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Subject: The DOL Newsletter - March 19, 2015: Building for the Future; Protecting Retirees; Declining Jobless Rate for Veterans

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DOL News Brief

March 19, 2015

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What's New

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

- [An Income Inequality Snapshot](#): Wall Street Bonuses and the Minimum Wage: A new report says Wall Street bonuses amounted to twice the annual earnings of more than 1 million full-time minimum-wage workers in America.
- [A Dispatch From the Front Lines of Innovation](#): Last week, Dylan Orr, chief of staff of the department's Office of Disability Employment Policy, paid his first visit to the International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference. There, he witnessed technology advancements that have the power to increase inclusion on multiple levels, he writes.
- [Unemployment Across All 50 States](#): For the first time in 30 years, average annual unemployment declined in all 50 states and the District of Columbia between 2013 and 2014, writes Dr. Heidi Shierholz, chief economist at the department.

The Importance of Outreach

Deputy Secretary of Labor Christopher P. Lu met with the Wage and Hour Division's Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialists working group on March 12 to discuss engagement with stakeholders. He affirmed the need for greater engagement: "Education and outreach to workers and employers will continue to be one of our key strategies for protecting the workforce and for promoting voluntary compliance." Since 2010, CORPS staff has supplemented the agency's outreach by engaging both employer and worker groups, then incorporated their feedback into the agency's planning process. Lu emphasized the importance of reaching out to other department agencies, as well as state and local governments and nongovernmental organizations, to build collaborative partnerships.

'A Good Job Is the Foundation of the American Dream'

For more than 60 years, the mission of the Greater Baltimore Committee has been to build a stronger America from the local level upward. On March 16, U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez joined GBC members and approximately 160 business and civic leaders to share his vision for shared prosperity in Maryland and across the United States. "Good jobs are the essence of middle class economics. A good job is the foundation of the American Dream. In the best America, every person has access to a good job," Perez said. He further explained that the key to helping everyone find a good job is to invest in job training, education and infrastructure that businesses need to create jobs and grow the middle-class. The department's investments in expanding apprenticeship programs and transforming community colleges into critical workforce development partners are key steps to helping build a better America, Perez said.

- [Read the Prepared Remarks](#)
- [Read the 4 Principles of America's Skills Transformation](#)

Championing Worker Protections on Retirement Advice

America's retirement security is too important to be compromised by conflicts of interest in investment advice, Secretary Perez emphasized before the Consumer Federation of America's Consumer Assembly on March 13 in Washington. Perez was there discussing worker protections, including an upcoming proposed rule to help more families get retirement investment advice that is in their best interest. "Many people lost so much of their savings in the Great Recession, and they are getting it back now. And this is one of the most important things we can do to help them," Perez said. He noted that he has been talking with as many people as possible as the new proposal is developed and counts insight from the financial services industry as particularly valuable. "I have been so heartened by the folks in industry who have stepped up and said, 'You know, we can do this, and it's right for our customers, and it's right for our business model.'"

- [Learn About Conflicts of Interest](#)

National News

Unemployment for Veterans Declines in 2014

The unemployment rate for Gulf War II-era veterans declined 1.2 percentage points to 7.2 percent in 2014, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' annual report on the employment situation for veterans in the United States says. Data collected as part of the monthly Current Population Survey is the source for the 2014 annual averages presented in the release. Other notable statistics included the unemployment

Progress in Mine Safety

Mining industry improvements in the past five years have laid the foundation for better protections for miners. That's the message Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health Joseph Main delivered to the annual convention of the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association on March 16 in Baltimore. "We are seeing significant reductions in chronic violators, improved industry compliance, and successful implementation of standards in metal and nonmetal mining," he said. Main was quick to add that, while metal and nonmetal mining had historically low fatality and injury rates in 2011, 2012 and FY 2013, increases in metal and nonmetal deaths since October 2013 are a matter of great concern and MSHA is working closely with the industry to reverse this trend.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read Main's Remarks](#)

