractors for Audit and Meeting Utilization Goals for Females and Minorities

- [March 19 — Philadelphia, PA](#)

OFCCP — Preparing Small and New Supply and Service Contractors for an Audit

- [March 21 — Baltimore, MD](#)
- [April 3 — Pittsburgh, PA](#)
- [April 16 — Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [April 18 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OFCCP — Public Briefing on OFCCP's Feb. 28 Rescission of the 2006 Compensation Guidance and New Investigation Protocols

- [March 22 — Webinar](#)
- [March 22 — Webinar](#)

OFCCP — Serving Those Who Have Served

- [March 20 — Los Angeles, CA](#)

OFCCP — Understanding AAP Requirements

- [April 9 — Dallas, TX](#)

OFCCP — Veterans' Civil Rights Regional Seminar

- [March 15 — Atlantic City, NJ](#)

OFCCP — Working on Equal Terms: A Summit on Women in Construction

- [March 18 — New York, NY](#)

OFCCP — Workplace Accommodations

- [April 18 — Omaha, NE](#)

OFCCP — What to Expect During an OFCCP Audit - Overview of 503 and 4212

- [April 18 — Columbus, OH](#)

that will fund the continuation of temporary cleanup jobs in the aftermath of Hurricane Isaac. A \$406,101 grant increment awarded to the Texas Workforce Commission will continue to fund temporary jobs for cleanup and recovery efforts following damage from wildfires that struck Texas in 2011. Acting Secretary of Labor Harris said, "These Labor Department grant funds will help rebuild homes and businesses, and make communities stronger."

- [Read the Louisiana News Release](#)
- [Read the Texas News Release](#)

Penalties Proposed After Finger Amputation at Ohio Plant
Smithville Manufacturing Co. has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for 21 violations after receiving a complaint that a worker's finger was amputated at the Wooster, Ohio, facility by an unguarded press machine. OSHA has proposed penalties of \$65,800 as a result of the December 2012 inspection. The health and safety violations include one willful violation for failing to ensure point of operation guards were in place on mechanical power presses at the stamping facility, which does short-run productions of automotive parts.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Plastics Plant Placed in Severe Violator Program

Berry Plastics Corp. has been cited with six safety violations by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration following a complaint inspection at the Monroeville, Ohio, facility. The violations included two repeat for failing to document and use energy control procedures and conduct periodic inspections of these procedures. Fines of \$86,000 have been proposed. Because of the hazards and the violations cited, Berry Plastics Corp. has been placed in OSHA's Severe Violator Enforcement Program, which mandates targeted follow-up inspections to ensure compliance with the law.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Ohio Union to Hold New Election Following Investigation

The officers of American Federation of Government Employees Local 607 in Elkton, Ohio, have agreed to conduct a new election for president under the supervision of the Office of Labor-Management Standards on or before May 8. An OLMS investigation determined the union improperly disqualified a member from running for president because he also belonged to a Fraternal Order of Police local lodge. The AFGE Constitution has long contained a provision that prohibits a member who belongs to a labor organization not affiliated with the AFL-CIO from running for office. But Local 607 had previously allowed members who were also members of the FOP to run for and hold elected office.

Cave-in, Struck-by Hazards Found at San Antonio Construction Site

Yantis Construction Co. has been cited for one serious and one repeat violation at the company's worksite on 36th Street in San Antonio. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigators issued a serious violation after finding the company failed to protect employees from gravel being poured above or near the work site. A repeat violation was cited for failing to provide the required shoring, trench shields or sloping to prevent a possible cave-in. Similar violations were cited in March 2011 and March 2009. Penalties of \$74,400 have been proposed.

- [Read the News Release](#)

New Jersey Contractor Fined, Placed in Severe Violator Program

F&G Sons Contractors Inc., doing business as F&G Contractors Inc. in Paterson, N.J., was cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration with five repeat violations and one serious violation. Violations found at a Kinnelon, N.J., work site include scaffolding and fall

OLMS — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [March 26 — San Francisco, CA](#)
- [March 26 — San Francisco, CA](#)

OSHA — Special Meeting of Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health

- [March 18 — Washington, DC](#)

OSHA — Stakeholder Meetings on Crane Operator Certification Requirements

- [April 2-3 — Washington, DC](#)

WHD — Mexican Consulate's Mobile Consulate

- [March 16 — Macomb, MI](#)

WB — Celebrating Children and Literacy

- [April 27 — Detroit, MI](#)

WB — Federal Labor Standards: Prevailing Wage and FLSA Training

- [April 25 — Kansas City, MO](#)

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USDOL New on the Blog - Back on the Road: Living With the Minimum Wage
1.usa.gov/YuIKlg

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USDOL .@ActingSecHarris shares in the blog some of the stories he heard from workers in Tampa and Atlanta:

ow.ly/iX6qC #MWraise

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hazards, and resulted in \$70,840 in penalties. Because of the cited hazards and violations, the company has been added to OSHA's Severe Violator Enforcement Program.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Pennsylvania Masonry Company Faulted for Fall, Safety Hazards

Lansdowne, Pa.-based J.C. Stucco and Stone, doing business as J.C. Construction, has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for four repeat and two serious violations found at a Philadelphia work site. Violations include a lack of fall protection and the company's failure to conduct daily inspections of working conditions. OSHA's inspection was initiated as part of the agency's regional emphasis program on preventing falls and resulted in \$73,150 in proposed penalties.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Fire, Combustible Dust Hazards Found at 2 Manufacturing Plants

New England Wood Pellet LLC has been cited for alleged violations following inspections of the company's Schuyler and Deposit, N.Y., manufacturing plants. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration found workers were exposed to fire, rapid combustion and wood dust explosion hazards. Penalties of \$47,710 have been proposed. The hazards echo similar conditions OSHA found at the company's New Hampshire manufacturing plant, which was the site of a combustible dust fire in 2011.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Lead Overexposure Hazard Result in Citations at New York Plant

Plastic container manufacturer Tulip Corp. has been cited for exposing workers to airborne lead and other hazards. This action follows a complaint inspection by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration at Tulip's manufacturing facility on Highland Avenue in Niagara Falls, N.Y. OSHA's inspection found workers were overexposed to airborne concentrations of lead. In addition, appropriate protective work clothing and equipment, including gloves, hats and respirators, were not used when employees were exposed to lead above the permissible exposure limit. Fines of \$47,700 were proposed.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Montana Asphalt Company Cited Following Worker's Death

M.R. Asphalt Inc. has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration with 16 safety and health violations following a worker's death at the company's Corvallis, Mont., facility. A worker checking asphalt levels from the top of a tank died when he fell 15 feet, hitting his head on concrete. OSHA cited the company with a willful violation for failing to provide a guardrail or fall protection on the working surface.

- [Read the News Release](#)

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