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DOL News Brief

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April 2, 2015

What's New

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

- [Why This Counts](#): Tracking Labor Market Experience Over a Lifetime: "As part of my blog series, 'Why This Counts,' I want to tell you about a fascinating group of surveys called the National Longitudinal Surveys," writes Commissioner Erica Groshen of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- [Pictures of Sacrifice](#): A Tribute to Our Military Women Heroes: "I became fascinated by the legacy of all those incredible women service members who so honorably paved the way for me and others. I felt indebted to the women who served generations ago, not thinking twice of making the sacrifice of leaving their families and careers to serve," writes Veterans' Employment Specialist LaCarole Faulkner, of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service.
- [If Work Came With a High Risk for Assault, Would You Go?](#) "When most people think about going into work every day, they probably assume a few things. One of those things is that they won't be physically assaulted while doing their job," writes Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Jordan Barab.

Workforce Boards Forum

The nation's publicly funded job training programs represent a partnership that spans numerous federal, state and local government agencies, educational communities and training providers. The key members of this system are the approximately 600 workforce boards across the country that help ensure local job training programs meet the needs of employers. Recently, 1,400 representatives came to Washington, D.C., for the National Association of Workforce Boards Annual Forum. On March 29, Secretary Perez joined the conference to thank the workforce system for their efforts connecting ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs. In particular, these workforce board members will play a critical role in effectively implementing the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and promoting key department priorities like apprenticeships and upskilling initiatives.

'Lead on Leave' Tour Launches in Seattle

Kicking off the "Lead on Leave —

Empowering Working Families Across America" tour on April 1 in Seattle, U. S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez was joined by Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, working mom Sydney Marino, small business owners and a senior representative from the Microsoft Corporation to shine a spotlight on the issue of paid family leave. The first stop was Molly Moon's Homemade Ice Cream shop, a small business that on April 1 began offering its employees up to 12 weeks of paid family leave. After some talk and frozen refreshment, Perez joined a roundtable discussion on how paid-leave policies can help support families and businesses. "Paid leave isn't just pro-family, it's pro-business. It's the right thing to do and the smart thing to do," he said. "Companies that voluntarily offer family-friendly policies benefit from greater worker morale and productivity. Those companies are able to recruit and retain the best talent, and that helps the bottom line."

- [Read the Blog Post](#)
- [Learn About Paid Leave](#)

Protecting Retirement at White House Conference in Seattle

America must make sure that people who have worked hard their whole lives are not left out in the cold when time comes for retirement. This principle led the discussion as Secretary Perez attended the White House Conference on Aging Regional Forum in Seattle on April 2. He was joined by federal, state and local government leaders and consumer advocates including AARP CEO Jo Ann Jenkins, who introduced the secretary. Perez addressed issues important to older workers including reducing costly conflicts of interest in the retirement marketplace and creating a pipeline of skilled workers for the health care industry. He also emphasized that ensuring health care workers are paid properly is also a priority, particularly for those who provide direct care, often in people's homes. While a 2013 rule on minimum wage and overtime protections for direct care workers is still being litigated, the department is urging states to plan as if the rule will be upheld.

- [Learn About Retirement Security](#)
- [Learn About the White House Conference on Aging](#)

The Value of a Higher Minimum, Pacifically Speaking

Heralding the benefits of an increased minimum wage, Secretary Perez traveled westward this week to meet with employers, workers and state officials in California and Washington. Echoing President Obama's desire to reward hard work with a higher minimum wage, Perez and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti on March 31 toured Bobrick Washroom Equipment, Inc., a manufacturer of restroom accessories. Bobrick CEO Mark Louchheim attributes his company's success to investments in its workers, a theme Perez has heard from other employers. "When you take care of your workers, you can take care of your bottom line and you can take care of your customers," he said, citing businesses that have learned that higher wages boost morale, productivity

Phoenix on the Rebound

In Phoenix on March 26, Deputy Secretary Christopher P. Lu was busy talking about and listening to issues impacting workers and jobs. At a Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Committee roundtable, he discussed strategies for workforce development and the importance of apprenticeships to create a pipeline of skilled workers and improve the economy overall. Later that day, he visited the Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Center and met its director and stakeholders. Lu ended the day with a meeting with Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton. With significant ties to the construction industry, Arizona's economy suffered greatly in the recent recession. In the last year, however, the recovery has led to steady improvements in the state's wages and salaries. "We're not going to rest until everybody who wants a good paying job has a good paying job," said Lu.