A World of Big Data

"Big data" is a common buzzword these days. Long before the term existed, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other federal agencies used alternative data sources — that today would be labeled big data — to revolutionize the way they do business. In Washington, D.C., on March 12, BLS Commissioner Erica L. Groshen, Burning Glass CEO Matthew Sigelman, Billion Prices Project cofounder Alberto Cavallo and former U.S. Census Bureau Director Robert Groves took part in a panel sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute where they discussed the current and future role of federal statistical agencies. Representatives from those agencies, local universities, businesses, think tanks and non-profit organizations were on-hand. The panelists agreed that federal statistical agencies must play a key part in the emerging world of big data. Blending survey data and big data will produce new and better ways to inform sound decision making by our nation's businesses, families and policymakers.

- [Watch the Video](#)

Women's History Month

Women's History Month is underway across the nation, and the Women's Bureau is participating in many observances. Director Latifa Lyles traveled to Hartford, Conn., on March 11 for "Women's Day at the Capitol," hosted by the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, where she spoke about the importance of paid leave. She was joined by Rep. Rosa DeLauro, Wendy Chun-Hoon of Family Values @ Work and Catherine Bailey of the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund. The next day, bureau Regional Administrator Grace Protos spoke at the New Jersey Forum on Women in Information Technology. Hosted by Wider Opportunities for Women, the event focused on preparing women for the IT industry and ensuring its workplaces are gender sensitive. In Atlanta, Ga., the bureau hosted a delegation of women leaders from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka on March 17. There, participants compared working conditions and the status of working women in their respective countries. Regional Administrator Lucia

rate for male veterans, which fell to 5.2 percent, as well as the overall unemployment rate for veterans, which dropped from the previous year to 5.3 percent. "Even as we celebrate the good news in this report, we will continue to deploy this system with every ounce of urgency to make sure all veterans have the opportunity to secure a job that helps them support their families," said Secretary Perez.

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

Mellon Bank to Return \$84 Million to Retirement Plans

The Bank of New York Mellon has agreed to repay \$84 million to employee benefit plan customers who were victimized through the bank's "standing instruction" foreign exchange trading program. The agreement is part of a larger settlement that resolves private lawsuits against the bank, as well as suits brought by the U.S. Department of Justice and the New York State Attorney General. An Employee Benefits Security Administration investigation found that, for most standing instruction foreign currency exchange transactions with customers, including retirement plans, the bank assigned nearly the worst prices at which currencies had traded in the market during all or part of a day. The department concluded that the bank misrepresented and failed to disclose to clients how it priced the transactions and that the bank had engaged in a deliberate, prolonged effort to conceal its pricing methods.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Final Rules on Excepted Benefits

The U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Treasury have published final rules to amend the definition of excepted benefits to include certain limited coverage that wraps around individual health insurance. The final rules permit group health plan sponsors, in limited circumstances, to offer wraparound coverage to employees who are purchasing individual health insurance in the private market, including in the Health Insurance Marketplace. This gives employees, unable to get employer-based coverage, access to high-level benefits.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the Final Rules](#)

International Scene

Germany, U.S. Share Common Mission to Develop Strong Workforce

A delegation of German government officials met with Deputy Secretary of Labor Christopher P. Lu recently to compare policy approaches to balancing work and family, promoting women's labor market participation and securing equal pay. Led by Manuela Schwesig, minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the delegation was eager to discuss ways to engage in related public-private partnerships, where Germany is pursuing a number of policy reforms. The department is collaborating closely with the German government in a number of ongoing forums, including the G7, G20 and International Labour Organization. The March 13 meeting was another opportunity to further the countries' common missions to promote and develop a strong, stable workforce. Lu was joined by department leaders including Latifah Lyles, director, Women's Bureau; Donna Lenhoff, senior advisor, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs; and Mark Mittelhauser, associate deputy undersecretary, Bureau of International Labor Affairs.

