

# OREGON HEALTH AND SAFETY RESOURCE

March, April, May (2001)



## **Bechtel's Airport MAX project earns STAR award**

Oregon OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) awarded STAR status to the entire Airport MAX contracting team, led by general contractor Bechtel Infrastructure Corporation at Bechtel's annual safety luncheon, December 15 in Portland.

Peter De Luca, administrator for OR-OSHA, made the presentation to the Bechtel team, based on the Airport MAX Project's exemplary safety record. Since breaking ground in March 1999, the project has worked over 650,000 employee hours without a lost-time accident.

OR-OSHA VPP recognizes excellence in employer-provided, (generally) site-specific, occupational safety and health programs for employees. The program ensures that OSHA standards are not only being met, but that employers are going beyond standards to provide the best feasible protection for workers at the site. VPP companies serve as models for the industry and provide

mentoring to help other workplaces in their pursuit of safety excellence.

In November 1999, the Bechtel Airport MAX team achieved MERIT status under the VPP. This marked the first time that a construction contractor met all the requirements for STAR status in the Oregon program. Bechtel (and its contracting team) is one of only three companies in Oregon to be recognized at this level.

Bechtel project manager Walker Kimball credits communication, cooperation, and trust among all the parties for the team's success. Kimball describes Oregon OSHA as "a very professional and dynamic player in this partnership for excellence in workplace safety."

Tri-Met's general manager, Fred Hansen, commended the Bechtel team, saying, "This is a tremendous accomplishment for any business, but especially a five-mile-long construction site. It's proof that safety and meeting schedule and budget can and should go hand in hand."

See "*Bechtel*," page 8

## **Safety committees – a part of Oregon's workplace culture**

Not many years ago, Oregon employers were saddled with the 6th highest workers compensation costs of all 50 states. Approximately 45,000 Oregon workers a year were being seriously injured or made ill on the job.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, management, labor, and government came together through the legislative process to reform the workers' compensation system and to make safety and health on the job a priority. One of the key elements in this effort to prevent on-the-job injuries and illnesses was the passing of Senate Bill 1197, which required employers to have a workplace safety committee.

Although a safety committee process is never perfect, there is benefit to having workers and management in Oregon workplaces coming together on a regular basis to identify and solve everyday safety and health problems.

See "*Committee*," page 8

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# Construction noise – What did you say?

by Karen Chase, Industrial Hygienist, OR-OSHA Consultative Services

Did you hear the one about the industrial hygienist who shows up on a construction site to check noise levels?

She asks a worker, "Can I put this equipment on you to measure your noise exposure?"

The worker cups his hands around his ears and says, "WHAT?"

Even though workers often joke about noise levels and their hearing, traditionally, hearing loss has been accepted as a cost of construction work. Older workers share stories about how "toughly" they resisted whatever hearing protection might have been offered; others say none was offered.

Now many of these people live with hearing impairments or loss. They've discovered that hearing loss is rarely just hearing normally at a lower

level: it's a frustrating distortion of sound that isolates them from the people with whom they want to share their lives.

How is it that so little attention has been given to the issue of hearing protection on construction sites? It has been considered impractical, some say, for construction employers to comply with hearing-conservation-program requirements when their workforce is often temporary and mobile. In addition, those workers who saw hearing loss or impairment as "part of the job," didn't file claims, so no money was paid out for their loss or recorded in workers' compensation statistics. Workers' compensation providers didn't rush in to help solve the problem.

Although noise possesses a discernible warning – loudness – how much loudness one can withstand without damage to hearing depends on such factors as exposure, frequency of exposure, decibel levels, type of noise, etc. OSHA has established decibel levels at which noise is believed to

be hazardous and has established rules based on two decibel-level thresholds: 85 dB and 90 dB. (See OR-OSHA Noise and Hearing Conservation, OAR 437-2/G, 1910.95, which includes tables that help employers determine how long employees can work at various decibel levels.) For all Oregon employers, including those in construction, OR-OSHA requires a hearing conservation program for workers exposed to 85 dB or more averaged over the course of an eight-hour workshift (time-weighted average or TWA). Eighty-five decibels over eight hours is considered the "action level" – the level at which the employer must take action. The goal of the hearing conservation program is to ensure that noise is monitored and that workers are getting hearing tests and are not overexposed to noise on the job.