Apprenticeships in Tech

America has five million available jobs; more than half a million of them are in information technology. With that in mind, Deputy Secretary Lu took part in a roundtable with Rep. Mike Honda and Silicon Valley business leaders on March 27 in San Jose. He discussed ways for businesses to invest in their workforce, highlighting the administration's TechHire initiative, which helps provide Registered Apprenticeships to workers while maintaining and expanding a competitive edge across a range of industries that rely on IT. He shared the same message in San Francisco during a tour of the TechSF training academy with Mayor Ed Lee, and at a Tech 4 America apprenticeship roundtable, where he met with business leaders from companies such as Glassdoor, Craigslist, LinkedIn and Salesforce. Lu wrapped up his day with a fireside chat at St. Mary's College, during a conference on responsible business and addressing the challenges of inequality. He spoke about the importance of skills training, increasing the minimum wage, and developing a diverse workforce that strengthens the middle class and creates a prosperous, broadly shared economy.

Vulnerable Worker Outreach in NM

Wage and Hour Division Administrator Dr. David Weil and local stakeholders discussed ways to better serve the needs of the community during his visit to the agency's Albuquerque, N.M., district office on March 30. The meeting included local interfaith and worker advocacy groups, the Mexican Consulate and officials with other federal and state agencies. Weil stressed the division's commitment to increase awareness of workers' rights by partnering with the groups on educational outreach. He urged them to assist the agency in identifying employers and industries that routinely take advantage of vulnerable, low-wage workers while gaining an unfair competitive advantage over businesses that obey labor laws.

and service. The next day, Perez traveled north to Washington State where he joined Seattle Mayor Ed Murray to celebrate the city's enactment of a new minimum wage on April 1. At a press conference, Perez commended Seattle for leading the way on higher wages and ensuring that low-wage workers are rewarded for their labor.

- [Learn About the Raise the Wage Campaign](#)

Veterans Share Experiences of Homelessness

As part of his trip to the West Coast, Secretary Perez visited Veterans at Connections Housing, a San Diego facility affiliated with People Assisting the Homeless. PATH, is an organization that provides sustainable housing for homeless veterans with funds from the department's Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program. One seven-year Navy veteran was homeless for 20 months before coming to the facility, where he found temporary shelter and learned job search skills like resume building and interviewing. He soon landed a job at a moving company. "While homelessness and joblessness among veterans continues to steadily decline, it remains our moral duty to do all we can to honor our veterans with the dignity of a good job," Perez said. He was joined by Congressional Reps. Scott Peters and Susan Davis. Last year, the department awarded more than \$36 million to 156 organizations nationwide, which provided services to more than 12,000 veterans through HVRP.

- [Learn More About HVRP](#)

National News

Help Us Build a Better Workforce System

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act — the first major reform of federal job training programs in more than 15 years — is part of a fundamental transformation in the way we prepare people for the careers of today and tomorrow. The department is working closely with its federal partners, including the Department of Education, to develop new rules for the workforce system to effectively implement the new law. On April 2, the proposed rules were available for inspection at the *Federal Register*. The public is encouraged to review the rules and offer feedback when the official comment period opens later this month.

- [Read the blog Post](#)

New Guidance on Workplace Violence

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that more than 23,000 significant injuries in 2013 occurred due to assaults in the workplace, 70 percent of which were in healthcare and social service settings. To reduce that risk, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has updated its "Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Healthcare and Social Service Workers." The publication includes industry best practices and highlights the most effective ways to reduce the risk of violence in various healthcare and social service settings, where workers are almost four times more likely to suffer violence than the average private sector worker. "It is unacceptable that the people who dedicate their lives to caring for our loved ones often work in fear of injury or death," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. "This updated booklet will help employers implement effective measures to reduce or eliminate workplace violence hazards."