It Happened on the Hill

Spotlight on the Fiscal 2016 Budget

The Labor Department's work is contributing to the economy's continued growth, promoting shared prosperity and giving more people the opportunity to punch their ticket to the middle class. Secretary Perez shared this perspective on Capitol Hill at two congressional hearings. On March 17, before the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies of the House Appropriations Committee, Perez made the case for the department's

Bruce called the visit "a fantastic opportunity for working women leaders from other countries to learn about U.S. working women who have similar issues and are achieving similar results."

LGBT Workplace Equality

America's workforce and economy are strongest when diversity is fully embraced, when opportunity's doors are open to all and no one is excluded from the American Dream, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Mary Beth Maxwell told the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on March 16. At the meeting, "Examining Workplace Discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Americans," Maxwell outlined the department's efforts to implement the Supreme Court 2013 decision to end the ban on recognition of same-sex marriages under federal law and Executive Order 13672, which prohibits employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity by covered federal contractors and subcontractors. The department is also developing internal policies that will position it as a model LGBT employer. "Much has been done, but there is much more to do," Maxwell said.

Texas Symposium on Ebola

To share lessons learned and best practices in an Ebola or other infectious disease outbreak, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, in partnership with the University of Texas at Arlington and state and county health services, conducted a free 4-hour symposium on March 12 at the university's main campus. More than 250 people from 19 states and the District of Columbia participated, either in person or on the Web. Attendees represented emergency service providers, health care practitioners, frontline workers, safety personnel, social service management and federal agencies.

- [View the Symposium](#)
 - [Visit the OSHA Ebola Website](#)
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Agreement for Recycling Workers

The Wage and Hour Division and California's Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery signed a three-year cooperative agreement to share information and coordinate enforcement efforts to combat wage and hour violations, fraud and other illegal labor practices against workers at certified beverage container recycling centers across California. The agreement follows a department investigation that yielded a \$77,000 judgment against Recycling Innovation and Valley Recycling. "Employees who work in the recycling industry are some of our country's lowest-paid workers and are vulnerable to exploitation," said Ruben Rosalez, regional administrator for the Wage and Hour Division. The agreement was signed at the California Environmental Protection Agency headquarters in Sacramento on March 13.

proposed fiscal year 2016 budget, highlighting specific workforce investments and programs to help unemployed people get back to work. The next day, at a House Education and Workforce Committee hearing, he laid out the department's broad agenda, thanking committee members for their work on the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as well as outlining efforts on the minimum wage, overtime, wage enforcement, workplace safety and the conflicts of interest rule.

- [Read the March 17 Prepared Remarks](#)
 - [Read the March 18 Prepared Remarks](#)
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DOL Working for You

Job Corps Leads Him From Homelessness to the Middle Class

Eric Martinez is busy at work these days as an apprentice at the new \$477 million downtown entertainment and sports arena under construction in the state capital — the future home of the NBA's Sacramento Kings. So, how did a once homeless, drug-addicted teenager become a "priority apprentice" with a new career in the construction trades and a pathway to the middle class? It took some spiritual reflection, a woman who is now Eric's wife, his last ounce of desire to succeed — and Job Corps. "I grew up homeless, living near rivers and in abandoned houses," Martinez said. "I became addicted to drugs and the streets were my family. Then I found God, my wife, and Job Corps." Today, Martinez knows hope exists, especially for the seemingly hopeless. He also believes opportunity exists for those who want it. He grabbed his opportunity by crossing the gap between life and death. First, he got clean and sober. Then, he pursued Job Corps and applied for a pre-apprenticeship training program in Sacramento. The program demanded hard work, discipline and sacrifice. "It took everything in me to succeed at Job Corps," he said. "There were times I wanted to give up." But he couldn't and now his decision to join Job Corps is paying enormous dividends. "I am grateful to have plates to eat from, to have a roof over my head and to have a new car," Martinez explained. "Every day I wake up reminded of what I've gained and where I've come from." His message is simple: "Do not look for a hand out, look for a hand up!"