When the eight-hour TWA reaches 90 dB, which is the permissible exposure limit or PEL, employees are considered overexposed, and employers must implement engineering and work-practice controls to reduce exposure. If engineering controls are not feasible, hearing protection must be provided by the employer and worn by employees. For every 5 dB under these two thresholds, exposure time may be doubled (the "doubling rate"). Engineering controls, such as enclosing equipment operators with cabs and "buying quiet" when purchasing new equipment, are the primary actions that can be taken to reduce exposures to below 90 dB.

OR-OSHA has established an emphasis program to evaluate noise exposure and controls in all industries as part of its five-year strategic plan. We'll soon see what changes come about in Oregon. One thing is certain: Someday, at a construction site with my bag of noise dosimeters, I will ask a worker, "How's your hearing?" and he will smile and reply, "WHAT?" ■

# Administrator's message



Peter De Luca

I got a phone call the other day. Actually I get quite a few phone calls, but this one got my attention. We had issued a willful citation to a roofer who, along with his crew, was on a roof 27 feet off the ground with no fall protection. This particular employer had been cited for fall protection violations no less than eight times in the past nine years. In a similar period, five of his em-

ployees were injured in falls from roofs.

The employer essentially said that he couldn't afford the fines and at the same time he didn't know how to ensure compliance with our fall protection rules. Of course, I pointed out to him that he was up there with his crew and that none of the crew, including the employer, were using fall protection. There are at least two lessons in this short story.

First, by being on a roof without fall protection, this employer sends a powerful message to his employees. The message is: "Safety be damned. I expect production. I don't care about fall protection and neither do you." This employer was quick to point out, as are most, that

he does not want to see his employees injured. I am willing to take him at his word. Yet the message he sends is, nonetheless, just the opposite.

This brings us to the second lesson. Help is available. In a citation situation, the compliance officer is authorized by OR-OSHA to work with the employer through the Compliance Assistance Program. The compliance officer can assist the employer in implementing procedures that will ensure compliance with OR-OSHA safety regulations. Moreover, carriers of workers' compensation insurance are required by law to provide loss-control services to their insureds. These services can also help employers comply with OR-OSHA regulations for the purpose of reducing exposure to injury. Finally, do not forget OR-OSHA Consultative Services – a program separate and apart from enforcement – that provides the services of trained consultants to employers. These services include assistance in complying with OR-OSHA regulations and help in reducing employee exposure to workplace hazards.

In conclusion, "do as I say, not as I do," is no way to run a business. Safety begins with management commitment. An employer who himself disregards safety rules sends a powerful message to employees. If employers do not know how to do the right thing, there's help available from a variety of sources. All that needs to be done is to make a simple request. When in doubt, get help, and please – BE CAREFUL OUT THERE! ■

## RESOURCE



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# STEP up to SHARP

## ABC and Oregon OSHA join forces for safety



*Oregon OSHA and the Pacific Northwest Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) have joined forces for safety. They signed a partnership agreement leading the way for contractors throughout the state to work collaboratively with OR-OSHA to continually improve safety and health programs for the entire construction industry.*

Member companies that achieve platinum status in ABC's STEP (Safety Training and Evaluation Process) program will automatically meet certain criteria for OR-OSHA's SHARP (Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program).

A goal of the partnership is to assist at least one ABC company each year to earn both the ABC STEP Platinum and OR-OSHA SHARP recognition. In addition, the ABC safety committee will receive training from OR-OSHA on its safety and health management programs, preparing the safety committee to accompany OR-OSHA on a SHARP review as part of the team. Additionally, ABC will partner with OR-OSHA in offering a series of classes on safety and health. ■

There are approximately 85,000 employers in Oregon. Fifty of them can say they are SHARP employers. SHARP is the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program of the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division Consultation and Services Section.