- [Read the New Guidance](#)
- [Learn About OSHA's Workplace Violence Resources](#)

Historic Coal Mine Safety Law Turns 45

In 1968, a powerful explosion rocked an underground West Virginia coal mine, killing 78 miners. While the disaster's cause remains uncertain, the Farmington mine was a flashpoint for reform after years of mining fatalities and injuries and a growing awareness of black lung disease. A year later, Congress passed the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. The act took effect on March 30, 1970 and was the toughest worker health and safety law of its time. It also ushered in a new culture in mining. In signing the new law, President Richard Nixon declared that it "represents a crucially needed step forward in the protection of America's coal miners." The law required federal inspections of all coal mines; authorized mine inspectors to shut down mines when life-threatening hazards were found; created strong, enforceable safety protections; set fines for violations and criminal penalties for willful violations; added health

Women's Bureau Had A Busy March

For Women's Bureau Director Latifa Lyles, March was packed with speaking engagements and panel discussions nationwide to mark Women's History Month. On March 26, she served on a panel at the Catalyst Women of Color Summit in New York City. The event drew scholars, business leaders and policymakers who offered insight on the advancement of women of color in the workplace. Back in Washington, D.C., the next day, Lyles delivered the luncheon address at the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation Summit. In her remarks there, she discussed the advancements made by women of color and the department's efforts on behalf of all working women. Lyles ended March with women leaders from throughout the U.S. government at a Women's Forum roundtable entitled "Breaking Barriers; Building Bridges," sponsored by the General Services Administration.

• [Read the Women's History Month Blog Post](#)

Combatting Misclassification

Construction businesses need a level playing field to be competitive. The Employee Misclassification Compliance Assistance Program — a joint effort between the Wage and Hour Division's Phoenix, Ariz., district office and industry stakeholders — seeks to create one. "Our work together has enabled us to make inroads into the construction and related industries which has magnified our message about the need for compliance many times beyond what we could accomplish on our own," agency administrator Dr. David Weil told program members during a visit to Phoenix on April 1. "Given the pervasiveness of misclassification, and the harm it causes to workers, taxpayers, and law-abiding employers, these sorts of relationships are critical to improving compliance going forward."

• [Learn About Misclassification](#)

Diversity Talk at Cornell

While in New York recently Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs Director Patricia A. Shiu visited the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations' Labor and Employment Law Program. At a March 27 forum, she joined a panel discussion on OFCCP's regulatory agenda and reviewed recent changes to regulations governing federal contractors, including final rules on disability and veterans' employment; nondiscrimination on the bases of sexual orientation and gender identity; and the rescission of the agency's ineffective compensation guidelines. Shiu also talked about upcoming equal pay reports and pay transparency rules. Approximately 50 attorneys representing employers, workers and unions participated.

• [Learn About OFCCP](#)

protections for black lung disease and established federal benefits for victims of black lung disease.

• [Learn More About the Coal Act](#)

International Scene

Vietnamese Delegation Studies DOL Workplace Safety Programs

Organized by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs, agency leaders and technical experts from several of the department's agencies met with a Vietnamese government delegation the week of March 29. The group visited to obtain technical assistance on workplace safety and health programs as Vietnam prepares to implement its first comprehensive occupational safety and health law. As the country expands the number of workers covered by its law, the Vietnamese government is eager to learn how to maximize limited resources in areas such as enforcement, training, outreach and education, statistics and notification, and workers' compensation. The delegation included representatives from Vietnam's National Assembly, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor (the national trade union) and key ministries, such as Labor, Health and Justice.

• [Learn More About DOL's Work in Vietnam](#)

Paraguayan Delegation Visits DC, Houston

Representatives from the Paraguayan Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security visited the department in Washington, D.C., and Houston March 23-27. Deputy Secretary Chris Lu joined Paraguay's Ambassador to the United States, Igor Pangrazio, and other staff from the Embassy of Paraguay and the Department of State to welcome the delegation. During their visit, the delegation met with national, regional and local offices from several departmental agencies to discuss priorities and current labor and employment programs for vulnerable workers, as well as U.S. wage, discrimination and safety and health laws. They also met with staff and students at the Potomac Job Corps center in Washington. A report summarizing their visit will be compiled and include recommendations for Paraguay's Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security.