DOL in Action

Union Pacific Ordered to Pay \$350,000 to Engineer

For the third time since 2011, the Union Pacific Railroad has violated the Federal Railroad Safety Act at its yard in North Platte, Neb., by disciplining employees who reported workplace injuries and sought medical attention, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration found. Since 2001, the company has faced more than 200 whistleblower complaints nationwide. "It is disheartening that this employee, a loyal railroad worker for 35 years, faced disciplinary action because he sought needed medical attention for a work-related injury," said Marcia P. Drumm, OSHA's regional administrator in Kansas City, Mo. The company has been ordered to pay the engineer \$350,000 in punitive and compensatory damages and reasonable attorney's fees, remove disciplinary information from the employee's personnel record and provide information about whistleblower rights to all its employees.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Company Cited in Fatal Fall at Missouri Dairy Farm

A 35-year-old worker performing maintenance on an overhead door's pulleys died after he fell off a 12-foot ladder onto a concrete floor at a dairy farm in La Belle, Mo. An Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigation identified eight serious violations, including failure to de-energize equipment and confined space and chemical hazards. It was the second fatality reported since 2012 at a business owned by Sharpe Holdings Inc., of Bethel, Mo. "Agricultural facilities can be dangerous work environments, and employers must ensure that workers are trained to recognize and avoid preventable hazards," said Bill McDonald, OSHA's area director in St. Louis.

- [Read the News Release](#)

High Levels of Carbon Monoxide Found at Bagel Bakery

Bruegger's Bagels in Birmingham, Ala., has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for exposing workers to high levels of carbon monoxide. Inspectors discovered that an exhaust fan in the baking

Labor Rights Primer for Students

Wage and Hour Division officials recently addressed more than 120 Phoenix high school students on employment rights under the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The division and the Genesis Academy have partnered to empower students with education about their rights to receive a fair wage and work in a safe environment. Genesis is an alternative high school that serves former dropouts and those at a higher risk of cutting short their education. Ninety percent of the enrollees are Hispanic and approximately 24 percent of the students work an average of 32 hours per week.

• [Read the News Brief](#)

Alliance Works to Avoid Falls

Falls are the leading cause of fatalities in the construction industry and fall prevention is critical — facts discussed at a March 17 meeting of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Lehigh Valley Safety Committee in Pennsylvania. Attended by people from a wide range of industries, the event included a demonstration by engineering consulting firm RETTEW on how to wear fall protection properly and how to rescue a person safely after a fall. The two-hour workshop also focused on effective safety and fall rescue plans, and why training and practice with safety equipment matters. Started in 2009, the alliance provides information, training, guidance, and access to OSHA resources to help reduce potential workplace injuries and illnesses.

• [Read More About the Alliance](#)

Fighting Misclassification in Nevada

Wage and Hour Division and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration staff met with several Nevada state agencies in Las Vegas on March 12 to discuss enforcement and outreach efforts currently underway to stop employers from misclassifying workers. "Misclassified employees are often denied family and medical leave, overtime, minimum wage and unemployment insurance," said Gaspar Montanez, the division's district director in Las Vegas. "Misclassification also generates substantial losses to the Treasury, the Social Security and Medicare funds, and to the states' unemployment insurance and workers' compensation funds." Representatives from the Nevada Office of the Labor Commissioner, the Nevada State Workers' Compensation, and the state of Nevada OSHA program attended.

• [Learn About Misclassification](#)

Farmworker Safety in Idaho

Nearly 90 Idaho farmers, ranchers, farm labor contractors and stakeholders participated in two Wage and Hour Division workshops to learn more about labor laws in the agricultural industry. In Caldwell on March 9 and Twin Falls on March 11, Western Regional Director of Enforcement Richard Longo encouraged attendees to be diligent about ensuring safe transportation of farmworkers and setting industry standards for youth employment and payments of wages. "We

area burned out, allowing carbon monoxide fumes to exceed safe levels. OSHA issued three citations to the employer for failing to develop a written hazard communication program; take steps to maintain safe carbon monoxide levels; and not ensuring the carbon monoxide alarm was working properly. The investigation began after three workers were hospitalized. The store owner faces penalties totaling \$26,000.

