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## DOL News Brief

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February 26, 2015

### What's New

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

- [The Coffee Shop That Canned the Tip Jar](#): We noticed a problem with our coffee shop and made a change that some people viewed as radical — getting rid of the tip jar, writes Amanda and Andrew Kopplin, small business owners from Minnesota.
- [Building a Workforce That Reflects the People We Serve](#): The Office of Personnel Management's latest report on the employment of people with disabilities shows that the federal government has hired people with disabilities at a higher rate than at any time in the past 33 years, writes Katherine Archuleta, director of OPM.
- [Our Last Poet](#): No one wrote about work quite like Philip Levine. In collections such as "The Simple Truth" and "What Work Is," the proud son of Detroit evoked an experience of industrial labor that he shared with many from the heartland, writes Dr. David Michaels, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health.

### Supporting Tribal Communities

To ensure Tribal communities are sharing in our nation's economic prosperity, it is important to increase access to the department's competitive grants. That was the key message delivered by Secretary Perez to the National Congress of American Indians' Legislative Summit on Feb. 24. Perez announced his intention in 2014 to clarify grant guidelines to make sure that federally recognized tribes can apply for various employment and training grant programs. Now, he has issued a memorandum directing agencies and offices to include tribes and tribal organizations in grant opportunities when applicable. This effort will ensure tribal communities' awareness of upcoming funding opportunities.

- [Read the Blog Post](#)

#### Department Tasked with Reducing Investment Conflicts of Interest

Workers and families saving for retirement deserve investment advice that is in their best interests. With that in mind, U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez, members of Congress and consumer advocates gathered at AARP headquarters on Feb. 23 in Washington, D.C., to hear President Obama as he directed the department to advance a rule to reduce conflicts of interest in the retirement investment marketplace. "Today, we're going to build on these consumer protections for the middle class by taking a new action to protect hardworking families' retirement security," he said. "Because in America, after a lifetime of hard

work, you should be able to retire with dignity and a sense of security." Before the president's address, Perez welcomed the group and remarked on the harm conflicts can have on retirement savings and the need for stronger protections. "Common-sense rules can protect investors and consumers, prevent abuse, and ensure that brokers and advisers provide advice that is in consumers' best interests," said Perez.

- [Learn How to Protect Retirement Savings](#)

#### Breaking the West Coast Ports Impasse

After four days of intensive negotiations overseen by Secretary Perez, shipping companies and West Coast dockworkers reached a tentative agreement on Feb. 20 to end a months-long dispute that was harming agriculture, retail and other sectors of the economy. At the president's request, Perez was dispatched to San Francisco to break an impasse in negotiations and to urge port operators, company executives and union leaders to settle contract differences. Between meetings with leaders of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association, Perez discussed the dispute's impact on the West Coast with elected officials, including Governors Jay Inslee (Washington) and Jerry Brown (California), and Mayors Eric Garcetti (Los Angeles), Ed Lee (San Francisco), Robert Garcia (Long Beach), Libby Schaaf (Oakland), Ed Murray (Seattle) and Marilyn Strickland (Tacoma). On Feb. 18, Perez was joined by Department of Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker and Garcetti for meetings with both sides in the dispute. Perez and Pritzker stressed the importance of reaching a quick agreement as global trade is vital to the strength of the U.S. economy, with exports of U.S. goods and services reaching a record \$2.35 trillion in 2014 and supporting 11.3 million American jobs. In a statement, the White House said, "The president is grateful to Secretary Perez for his hard work bringing about a successful resolution to this dispute." The White House called on the companies and dockworkers to finalize their agreement and clear backlogged shipments and congestion at West Coast ports.

- [Read the White House Statement](#)



## Building Local Partnerships

State, county and local leaders play a crucial role in implementing many programs funded by the department. Developing strong partnerships is key to the success of these programs, noted Secretary Perez, who spoke at the 2015 Legislative Conference for the National Association of Counties on Feb. 24. The conference brought together more than 1,500 representatives from across the country. As the department prepares to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act this year, Perez called on county officials to lay the ground work by setting up workforce boards and building local community partnerships. "I believe that the challenges we face, at every level of government, require unprecedented levels of interagency collaboration," he said. Perez also met with governors in Washington, D.C., attending the National Governors Association meetings.