• [Learn More About ILAB](#)

In Our Thoughts

Visionary Trailblazer Norwood Made Numbers Count

The statistical community lost one of its heroes on March 27 when former Bureau of Labor Statistics Commissioner Janet Norwood passed away at age 91. Norwood climbed the ranks at BLS for 16 years before chosen as its commissioner, where she remained for 12 years through three presidential administrations. BLS' first female commissioner, Norwood was a trailblazer known for her integrity, professionalism and impartiality. During her tenure, the data produced at BLS gained great importance. "All U.S. policymakers, businesses and families can make better decisions every day because of Janet Norwood's work," said BLS Commissioner Erica L. Groshen.

• [Read Commissioner Groshen's Statement](#)

Around DOL

Honoring César Chávez

To celebrate César Chávez Day — which marks his birthday on March 31 — Secretary Perez and employees from the department's chapter of the League of the United Latin American Citizens held a wreath-laying ceremony on March 27 at the entrance to the auditorium named in his honor at the Frances Perkins building. The iconic American farmworker, labor leader and civil rights activist co-founded the United Farm Workers of America was inducted into the Labor Hall of Honor in 1998. "Chavez made sure that American workers are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve," said Perez.

• [Learn More About Chávez in the Hall of Honor](#)

Older Workers Face Tough Terrain

Losing a job is difficult for everyone; for workers older than 55, unemployment can be impossible to overcome. A new report by the AARP Public Policy Institute found that half of older workers unemployed at some point in the past five years were still not working or had fallen out of the labor force. The report was released March 30 at the AARP Policy Conference where the department's chief economist, Dr. Heidi Shierholz delivered its keynote address, which described the economic landscape facing today's workers. While the rate for older unemployed workers is lower than the national average, they make up a large share of those out of work more than six months. Shierholz laid out several departmental policy tools designed to help prevent layoffs and reduce the length of unemployment, such as work-sharing programs and re-employment assistance services.

- [Read the AARP Report](#)

'Green Tobacco Sickness'

To combat "green tobacco sickness" and its effects — dizziness, headaches and vomiting — among workers who plant, cultivate and harvest tobacco, Secretary Perez announced new guidance on March 27 on the hazards of nicotine poisoning. The recommended practices bulletin identifies serious hazards to tobacco field workers' health and how their employers can protect these workers. The bulletin also identifies vulnerable workers, including children and adolescents, who may be more sensitive to chemical exposure and more likely to be poisoned. "It's important that we continue to work with a wide array of stakeholders in order to find solutions that protect all workers," said Perez.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the Bulletin](#)

Comment Period on Sex Bias Rule

In recognition a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, public comments will be accepted until April 14 on a proposed rule governing sex bias in employment practices of federal contractors and subcontractors. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs announced the extension to ensure comments reflect the impact of the March 25, 2015 decision in *Young v. United Parcel Service*. The decision affects application of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to pregnancy discrimination in the workplace.

- [Comment on the Proposed Rule](#)

From Trauma to Work

Community experts on trauma and employment in Alabama met on March 31 in Birmingham at an event co-hosted by the Women's Bureau. Participants at "From Trauma to Employment: Women's Challenges, Barriers, and Successes" discussed the importance of recognizing and responding to all forms of trauma experienced by women and its effects on their ability to attain stable employment. The Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health, the University of Alabama, community advocate Sunny Slaughter

DOL Working for You

On Target for a Bright Future

When Kaitlyn O'Hanlon was graduated from high school, she was stumped. She didn't see herself going to college for two reasons — self-doubt and no money. A school counselor suggested O'Hanlon consider Job Corps. Little did she know that applying to the Pittsburgh Job Corps Center would lead her down the road to higher education. After entering Job Corps in 2006, a counselor detected her interest and ability in business and told her about the Off Center Training Program. The program helped O'Hanlon earn an associate's degree in business management from the Community College of Allegheny County. Then, she set her sights higher: pursuing a bachelor's degree at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (which had a cooperative agreement with her community college). Before long, the person who couldn't see herself in college had a degree in general management and human resources. Her graduation in 2012 led to a position as a human resources executive team leader with Target Corporation. O'Hanlon is grateful for her experience. She encourages others to "take full advantage of all Job Corps has to offer — a partnership that will guide you in the right direction, as well as encourage and support your success."