• [Read the News Brief](#)

Funds Available for Military in Washington State

Soldiers and airmen at Joint Base Lewis McChord in Washington State will continue to benefit from re-employment services thanks to \$2.7 million in incremental funding of a National Emergency Grant awarded to the Pacific Mountain Workforce Consortium. The funding will help support the continuation of job training, job placement and business recruitment services for approximately 900 military personnel affected by budget cuts at the Lakewood-based military facility. The funding was initially approved in December 2013 and this week's funding brings the total award for this program to more than \$5.5 million.

• [Read the News Brief](#)

Bowling Center Worker Dies After Being Caught in Pinsetter

An Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigation determined that exposed machine operating parts caused the death of a 53-year-old worker at a Fairfield, Ohio, bowling alley. In November 2014, the man was asphyxiated when his hooded sweatshirt became caught in a pinsetter at Northwest Lanes. OSHA issued eight serious safety violations, citing the alley owner for failing to install adequate guards on pinsetter mechanisms. "Northwest Lanes had identified issues with its 1970s-era equipment, but it did not ensure workers were protected from dangerous parts," said Bill Wilkerson, OSHA's area director in Cincinnati.

• [Read the News Release](#)

Florida University Faulted for Unsafe Levels of Formaldehyde

Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., has been cited the Occupational Safety and Health Administration after a November 2014 inspection found faculty members were exposed to unsafe levels of formaldehyde. OSHA issued 10 citations to the employer for not providing protective equipment to workers; exposing workers to formaldehyde at unsafe levels; not taking corrective action to reduce worker exposure; and not providing eyewash stations in the work area where workers prepared formaldehyde solutions. OSHA initiated the inspection after receiving a complaint and levied penalties of \$50,000.

• [Read the News Brief](#)

Laser and Skin Surgery Center Overvalues Employee Stock Plan

Accurate company valuations are critical when it comes to establishing an Employee Stock Ownership Plan. Company owners sometimes seek to inflate the price to benefit themselves at the expense of workers. The department alleges that Dr. Roy Geronemus, owner of the Manhattan-based Laser and Skin Surgery Center of New York, and plan trustee Samuel Ginsberg did just that when they created the Laser Skin and Surgery Center Employee Stock Ownership Plan in 2009. An Employee Benefits Security Administration investigation found that the valuation process was flawed, and the ESOP's subsequent \$24 million purchase of the stock violated the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. These breaches led the department to sue Ginsberg and Geronemus in federal court, seeking to have the defendants restore all losses to the ESOP and take other correction action and to have them barred from serving as fiduciaries or service providers to any ERISA-covered plans in the future.

• [Read the News Release](#)

Illinois Recycling Plants Face Penalties of \$366,000

A September 2014 Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspection found recycling plant workers were exposed to dangerous amputation hazards during maintenance and while processing scrap metal at facilities in Rockford and Peoria, Ill. OSHA proposed penalties of \$366,400 for five willful and nine serious safety violations, including fall and confined space hazards, at Behr Iron & Steel recycling plants. The inspections began under the agency's Severe Violator Enforcement Program after similar hazards were found during an investigation into the death of a worker at another of the company's facilities last year.

• [Read the News Release](#)

are excited to build a positive and long-lasting relationship with Idaho's agricultural community. We will continue to provide our support and increase understanding of labor protections for agricultural workers," said Thomas L. Silva, the division's district director in Portland.

Partnering in Connecticut

Wage and Hour Division's Hartford District Office staff met on March 10 with Labor Commissioner Sharon Palmer and the Connecticut Department of Labor in Wethersfield in support of their ongoing partnership to serve Connecticut's working families. Approximately 50 staff from both agencies discussed the laws they enforce, current strategic objectives and ways of working together in the future, such as mutual initiatives to improve employer compliance in the restaurant industry. Gary Pechie, director of wage and workplace standards for the Connecticut Department of Labor, hosted the meeting.