SHARP is a cooperative program between business and government that recognizes Oregon employers and employees committed to managing occupational safety and health. Oregon's SHARP employers:

### **Fourth-year recipients**

- Co-Gen
- CoreMark International, Inc.
- Prairie Wood Products
- R&H Construction
- Weyerhaeuser Company, Coos Bay Timberlands

### **Third-year recipients**

- Barrett Business Services, Bend
- Barrett Business Services, Eugene
- Barrett Business Services, Kelly
- Douglas Electric Cooperative
- Oregon Institute of Technology, Food Services
- Pioneer Cut Stock
- Timber Products, Medford Particleboard Division

### **Second-year recipients**

- Bay Area Enterprises
- Bear Creek Valley Sanitary Authority
- Blachly Lane Electrical Cooperative
- Future Forest Company, formerly Kerry Clark Company
- Graphic Arts Center, Inc.
- Lane Electric Cooperative, Inc.

- Lebanon Community Hospital
- Louisiana-Pacific, Hines Oregon Facility
- Marvin Wood Products
- Oregon Department of Transportation, Bend Equipment Shop
- Oregon Department of Transportation, Salem Repair Facility
- Orkot Incorporated
- Pendleton Woolen Mills
- Precision Interconnect
- Quest Diagnostics Incorporated
- Salem Electric
- MasterBrand Cabinets, formerly Schrock Cabinet Company
- Southern Oregon Goodwill Industries
- Timber Products, Spectrum Division
- Weyerhaeuser, Beaverton Recycling Center
- Weyerhaeuser, Cottage Grove Lumber Operations
- Weyerhaeuser, Eugene Distribution Center
- Yorke & Curtis, Inc., General Contractors

### **First-year recipients**

- AVI BioPharma
- Barrett Business Services, Inc., Roseburg Branch
- Emerick Construction Company
- Georgia-Pacific Corporation, Lumber Division, Coos Bay Operations
- Hermiston Generating Plant, PG&E Generating
- Oregon Department of Transportation, Heppner and Spray Maintenance Stations
- Oregon Department of Transportation, La Grande Equipment Repair Shop
- QPM Aerospace
- Selectemp
- Snake River Correctional Institution
- Sprague Controls
- Wacker Siltronic Corporation
- Western Pulp Products Company
- Weyerhaeuser Company, Containerboard Packaging
- Weyerhaeuser, Beaverton Customer Service Center
- White City Plywood Division, Timber Products Company

*All Oregon employers are eligible to participate in the SHARP program. **Questions?** Call Steve Beech or Cheryl Mushaney, (503) 378-3272, or toll-free in Oregon, (800) 922-2689. Information is also available on the Web, [www.orosha.org](http://www.orosha.org).*





## **Sharell McMurray, Conference Specialist, Public Education and Conferences Section**

*by Cheryl Mushaney, Administrative Assistant, Oregon OSHA*

**W**ith spring just around the corner, we think of youth, energy, freshness, tenacity, and the Oregon Governor's Occupational Safety & Health Conference. In Oregon OSHA, the person that fits this description is Sharell McMurray.

McMurray graduated from Oregon State University in 1993 with a degree in business administration and marketing and a minor in housing design. Not knowing exactly what career path she wanted to take, she completed real estate license classes and passed the exam. She also decided to accept a position in the Oregon OSHA Records Management Unit. She was quickly promoted to an office specialist 2 in the Technical Section where she worked for Marilyn Schuster revising and promulgating OR-OSHA rules. While working for Schuster, McMurray was asked to help at the biennial Governor's Occupational Safety and Health (GOSH) Conference and found her niche.

She applied for the first vacancy available in the Conference Section. McMurray sees her position as a reflection of her private life and much like attending college: a balance of time, organization, project management, collaboration, challenges, coping with frustrations, and most important, having fun!