DOL in Action

Federal Contractor in Hawaii Owes \$1.2M in Back Wages

Lighting Services Inc. of Honolulu will pay 38 electricians/technicians more than \$1.2 million in back wages after Wage and Hour Division investigators determined the federal contractor did not pay required prevailing wages at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay. The employer also submitted falsified payrolls and told workers to provide false information. The company and owner Scott Wilks are now excluded from obtaining federal contracts for three years. "Businesses that benefit from federal dollars have a responsibility to play by the rules, and that includes paying employees legally required wages," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez. "Having a federal contract is a privilege, not a right. And we will remain steadfast in our enforcement of laws that level the playing field for those employers who are doing the right thing."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Funds to be Restored to Connecticut Retirement Plan

The fiduciaries to the Fletcher-Thompson Inc. Savings Plan in Bridgeport, Conn., must restore \$485,560 in withheld employee contributions and loan repayments to the plan, thanks to a federal court consent judgment obtained by the department. Employee Benefits Security Administration investigators found that the plan, and company president Michael Marcinek, violated the Employee Retirement Income Security Act by being delinquent in forwarding contributions withheld from employees' paychecks and loan repayments to the plan. They later stopped remitting monies altogether, while still withholding contributions and loan repayments from plan participants' pay. The order also prohibits Marcinek from ever again serving as a fiduciary to an ERISA-covered benefit plan.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

New Jersey Eateries Owe \$325,500 in Back Wages

Raymond's Ridgewood LLC has agreed to pay \$325,534 to 160 workers, after an investigation by the Wage and Hour Division's Northern New Jersey District Office. The investigation exposed violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act at the company's upscale restaurants in Ridgewood and Montclair, N.J. The employer was found to have failed to pay members of the kitchen staff overtime and use the correct rate when calculating overtime for tipped workers.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

Farm Labor Contractor Must Pay \$146,000 in Penalties

A Philadelphia-based farm labor contractor has been ordered to pay \$146,100 in civil penalties after a September 2014 lawsuit filed by the department. Wage and Hour Division Southern New Jersey District investigators determined that Heng Heng Agency Inc. and its owner, Visith

and the department's Wage and Hour Division partnered on the event.

Oil and Gas Workers Get \$1.3M

A day working in an oilfield usually means long hours in physically demanding and exhausting conditions. An ongoing Wage and Hour Division enforcement initiative is making sure workers in the oil-and-gas-rich Southwest get paid fairly. Since 2014, investigators have recovered more than \$1.3 million owed to more than 1,300 workers in New Mexico and west Texas. Violations include the misapplication of exemptions from overtime; failure to include bonus payments made to employees when calculating overtime; failure to pay for time working off-the-clock; and paying flat daily/shift rates without regard to the hours the employees worked. "The oil and gas industry is emblematic of the modern, fissured workplace where contracting and subcontracting have obscured the traditional relationship between employer and employee," said Dr. David Weil, administrator for the Wage and Hour Division.

• [Read the News Release](#)

UPS Delivers for Veterans

In Louisville for the U.S. Army's Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program Training Symposium at the United Parcel Service's Worldport facility on March 31, Tim Winter and Mike Bocchini of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service attended a briefing by the company's Veteran Affairs Manager Pat O'Leary, who leads its effort to hire and train veterans. At a White House "Joining Forces" initiative event in 2013 led by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, UPS committed to hiring 25,000 veterans by 2018. By April 2014, the program was so successful that the parcel service doubled its commitment to hire 50,000 veterans. "UPS has long valued veterans. Military jobs include a high concentration of the types of skills UPS needs," O'Leary said. In Louisville, UPS kicked off its registered apprenticeship program for drivers, an opportunity for veterans and nonveterans alike. On hand for the March 31 event were partners from the U.S. Army, U.S. Army Reserve and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

• [Learn About Veterans Apprenticeships](#)

Compliance Assistance in Houston

The Wage and Hour Division's Houston District Office is piloting a series of compliance assistance workshops for local employers. The first session was held on March 26, and offered an overview of the division, the investigative process and how to prepare for an investigation. Employer response was strong, and a waiting list has already been started for future workshops. The division is now exploring the possibility of workshops throughout the nation.

• [Find Compliance Assistance Information](#)

Oum violated the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Workers Protection Act by failing to pay temporary workers the federal minimum wage at Medford Nursery in Lumberton, and did not keep proper records, provide safe transportation vehicles and obtain required insurance.