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## Highlighting Services for Veterans

The full battery of resources the department uses to help veterans find good jobs was on display during a Q&A session with the veterans service organization community on Feb. 26. Deputy Secretary of Labor Chris Lu moderated a panel of department leaders who stressed the importance of partnerships as representatives of veterans service organizations listened. Panelists presented and then answered questions on topics ranging from the department's research on its programs effectiveness, workplace equality for women veterans and their families, military provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act, employment services for veterans at nearly 2,500 American Job Centers across the country, and much more. "Our work is broad-based; it is comprehensive," said Lu about the range of topics. "And, most importantly, it is coordinated."

• [Learn More About VETS](#)

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## Protecting Tobacco Workers

Improved conditions for tobacco industry workers took center stage at two gatherings attended by Wage and Hour Administrator Dr. David Weil and Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. On Feb. 20 in Raleigh, N.C., Weil and Michaels met with manufacturers and buyers to discuss how to improve labor law compliance up and down the industry supply chain. Later, they engaged with Human Rights Watch to discuss the group's recommendations on improving industry conditions. "We are pleased that the tobacco industry is at the table to explore avenues to continue working together with the department to educate growers and other tobacco stakeholders about their responsibilities to their workers," said Weil. "Groups like Human Rights Watch play a critical role in keeping this important conversation about the serious issues we face in this industry at the forefront." In FY 2014, the Wage and Hour Division found more than \$4.5 million in back wages for more than 12,000 workers in agriculture, including tobacco.

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- [Read an Interview with the Secretary](#)
- [Read More on the Port Talks](#)

## A Focus on Youth Opportunities

Despite strong economic gains in recent years, many young people nationwide are on the sidelines of success. Ensuring that young people share in the nation's economic prosperity was the headline at this year's National Opportunity Summit, hosted by Jobs for America's Graduates and Opportunity Nation. On Feb. 26, Secretary Perez emphasized the importance of focusing on youth before about 1,000 business, non-profit, government and education leaders, and 200 young adults from across the country. With employers optimistic about the economy and looking for opportunities to grow, investing in youth is a common sense strategy. As Perez said, "Opportunity should not be a function of your zip code, the color of your skin, the person you love, or anything other than your desire to work hard and play by the rules." The Obama administration has made youth employment a priority from the very beginning with its focus on youth summer jobs, its "My Brother's Keeper" initiative and the recent push to expand apprenticeships. In the coming months, the administration will announce additional activities through its "Upskilling" initiative that will encourage employers to commit to hiring youth.

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## National News

### An Update for Modern Families

Workers in legal, same-sex marriages, regardless of where they live, now have the same rights to federal job-protected leave as those in traditional marriages. Under a rule change to the Family and Medical Leave Act, same-sex married couples receive the same protections when caring for a spouse with a serious health condition. The department announced the rule change on Feb. 23, in keeping with a U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down the definition of "spouse" in the Defense of Marriage Act. "The basic promise of the FMLA is that no one should have to choose between the job and income they need, and caring for a loved one," said Secretary Perez. "With our action today, we extend that promise so that no matter who you love, you will receive the same rights and protections as everyone else."

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

### Measuring Real Impacts for Workers

In the past six years, the Wage and Hour Division has helped more than 1.5 million workers who were denied the wages to which they were legally entitled, recovering more than \$1.3 billion in back wages for those workers. In fiscal year 2014 alone, the agency identified more than \$240 million owed to more than 270,000 workers. Administrator Dr. David Weil says the enforcement statistics are more than just numbers. "It means food on the table. It means having a paycheck to help cover basic expenses like rent, utilities and transportation," he said. To put it in perspective, Weil noted that the agency collected an average of more than \$659,000 in back wages for workers *every day* last year. That's enough for more than 3,500 working families to buy a week's worth of groceries.

- [Read the Blog Post](#)
- [View the Enforcement Statistics](#)

### Developing an Online Skills Academy

The department hosted a virtual listening session on Feb. 20 to hear public comment on the Obama administration's proposed Online Skills Academy. The academy was a recommendation from the administration's Job-Driven training report issued last summer that seeks to leverage the free, publicly available training programs developed at community colleges using department funding. The academy would allow for students to earn credentials through online courses and help them advance in their careers by gaining skills and certifications employers are seeking. Approximately 300 representatives from the workforce, education, business and technology communities participated.