The 2001 GOSH Conference is McMurray's fourth and the 30th of all the conferences she has worked on since she joined the staff of Oregon OSHA. (Oregon OSHA co-sponsors up to seven conferences each year.) Her duties are diverse. She is the liaison for conference speakers, writes the printed conference programs, is a member of the conference marketing committees, coordinates volunteers, and designs on-site signage. And while doing all this and more, she is having fun!

McMurray is a native Oregonian whose mother works for the Corvallis School District and whose father sells real estate. Her younger brother is a marketing representative for a beverage company. The family avidly golfs and plays softball, with the exception of McMurray's mother, who is fondly referred to as the athletic supporter.

A graduate of Crescent Valley High School, McMurray was active in the National Honor Society,

Spanish Club, and Future Business Leaders of America. While in high school, she worked weekends and summers as a receptionist for a local real estate office, played softball and volleyball, and volunteered at "Safety Town," a program that teaches preschoolers safety practices, e.g., crossing the street, using 911, etc.

You might call her an over-achiever. While attending OSU, she carried at least 18 credit hours a semester, worked 30 hours a week, and played club and intramural volleyball and softball.

In 1998 McMurray and her fiancé, Cameron Lien, traveled through Europe for three weeks. Starting in Germany, they traveled to France, Italy, Austria, and finally to Belgium. They traveled by train, with backpacks, and did not make advance room reservations.

They haven't traveled much since buying a farm in Aumsville and becoming caregivers to Lien's grandfather. They have a small herd of Hereford, black angus, and Scottish Highland cattle, a goose that mothers the chickens and pheasants, three Schipperkes (dogs used for gopher control), and an unknown number of barn cats. For city kids, this has been a real learning experience.

Both McMurray and Lien are active softball players – one a little better than the other, and McMurray is on a volleyball team in Corvallis. Their search for the perfect spot to exchange marriage vows, preferably a castle in Scotland, ranks high on their dream list. ■



*Sharell McMurray*

# Musculoskeletal injuries riddle health-care workforce

By Dian Cox, DCBS Communications Section

Statistics show that health-care industry workers experience more ergonomic-related injuries than most other industries. Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants suffer a risk of lost-workday injuries that ranks up there with construction laborers: about 3.5 times that of the average private-industry worker.

Between 1995 and 1999, losses incurred due to musculoskeletal disorders for all industries in Oregon are estimated at \$822 million. The average cost of ergonomic-related injuries is over \$8,000. The costs of musculoskeletal injuries in the health-care workforce are high for everyone involved: injured workers who suffer pain and lose work, patients who need reliable caregivers in a field where there is a shortage of such workers, employers who lose employees either temporarily or permanently, and insurers who pay at least some of the rising costs of MSDs.

When you think about nursing homes, rehabilitation facilities, home nursing services, it's not difficult to see how musculoskeletal injuries can happen: many health-care workers' daily tasks require moving people, and people can be heavy; uncooperative; resistant; combative; comatose; seated, supine, or prone; fragile; in pain; hooked to intravenous tubes, heart monitors, or other devices; nude or wearing hard-to-grip clothing, bandages, or casts; and sometimes impatient to be moved.

For a wide variety of reasons, those charged with moving patients may proceed without adequate assistance, adequate equipment, or adequate training. In addition, these health-care workers often face emergencies, long workshifts, and large numbers of patients.

Not surprisingly, back injuries are the most prevalent ergonomic injury among health-care workers who lift and transfer patients; although the health-care industry also experiences injuries from slips, trips, jumping from vehicles, contact stress, and repetitive motion.

The science of ergonomics, of course, aims to prevent MSDs (which include injuries to muscles, tendons, liga-

ments, joints, cartilage, nerves, blood vessels and intervertebral discs of the spine) by designing workstations, work practices, and work flow to accommodate the capabilities of workers.

MSDs now affect 1.8 million U.S. workers, keeping more than 600,000 people from work. There is compelling reason to employ ergonomics to prevent MSDs.