Outreach Effort in Texas

Combating the misclassification of employees and independent contractors in the construction industry in Texas is high on the list of the Wage and Hour Division Southwest Region's initiatives. On Wednesday, March 19, the division and OSHA Regional Administrator for Enforcement Jeffrey Lewis hosted a feedback session to gather input and hear concerns of union representatives statewide. They discussed how wide-spread non-compliance with the industry's labor laws hurts their members. In response to a request made for additional education for unions, employers, and workers, Wage and Hour staff plans several events in Texas to spread the word about misclassification and other labor law enforcement.

Nuclear Workers in Colorado

Nearly 400 current and former nuclear industry workers and their survivors gathered at town hall meetings hosted by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs in Westminster, Colo., on March 18. OWCP representatives shared information about the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act and the medical benefits it provides to approved claimants. Staff also answered questions and helped visitors file claims. Administered by OWCP's Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation, the program provides compensation and medical benefits to eligible Department of Energy nuclear weapons workers and their families.

- [Learn More About DEEOIC](#)
 - [Learn More About EEOICPA](#)
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Weekly UI Claims

Seasonally adjusted initial Unemployment Insurance claims increased to 291,000 for the week ended March 14, the department reported. The advance figure was up 1,000 from the previous week's revised level. The four-week moving average was 304,750, up 2,250 from the

Massachusetts Health Plan Fiduciaries Sued for Unpaid Premiums

An Employee Benefits Security Administration investigation found that Northampton Motor Classics LLC and owner/president Andrew Feuerstein violated their fiduciary duties under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act by failing to remit withheld employee contributions to the Massachusetts company's health plan; pay health premiums to maintain coverage for plan participants; and inform participants that premium payments had stopped. The department has turned to a federal court and asked that the defendants be ordered to undo any prohibited transactions, disgorge any profits that resulted, restore all losses plus interest to the plan, and compensate plan participants for any medical expenses that resulted from the defendants' misrepresentation. The suit also seeks to stop Feuerstein from ever again serving as a fiduciary to an ERISA-covered plan and have the court appoint an independent fiduciary to administer the plan.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

Alert Letter Issued to Maine Elephant Refuge After Worker Death

The co-founder, curator and elephant manager of Hope Elephant Refuge in Hope, Maine, was found dead in the refuge's compound in September 2014 with a crushed chest. An Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspection found that the victim routinely entered the compound to work with two elephants then in residence. The inspection prompted OSHA to issue a hazard alert letter to the refuge's board of directors, noting the hazards of allowing individuals to routinely enter the elephant enclosure without protection against crushing injuries. OSHA recommended that protected contact, consistent with industry standards, be used when employees work with elephants, and that Hope Elephant Refuge develop and implement a policy to ensure that elephant care providers are not present in the same unrestricted space as elephants, except in rare circumstances.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

Retirement Plan Administrator Barred in Colorado

The department filed a lawsuit on March 9 against Alvin Martin Mavis, third-party administrator for the Welzig Heating and Air 401(k) Plan in Longmont, Colo., alleging that he received illegal commission payments from a securities broker/dealer. While plan participants did not suffer any losses due to the violations, Mavis did profit illegally from the commission payments. The U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado issued a judgment stopping Alvin Martin Mavis from serving as a fiduciary to any retirement benefits plan and from violating the Employee Retirement Security Income Act of 1974 in the future.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

Department Files Suit Against New York Union

A lawsuit against Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181 in Valley Stream, N.Y., recently filed by the department, seeks to nullify the union's June 2014 election for president, vice president, financial secretary, recording secretary and nine executive board positions. The action also seeks a new election supervised by the Office of Labor-Management Standards. Filed in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, the lawsuit alleges the union violated the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act when it failed to comply with a candidate's reasonable request for distribution of campaign material to all members in good standing. The union also used an incomplete list of members to mail the candidate's campaign literature and violated the LMRDA when it denied members the right to vote by failing to count a significant number of ballots.