- [Learn More About the Skills Academy](#)
  - [Hear the Listening Session](#)
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## AAPI Listening Session

The Departments of Labor and Justice, along with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, hosted a listening session for members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 21. It was the third gathering, following meetings in Houston and Los Angeles. AAPI workers shared accounts of their workplace challenges with respect to health, safety, compensation, job training, discrimination and equal opportunity. Patricia Shiu, director of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs; Portia Wu, assistant secretary of Labor for employment and training; and Laura Fortman, deputy administrator for the Wage and Hour Division; attended the listening session, which was co-sponsored by the White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islanders.

## Sharing a Need for Timely Data

More than 20 economists from business trade associations — ranging from the National Beer Wholesalers Association to the American Chemistry Council — were welcomed recently to the Bureau of Labor Statistics headquarters in Washington, D.C., by fellow economist, Commissioner Erica L. Groshen. Jack Kleinhenz, chief economist of the National Retail Federation, organized the gathering to increase collaboration between BLS and business trade association economists. Participants may have differed in industry, but they shared similar views on the need for access to timely, relevant data to enhance decision-making. BLS provided updates on current data by industry, the dynamics of business employment — including assessing the strength of entrepreneurship in America — and what the data show regarding how and where people spend money.

• [View the Latest Statistics on Employment](#)

## Keeping Workers Safe on the Farm

Housing agricultural workers in unsafe or unsanitary conditions is illegal and an enforcement priority for the Wage and Hour Division. Administrator Dr. David Weil and Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels met with stakeholders on Feb. 20 in Raleigh, N.C., to discuss critical issues on this topic, including the importance of enforcement agencies and worker advocates having access to migrant labor camps. "Farm workers across this country are among the most vulnerable that we see," said Weil. "For a variety of reasons, these workers are less likely to step up and complain when conditions are poor, or even dangerous. We continue to work to ensure that basic standards are maintained on their behalf." Joining Weil and Michaels were state labor and commerce department officials and representatives from Legal Aid of North Carolina, Student Action with Farm Workers and the Telamon Corporation, a non-profit which supports farmworkers.

• [Learn About Agricultural Labors Laws](#)

## News You Can Use

### New Mine Safety Tools

The Mine Safety and Health Administration has launched two new online tools to assist the mining community in tracking safety and health violations commonly associated with mining deaths and frequently flagged by federal mine inspectors in underground coal mines. The latest tools enhance other web-based methods MSHA currently offers the mining industry to operate more safely. These include tools to monitor a mine's compliance history, such as determining its eligibility for a Pattern of Violations or the number of significant and substantial violations issued in a given time period after a corrective action plan is put into place.

• [Read the News Release](#)

## Around DOL

### Black History Month Roundtable Focuses on Challenges and Solutions

"Labor Market Challenges of People of African Descent in the Americas" was the topic of a Black History Month roundtable held by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs on Feb. 25. The panel featured representatives from the Department of State, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Embassy of Uruguay and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Moderated by Dr. William Spriggs of the AFL-CIO, the panel discussed the lasting negative effects of colonialism and slavery, and the challenges people of African descent confront as they press toward full labor market inclusion. Limited data adds to the "invisibility" of these populations to policymakers, which reinforces poverty and exclusion. Barriers to the formal labor market add to a high prevalence of "informal sector" jobs among these populations. After potential solutions had been discussed, the message became clear: Policy should be tailored to these vulnerable communities to give them a better and more stable future.

• [Learn More About ILAB](#)

## DOL Working for You

### Colorado Veteran Harnesses Military Skills for Civilian Job

Transitioning military skills to a civilian career can be difficult, a reality that Salvador Cruz, a retired veteran with 25 years of service, knows well. While in the U.S. Army, Cruz was a Special Forces communicator and — after retiring in 2011 — found contract employment as a combat trainer to foreign and U.S. troops near Colorado's Fort Carson. When that contract ended almost two years later, Cruz faced unemployment. He visited the Pikes Peak Workforce Center in Colorado Springs and began his transition to a new career. After a two-week assessment, Cruz was chosen for a five-week training program. The Veterans Workforce Investment Program and the Workforce Investment Act paid for the training and lodging. Cruz learned to become an electrical fabricator technician with Lockheed Martin in Littleton, Colorado, where he builds electronic components and fabricates cable harnesses for missile defensive systems.