## What can you do to protect health-care workers from MSDs?

First of all, know the causes of MSDs. They include the following:

- forceful exertion
- awkward postures
- repetitive motions
- long durations
- contact stresses
- vibration
- other environmental factors such as poor lighting, slippery floors, and extreme temperatures

Then, assess your workplace and the tasks in the jobs therein. Involve your company's safety and health specialists, your safety committee (or your line workers, if you aren't required to have a safety committee) and/or an ergonomic consultant.

OR-OSHA has several ergonomic consultants who will come to your place of business and do an ergonomic analysis at no cost to you and help you find cost-effective solutions that work for your particular workplace. (To request a free ergonomic analysis, call Consultative Services, (503) 378-3272.)

Find out what causes, or is likely to cause, MSDs in your workplace. Are your employees sitting; standing; pushing; pulling; lifting; carrying; reaching; bending; turning; twisting; working in awkward positions; driving; jumping; running; squatting; or doing certain motions repeatedly?

See "Health-care," page 12

This timely guide helps health-care workers avoid back injuries. Its more than 40 pages are full of tips, photos, and work-evaluation tools. Contains practical suggestions for orderlies, attendants, nurses, nursing assistants, and others who lift and move patients.

To receive a free copy of this publication, call the Oregon OSHA Resource Center, (503) 947-7447 or (800) 922-2689 (V/TTY), or fax your request, (503) 947-7463. There may be charges for additional copies. Oregon OSHA publications are also available on the Web, [www.orosha.org](http://www.orosha.org), under "Publications."

## Publication Spotlight



**Oregon OSHA's mission:**  
"To advance and improve  
workplace safety and health  
for all workers in Oregon."

## Introduction

Because our *Stakeholders' Report* has been so well received, we are providing it to you in *Resource* on odd-numbered years and as a freestanding report on even-numbered years.

This report helps you see where OR-OSHA has been, where we are now, and where we are headed.

Together, through this report, we'll track our successes.



**Peter De Luca**  
OR-OSHA Administrator

## 2000 Report to

# Stakeholders

March 2001

## What is OR-OSHA?

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA) became an official part of national labor law effective April 28, 1971. Its purpose is to assure so far as possible every working man and woman in the nation safe and healthful working conditions and to preserve our human resources.

Oregon passed its own occupational safety and health legislation in 1973 — the Oregon Safe Employment Act (OSEA) — and now operates under a state plan agreement with federal OSHA.

Oregon OSHA's mission is "to advance and improve workplace safety and health for all workers in Oregon." Oregon OSHA strives to accomplish its mission by administering the OSEAct through:

- Its comprehensive **Enforcement Program**, ensuring that Oregon's occupational safety and health rules are carried out in the workplace
- Its **Consultative Services Program**, offering no-cost, onsite safety and health evaluations by trained safety and health professionals
- Its **Standards and Technical Section**, providing technical assistance to employers and workers, and amending and adopting Oregon's occupational safety and health rules
- Its **Public Education and Conference Section**, reaching employers and safety professionals through conferences, seminars, workshops, and rule forums.

Oregon OSHA endeavors to make every contact with the public a learning experience.

## Oregon OSHA's Strategic Plan

Oregon OSHA is dedicated to safety and health in the workplace and to helping employers and employees develop and implement comprehensive safety and health programs.

To better serve the employers and employees of the state of Oregon, OR-OSHA has developed a plan. The plan contains three goals OR-OSHA hopes to achieve over a five-year period. The following is a brief description of the goals and highlights of accomplishments made toward the achievement of those goals during federal fiscal year 2000 (FY 2000).

### GOAL 1

*Change the workplace culture in Oregon to increase employer and worker awareness of, commitment to, and involvement with safety and health.*

With this goal, Oregon OSHA is focused on helping Oregon businesses become self-sufficient in managing their safety and health programs.

#### Accomplishments

The **Web-based self-assessment tool**, developed in FY 1999, was unveiled on OR-OSHA's Web site in early 2000.