• [Read the News Brief](#)

Action Averts Catastrophe at Honolulu Warehouse

Unicold Corp. has agreed to make health and safety improvements at its refrigerated food warehouse in Honolulu and end a two-year fight against \$197,000 in penalties, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced. A joint inspection in 2013 by Hawaii's Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and OSHA found hazards that could have led to a catastrophe. Nearly every emergency exit door or route was locked, sealed shut, blocked or unusable, and Unicold's hazardous use of ammonia as a refrigerant could have leveled the building. "This could have had devastating consequences in a building evacuation," said Barbara Goto, acting OSHA regional administrator in San Francisco. "The department will not allow Unicold or other employers to allow dangerous conditions that put workers in a potential death trap," said Janet Herold, the department's regional solicitor in San Francisco. "Luck is the only reason that we are not investigating a multi-fatality disaster here."

• [Read the News Release](#)

Wood Pellet Maker Ignores Repeated Risks of Amputation

Five times in three years, a Wisconsin wood pellet manufacturer has been cited by Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors. Acting on an employee complaint, OSHA went to Wood Fibers Inc. in Niagara and found employees operating machines without proper guards in place and excessive amounts of combustible wood dust throughout the facility. The agency issued four repeated and eight serious safety violations with penalties totaling \$71,610. "A business that exposes workers daily to dangerous hazards creates an environment that forces employees to decide between their lives and their livelihood," said Robert Bonack, OSHA's area director in Appleton. "This is unacceptable."

• [Read the News Release](#)

Violations Force Midwest Hotel Operator to Change Business Practices

Wage and Hour Division investigators have uncovered significant minimum wage and overtime violations at seven Michigan hotels owned and operated by A & M Hospitality and Management Inc. and Grand Hospitality Management Inc. The investigation found that 96 housekeepers and maintenance employees were not paid fully for work performed before and after their shifts ended. To resolve the violations, the employers signed a consent judgment to pay \$50,000 in back wages and damages to the employees and make significant changes to their business practices at 70 hotels in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. "We are pleased that these two companies have committed to change their corporate culture from top to bottom to ensure they are paying workers legally," said Karen Chaikin, regional administrator for the Wage and Hour Division in Chicago.

• [Read the News Release](#)

No Protection Leads to Fatal Trench Disaster

On Oct. 1, 2014, two employees of Bednar Landscape Services Inc. were killed when a trench collapsed during installation of a French drain system at a residence in Boonton, N.J. A subsequent investigation by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration found the Boonton-based company allowed employees to work in a trench between nine and 13 feet deep with no cave-in protection. OSHA issued one willful citation for the unprotected trench. Nine serious violations included not providing a ladder in the trench every 25 feet to allow for safe exit, and the trench not inspected by a competent person. Penalties total \$77,000.

• [Read the News Brief](#)

Workers Exposed to Fall Hazards Working on Roofs in Florida

A construction company in Jacksonville, Fla., has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration after inspectors observed employers at two separate sites working on roofs without fall protection. Great White Construction has a history of disregarding hazards, according to OSHA, which issued the employer six citations for exposing workers to fall hazards and unsafe wiring, and not ensuring they wore protective equipment. The company has been cited five times since 2012 for fall protection

Weekly UI Claims

Seasonally adjusted initial Unemployment Insurance claims fell to 268,000 for the week ended March 28, the department reported. The advance figure was down 20,000 from the previous week's revised level. The four-week moving average was 285,500, down 14,750 from the previous week's revised average.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

Open Funding Opportunities

OASAM — Vendor Outreach Session

- April 23 — Washington, DC

EBSA — Getting It Right: Know Your Fiduciary Responsibilities

- May 7 — Pasadena, CA
- May 19 — Philadelphia, PA

OFCCP — An OFCCP Audit Through the Eyes of An Investigator

- April 21 — Webinar
- May 14 — Houston, TX

OFCCP — Construction 16 EEO & Affirmative Action Specification

- April 15 — Columbia, SC

OFCCP — Good Faith Efforts Required by OFCCP

- May 7 — Orange, CA

OFCCP — New Scheduling Letter

- April 16 — Orange, CA

OFCCP — Outreach and Positive Recruitment for Section 503/VEVRAA

- April 16 — Houston, TX

OFCCP — Presentation: Protecting Your Workplace Rights

- April 23 — Dallas, TX

OFCCP — Presentation: The Revised Supply and Service Scheduling Letter and Itemized Listing