## DOL in Action

### \$300,000 Judgment Added to \$12 Million Recovered for Pension Plans

The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky has issued a consent judgment against George Hofmeister, trustee of pension plans sponsored by several companies. The judgment requires Hofmeister to repay \$300,000 to the plans. It also bans Hofmeister from being a fiduciary or service provider to employee benefit plans under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. An Employee Benefits Security Administration investigation and subsequent lawsuit revealed that Hofmeister and others improperly used plan assets. More than \$12 million has been recovered after investigations by the department resulted in court orders and injunctions against Hofmeister and other fiduciaries.

• [Read the News Release](#)

### Postal Service to Pay \$229,000 in Whistleblower Case



## Partnership with the Highway Patrol

### The Wage and Hour

Division and the California Highway Patrol are working together to reduce the dangers farmworkers face when they are transported to and from fields in unsafe vehicles by their employers. On Feb. 19, CHP officers trained WHD staff in San Diego on safety inspections to help them recognize potentially unsafe vehicles. On April 8, the division will host a workshop in Calexico/Imperial County where the CHP will train crew leaders, supervisors and farm labor contractors on vehicle safety. The goal is to ensure farmworkers are safe when they are being shuttled around the work site by bringing employers and vehicle owners into compliance.

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## Combating Worker Retaliation

Departmental representatives from the Solicitor's Office and the Wage and Hour Division met with community organizations in Los Angeles on Feb. 23 to discuss recent efforts to combat retaliation against workers in the western region. Regional Solicitor Janet Herold discussed several court judgments protecting the rights of workers under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Other presenters talked about strides being made to correctly classify workers as employees rather than as independent contractors. Participating organizations included worker advocates such as the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, UCLA Labor Center and AFL-CIO.

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## Farm Labor Contractor Training

Approximately 150 farm labor contractors, managers, supervisors and crew leaders attended a training workshop in Bakersfield, Calif., on Feb. 12 to learn about the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act and safe transportation. Sponsored by Sun Pacific, a major citrus producer, the training was part of a voluntary compliance and self-monitoring agreement signed with the Wage and Hour Division. Presenters discussed vehicle inspection, safety requirements, vehicle insurance and driver licensing. "This training is an essential part of getting the message out to the farm labor contractor community in helping promote the welfare and labor rights of farm workers," said Nora Pedraza, the division's assistant district director in Fresno.

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## Warehouse Safety Partnership

Properly training and protecting temporary workers in the warehouse industry was the focus of a quarterly partnership meeting on Feb. 26 in Schnecksville, Pa. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Area Office in Allentown met with local warehouse industry representatives as part of the Warehousing and Materials Logistics Partnership agreement signed by OSHA in 2003. Presenters from OSHA and staffing agency Manpower Group discussed safety standards, temporary worker rights and safety, working cooperatively to find solutions to issues, and preventing workplace tragedies.

After a five-day bench trial, U.S. District Judge Ricardo Martinez in Seattle found a United States Postal Service employee is entitled to \$229,228 in damages. The employee suffered retaliation by his employer for advising a co-worker how to report workplace health concerns to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. He was transferred to another office, forced to work in an unheated storage room, demoted, restricted on his movements, publicly humiliated and subjected to four openly antagonistic interviews as part of workplace investigations. The employee also received a disciplinary letter and was rejected for a promotion. The ruling requires the USPS to promote the employee to the same pay rate he would have reached had he not been denied a promotion. Judge Martinez also enjoined the Seattle-area U.S. Postal Service from discriminating against employees who complain to, or cooperate with OSHA, and for failing to take action against managers who interfere with employees exercising their rights under the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

• [Read the News Release](#)

### 'Unacceptable Practices' at Virginia Coal Mine

A recent special impact inspection at Mill Branch Coal's Osaka Mine in Wise County, Va., found a number of hazardous conditions that exposed miners to potential ignitions, fire and explosions, as well as the risk of developing black lung disease. Enforcement personnel from the Mine Safety and Health Administration issued violations because the continuous mining machine was cutting coal with a thick cloud of dust suspended over the machine and shuttle car operators. The mine operator also did not comply with the approved roof control plan requiring visible warning devices to prevent miners from walking under unsupported roof. "The conditions cited at the Osaka Mine are a clear example of why increased respirable dust sampling is needed to rein in these unacceptable practices exposing miners to black lung disease," said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health.