Workers Receive Added Assistance to Overcome Layoffs

Approximately 300 workers laid off in Hampden County, Mass., will maintain their reemployment benefits from an incremental National Emergency Grant of \$854,851 awarded by the department on March 19. Workers receiving assistance worked at Avery Dennison Corp., Dow Jones & Co. Inc., Hasbro Inc., Exelis Inc., and Southworth Co. when layoffs began in 2013 and continued through January 2014. Initially approved in April 2014, this award brings total funding approved for these workers to more than \$1.5 million.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

Dinnerware Manufacturer Exposes Employees to Numerous Hazards

Dinnerware manufacturer World Kitchen LLC exposed workers at its Corning, N.Y., plant to a variety of hazards that put their health and safety at risk. An Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspection conducted

previous week's revised average.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

Open Funding Opportunities

OASAM — Vendor Outreach Session

- [April 23 — Washington, DC](#)

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

- [March 25 — Arlington, VA](#)

OFCCP — An OFCCP Audit Through the Eyes of An Investigator

- [May 14 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — Coming Into Compliance with Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Requirements

- [March 24 — Webinar](#)
- [March 25 — Webinar](#)

OFCCP — Construction 16 EEO & Affirmative Action Specification

- [April 15 — Columbia, SC](#)

OFCCP — Construction Review and the Sixteen Specifications

- [March 23 — San Francisco, CA](#)

OFCCP — Good Faith Efforts Required by OFCCP

- [March 26 — Chicago, IL](#)
- [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 — Protecting Your Workplace Rights

- [April 14 — Chicago, IL](#)

OFCCP — The New VEVRAA Regulations

- [April 14 — Chicago, IL](#)

OFCCP — Veterans & Persons with Disabilities Hiring Expo

- [March 27 — Los Angeles, CA](#)

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

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

in response to employee complaints found workers faced the dangers of fire, laceration, amputation, crushing injuries, electric shock, falling and hearing loss due to absent or deficient safeguards. The Corning plant also was cited for a repeated violation for not recording all work-related injuries and illnesses in its OSHA 300 injury and illness log. The agency had cited World Kitchens in July 2010 for a similar violation at its Greencastle, Penn., location. The company faces \$108,000 in fines.

- [Read the News Release](#)

- [See Updates to OSHA's Recordkeeping Rule](#)

Fire, Explosion Hazards for Employees of New York Manufacturer

Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors found that employees of an upstate New York manufacturer of foam, paper and plastic packaging materials were exposed to fire and explosion hazards. The program for safely managing large amounts of Isobutane, a flammable gas used in the manufacturing process, at Queensbury-based Pregis Corp., had several deficiencies. These included an incomplete analysis of hazards; inaccurate diagrams; not conducting required inspections and testing; correcting deficiencies, updating safety information and not investigating incidents that could have caused a catastrophic chemical release. The company also allowed unsafe levels of combustible dust to build up in the workplace; did not provide training and personal protective equipment to employees working with live electricity; and chose exit routes near hazardous areas. As a result, Pregis Corp. was cited for 13 serious violations and faces \$73,000 in fines.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

- [Learn About Process Safety Management](#)

Safety Hazards Found at Georgia Wood Products Manufacturer

A Georgia wood reprocessing supplier was issued 14 safety violations by Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors who found workers exposed to amputation, electrical, and fire and explosion hazards. K. W. McAvoy & Son Inc., of Washington, Ga., allowed the danger of amputation due to unprotected rotating conveyor parts; allowed fire and explosion hazards caused by excessive amounts of sawdust; had no program to ensure machinery could not start accidentally during maintenance and servicing; failed to cover electrical boxes and did not use permanent fixed wiring. The violations carry penalties totaling \$45,500.

- [Read the News Brief](#)

Fired for Reporting Hazards, Truck Driver Wins \$33,000

Fired the morning after he filed an Occupational Safety and Health Administration complaint, an Illinois truck driver will now receive \$33,000 from his employer in a settlement agreement. The driver alleged unsafe working conditions as he delivered waste material to a treatment facility in Du Quoin. The agreement ends a lawsuit against Perry Ridge Landfill Inc., Panther City Hauling and their corporate officer, Joseph Mazza, for violating whistleblower provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

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