The tool helps employers and employees evaluate their safety and health programs while maintaining confidentiality.



During the first nine months, 4,406 "hits" were recorded on the site. OR-OSHA is planning an incentive program that will encourage employers to submit their assessment results to OR-OSHA and work with the Consultation Section to improve their safety and health programs.

Oregon's **Voluntary Protection Program (VPP)** was officially removed from pilot status in FY 2000 with federal OSHA's approval of a state-initiated plan change. VPP continues to be very successful in Oregon. Two sites were awarded VPP status this year. Of

special note is the Bechtel Infrastructures, Portland, VPP award, which involves 15 craft unions. OR-OSHA anticipates this VPP award will have a ripple effect as the unions take Bechtel's culture of self-sufficiency in occupational safety and health to other job sites. Oregon VPP companies continue to serve as mentors to other companies striving to improve their safety and health programs.

Oregon's **Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP)** continued to gain momentum in FY 2000. As of the end of the fiscal year, (September 30, 2000) Oregon had certified 50 employers that met SHARP criteria. These companies organized to form the SHARP Alliance, whose members' goals are to share information about the benefits of SHARP, serve as mentors for employers in need of guidance or information about workplace safety and health, and be a resource to OR-OSHA.

Oregon OSHA's Public Education and Conference Section launched a highly successful **small-business training program** in FY 2000. The program is designed to help small-business owners implement safety and health programs. The program is offered during two one-hour lunch sessions to accommodate small-

business owners. The first session gives employers the tools to implement a written occupational safety and health program. The second session, offered two weeks later, is a question-and-answer session regarding implementation of the written program. Instruction also is provided on implementing the program's 10 safety and health training modules in 10- to 15-minute sessions at their workplaces. During FY 2000, 156 small businesses were reached through this program in six Oregon communities. Oregon OSHA will develop a state-wide roll-out of the small-business training program for FY 2001.

As part of **OR-OSHA's efforts to raise public awareness** of occupational safety and health, the agency unveiled the OR-OSHA "Road Map" and revised "Tool Kit" during FY 2000. The Road Map, designed to resemble an actual road map, provides a quick tour of OR-OSHA rules, employer and employee responsibilities, terms to know, services provided by OR-OSHA, and information about who to call for help. The "Tool Kit" provides a step-by-step approach for employers to help them meet their occupational safety and health responsibilities. For more information, see the Oregon OSHA Web site, [www.orosha.org](http://www.orosha.org).



## GOAL 2

*Improve workplace safety and health for all workers, as evidenced by fewer hazards, reduced exposures, and fewer injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.*

OR-OSHA is targeting resources on high-hazard industries. Targeted industries identified through claims-data analysis include agriculture, construction, lumber and wood products, food and kindred products, and health care.

### Accomplishments

Based on claims-data analysis, a significant change was made in targeted safety hazards during FY 2000. Because analysis indicated **falls**

**to be the most prevalent safety hazard** in Oregon, OR-OSHA changed its targeted safety hazards mid-year to "falls to a lower level," "falls to the same level," and "jumps to a lower level." Activities to promote fall-hazard safety included a local emphasis program for falls in construction, internal training on fall hazards, and a fall-safety handout for employers. Analysis identified the four leading causes of fatalities in Oregon: "falls," "caught in between," "struck by," and "electrocution."

Oregon OSHA continued to focus on the **health hazards of silica, lead in construction, and noise** during FY 2000. The focus resulted in a significant increase in inspections and citations related to those three hazards. Public awareness campaigns were put in place to alert employers and employees of health risks associated with overexposure to any of these hazards.

Oregon's **Joint Emphasis Program (JEP)** continued strong in FY 2000, providing training on the new respirator standard. JEP is a cooperative training effort among industry, labor, and government to resolve complex construction regulation issues and difficult-to-abate safety and health hazards in the construction industry. JEP designed curriculum and provided training to construction safety personnel, foremen, supervisors, and OR-OSHA staff. JEP's outreach component communicates safety problems and solutions within the construction industry.