• [Read the News Release](#)

### Massachusetts Roofing Contractor Is Four-Time Fall Hazard Violator

For the fourth time in four years, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has found Massachusetts roofing contractor William Trahan, Jr. Construction, Inc. exposing its employees to potentially fatal falls. The latest instance occurred in Salem, Mass., where employees repairing an asphalt shingle roof on a three-story house had no fall protection or adequate mounts to attach lines to stop falls. The company also failed to train workers to recognize fall hazards. Given its history of similar violations, the contractor received willful and repeat violations and faces fines of \$43,560.

• [Read the News Brief](#)

### Restaurants in San Francisco to Pay \$112,000 in Wages, Damages

Udupi Palace restaurants in San Francisco and Berkeley, Calif., violated the Fair Labor Standards Act by not paying workers overtime and not paying one worker the minimum wage. As a result of a Wage and Hour Division investigation, the business will pay eight kitchen workers \$56,288 in back wages and an equal amount in liquidated damages. Inspectors discovered rampant overtime violations dating back to 2011. Some employees routinely worked up to 60 hours per week with no overtime pay, while one employee at the Berkeley eatery worked for no pay during training.

• [Read the News Release](#)

### Grain Bin Facility Fined \$66,000 in Serious Amputation Injury

A 35-year-old worker in Waterville, Kan., had all the toes on his left foot amputated after a grain bin auger began turning during maintenance. An investigation of the August 2014 accident by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration found that The Beattie Farmers Union Cooperative failed to place locking devices on augers to prevent operation while workers were in the bin. OSHA identified one willful, one repeated and three serious safety and health violations, and proposed penalties of \$65,900. "Workers in the grain handling industry are regularly exposed to danger. Industry leaders must ensure their workers are trained on all necessary precautions to avoid these hazards," said Judy Freeman, OSHA's area director in Wichita.

• [Read the News Release](#)

### Temp Workers Face Safety Dangers at New Jersey Facility

Temporary workers at a beauty and pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in Edison, N.J., were exposed to safety hazards, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has found. An October 2014 investigation at Bentley



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## ERISA Advisory Council Meeting

The Advisory Council on Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans, also known as the ERISA Advisory Council, will hold its first meeting of 2015 on March 20 in Washington, D.C. Open to the public, the meeting will begin with the introduction of the new council chair and vice chair. An update on Employee Benefits Security Administration activities and a determination of topics to be addressed will follow.

• [Read the News Release](#)

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## Weekly UI Claims

Seasonally adjusted initial Unemployment Insurance claims rose to 313,000 for the week ended Feb. 21, the department reported. The advance figure was up 31,000 from the previous week's revised level. The four-week moving average was 294,500, up 11,500 from the previous week's revised average.

• [Read the News Release](#)

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## Upcoming Deadlines & Events

### Open Funding Opportunities

#### EBSA — Getting It Right: Know Your Fiduciary Responsibilities Seminar

- March 5 — Philadelphia, PA
- March 12 — Washington, DC
- March 18 — Washington, DC
- March 19 — Washington, DC

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

- March 18 — Baltimore, MD

#### OFCCP — Complaint Procedures

- March 18 — Orange, CA

#### OFCCP — Complying with the Section 503 and VEVRAA Regulations

- March 11 — Baltimore, MD

#### OFCCP — Construction 16 EEO & Affirmative Action Specification

- March 18 — Columbia, SC

#### OFCCP — Construction Review and the Sixteen Specifications

- March 23 — San Francisco, CA

#### OFCCP — New Regulations Implementing the Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act

- March 19 — Richmond, VA

#### OFCCP — New Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act & VEVRAA Regulations

- March 5 — Pittsburgh, PA

#### OFCCP — Veterans & Persons with Disabilities Hiring Expo

- March 27 — Los Angeles, CA

#### OLMS — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- March 5 — Dallas, TX

Laboratories LLC, found workers had not been trained on hazards related to chemicals, and were exposed to unguarded machinery and excessive noise. In all, 14 serious violations with levied with penalties of \$45,000. OSHA also cited Joulé Clinical & Scientific Staffing Solutions, a division of System One, for three serious violations involving lack of a hazardous communication program and employee training. The agency provides staffing services to Bentley Laboratories, and faces \$8,000 in penalties.