- April 9 — Dallas, TX

OFCCP — Protecting Your Workplace Rights

- April 14 — Chicago, IL
- April 22 — Chicago, IL

OFCCP — The New VEVRAA Regulations

- April 14 — Chicago, IL

OFCCP — Traveling Resource Center to assist nuclear weapons workers

- April 28 — Newport News, VA

OFCCP — Scheduling Letter Updates

- April 7 — New Orleans, LA
- May 13 — New Orleans, LA

OFCCP — Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Nondiscrimination Requirements: Complaint Processing

violations. Proposed penalties total \$184,000.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Inspection at Steel Fabrication Company Yields Multiple Hazards

A Wisconsin steel fabrication company faces penalties of more than \$102,000 for two willful, four repeated and 12 serious safety violations after an October 2014 inspection by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Inspectors found that Koser Iron Works' employees in Barron were at risk of suffering amputation because machines lacked required safety guards. Explosion and fire hazards also existed as Koser failed to properly store flammable liquids and install a required ventilation system in the storage room. "Manufacturers should examine their procedures to ensure they are in compliance," said Mark Hysell, OSHA's area director in Eau Claire. It takes seconds for a worker to be severely injured, but often a lifetime to recover."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Florida Contractor's Safety Hazards Exposed

A Florida construction company contracted to restore the concrete finish on high-rise apartment buildings has been cited by Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors. Acting on complaints of hazards, OSHA visited sites in Sunny Isles and Hollywood in October 2014 where they issued 17 citations to Maxim Construction Group Corp. of Hallandale Beach. Violations included exposing workers to fall hazards and failing to develop respiratory protection and hearing conservation programs. Proposed penalties total \$119,000.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

NJ Clothing Companies Put Workers in Danger

Two apparel industry companies in New Jersey, both located in Dayton, were found by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors to be in violation of safety and health standards. Imagine Screen Printing & Productions LLC, which imprints graphic designs on apparel, received 15 serious citations and a \$43,200 penalty. The second company, Central Mills Inc. — doing business as Freeze — sorts, packs and distributes the apparel to some of the nation's largest retailers. OSHA handed Freeze seven serious citations and issued a \$21,000 penalty. The violations included blocked exit routes, no worker training on chemical hazards and the lack of a hearing conservation program for excessive noise exposure.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

Rhode Island Restaurant Chain has Wage and Child Labor Violations

Wage and Hour Division investigators found the owner of a Rhode Island Mexican restaurant chain underpaid workers and violated youth labor restrictions. Cooks and servers at Cilantro Mexican Grill were paid straight time instead of legally required time and a half when they worked beyond 40 hours in a work week, the investigation determined. The company also employed three minors — ages 16 and 17 — who used their own vehicles to make food deliveries in violation of child labor provisions in the Fair Labor Standards Act. To address its violations, the company agreed to pay employees \$100,417 in back wages and liquidated damages, no longer use minors as drivers, and pay a civil penalty for the child labor violation. The investigation was part of an ongoing enforcement initiative by the division's Hartford district office to improve compliance among restaurants in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

- [Read the News Brief](#)
- [Learn Rules About Teens Driving on the Job](#)

Workers Risked Cave-in and Struck-by Hazards

Workers installing sewer lines at a Georgia crossroads were at risk of being buried in a cave-in and were without head protection because their Hilton Head, South Carolina-based employer failed to protect them. Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors found Jordan Construction Co. violated safety rules intended to prevent workers from being harmed on the job. The October 2014 inspection in Pooler was initiated as part of OSHA's National Emphasis Program on Trenching and Excavation. Jordan was issued two willful citations and faces \$46,800 in penalties.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

- [April 8 — Washington, DC](#)
- [April 9 — Washington, DC](#)

OLMS — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [May 19 — Appleton, WI](#)
- [May 21 — Maple Grove, MN](#)

WHD — Employee or Independent Contractor? Employment Relationship under the FLSA

- [April 30 — Houston, TX](#)

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