• [Read the News Brief](#)

### Exit Routes Become Obstacle Courses at Manhattan Retailer

Employees of a Duane Reade store in Manhattan would have been unable to exit the store swiftly and safely in the event of a fire or other emergency, an Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspection found. Consequently, OSHA cited the subsidiary of Illinois-based Walgreen Co. for one repeated and four serious violations of workplace safety standards. Inspectors found that three emergency exit routes from the store's basement were blocked by boxes, crates, garbage bags and merchandise stored or strewn in aisles and passageways. The emergency exit lights were not illuminated, and one exit was not marked. Inspectors also found that boxes of merchandise and inventory in the store's second-floor stockroom were unsafely stacked in 10- to 12-foot piles that could tip, slide or collapse, striking or crushing workers. "An exit route should not be an obstacle course. Seconds count during a fire or other emergency. These obstructions steal away precious moments employees could use to save themselves," said Kay Gee, OSHA's area director in Manhattan. The retailer faces \$77,400 in proposed fines.

• [Read the News Release](#)

### Money Transfer Companies Willfully Underpay Employees

Wage and Hour Division's Dallas District Office investigators determined employees of two money-transfer companies were willfully and repeatedly underpaid. The investigation found America Transfers Inc. and Mexico Transfers Inc. willfully violated the Fair Labor Standards Act by deducting cash-register shortages from workers' paychecks and misrepresenting them as payments for insurance or garnishments. These illegal, repeated and willful deductions forced the employees' pay below the minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. The companies must pay 111 employees more than \$15,000 in minimum wage back wages and \$61,050 in civil penalties for the FLSA violations as a result of the investigation. America Transfers Inc. operates 57 locations in Texas, Arizona and Illinois; Mexico Transfers has 33 locations in Arkansas, Georgia, Kansas, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon and Washington.

• [Read the News Release](#)

### Tool Manufacturer Nailed for Amputation Hazards

A carbide steel-cutting tool manufacturer in Madison, N.J., was cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration when investigators found employees exposed to amputation hazards from improperly guarded machinery. OSHA cited two willful and 11 serious violations to EP Heller Co. Proposed penalties total \$56,000.

• [Read the News Brief](#)

### Migrant Workers at California Winery to Get \$163,000 in Back Wages

A Northern California farm labor contractor will pay more than \$163,000 to 59 migrant workers after investigators found that he had failed to pay wages for three weeks during last fall's grape harvest in Mendocino County, Calif. The Wage and Hour Division cited contractor Manuel Quezada for violations at the Roederer Estate, where he has provided work crews for the past 10 years. Roederer immediately agreed to sign an enhanced compliance agreement requiring stringent reviews of its farm labor contractors' practices. "This case strikes a fair balance between rectifying Quezada's violations and his, and the winery's willingness to step up to the plate to correct violations now and in the future," said Susana Blanco, division director in San Francisco.

• [Read the News Release](#)

### Town Halls for Nuclear Weapons Workers

The Joint Outreach Task Group, of which the Office of Workers' Compensation (Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation program) is a member, hosted town hall meetings in Carlsbad, N.M., on Feb. 25 to inform current and former nuclear weapons workers including those employed at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, about

## WHD — Presentation on H2B compliance to Mexican Nationals

- [February 27 — Little Rock, AR](#)

## WHD — Wage and Hour 101: What to expect during a WH investigation

- [March 27 — Houston, TX](#)
- [March 31 — Houston, TX](#)

the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act. DEEOIC Director Rachel Leiton discussed the program benefits to which workers, including those employed at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, may be entitled. To date, \$1.4 billion in EEOICPA compensation and medical benefits has been paid to 12,586 claimants living in New Mexico.

- [Learn More About DEEOIC](#)
- [Learn More About EEOICPA](#)

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