OR-OSHA increased **ergonomics** outreach to all industries during FY 2000, with special emphasis on the health-care industry. OR-OSHA's ergonomic consultations in that industry, in which musculoskeletal injuries are prevalent, increased by 50 percent. Training courses on ergonomics proved to be popular, with 146 ergonomic training sessions presented. The Internet-based course, "Ergonomics Awareness," was one of OR-OSHA's most popular Internet courses offered.



The Ergonomics Advisory Committee was formed from a group of stakeholders during FY 2000. This stakeholder committee was formed to help define employers' needs for ergonomics information.

The committee coordinated a successful one-day seminar, "Understanding Ergonomics Now and in the Future."

### GOAL 3

*Continuously strengthen public confidence through excellence in the development and delivery of OR-OSHA programs.*

OR-OSHA has been working to change its public perception from that of an enforcer to be avoided to a potential business partner that can provide valuable resources and direction. Previously listed accomplishments show that we have come a long way. Public confidence continues to grow as higher quality programs and services are offered by professional staff committed to worker safety and health.

#### Accomplishments

**Stakeholder involvement** in rule-making, conferences, and policy committees remained strong in FY 2000, with nine formal groups involved in these activities. The Forest Activities Committee met monthly during the year to draft rule changes in cooperation with manufacturing groups and international standards organizations. The Farm Labor Housing Advisory Committee developed a farm labor-housing standard that became effective June 1, 2000 (some portions effective October 1, 2000). Stakeholder groups also met on the multi-employer worksite policy, personal floatation devices, ergonomics, leased/temporary worker issues, and the first-aid standard revision.

Several initiatives were implemented this year to **enhance OR-OSHA's professionalism**. Staff performance appraisals now include evaluation of an employee's performance as it relates to the strategic plan. Core competencies were

identified for all sections and work groups. Managers met with staff to determine individual core competencies, which provided the basis for determining individual goals and development plans.

**Customer surveys** from Consultation, Public Education and Conferences, Compliance, the Audio-Visual Library, and Appeals continued to reflect an average satisfaction rating of 90 percent for FY 2000. OR-OSHA is committed to providing quality customer service and is interested in the feedback of its customers.

## Highlights & Statistics: FY 2000

In addition to its strategic plan activities, OR-OSHA offers a wide variety of safety and health services to employers and employees to help ensure safe workplaces for workers in Oregon.

The Enforcement Section, made up of 58 safety compliance officers and 28 health compliance officers, conducted 5,362 inspections.

The Consultative Services Section conducted 2,240 consultations in the areas of safety, industrial hygiene, ergonomics, safety and health program management, and new business assistance. Sixty-two percent of the consultations conducted were comprehensive, which means a safety and health program evaluation was included. This section has 24 safety consultants, 13 health consultants, and five ergonomic consultants.

The nine trainers of the Public Education and Conferences Section participated in 1,300 activities,

including: workshops around the state, on-site customized training for individual employers, interactive Internet courses, and other special projects.

The conference staff conducted six statewide and regional conferences, coordinating with co-sponsors and organizing a multitude of volunteers.

The Oregon OSHA Resource Center and Audiovisual Library lent 7,924 video training programs to Oregon employers and employees at no cost. The library contains up-to-date books, topical files, technical periodicals, and more than 200 databases.

OR-OSHA's Standards and Technical Resource Section provided interpretations of rules through telephone inquiries and speaking engagements. This section continues to work with numerous stakeholder groups to review, revise, and create safety and health rules; publish materials to help in the implementation of safety and health standards and programs; and administer the Worksite Redesign Grant Program. Project grants totaling \$472,032, and product grants totaling \$291,200 were awarded in FY 2000.

Lost-workday-cases incidence rates (LWDCIR) for 1999 continued to follow a downward trend since 1988. The LWDCIR includes injury and illness cases that resulted in one or more days away from work. The 1999 private-sector LWDCIR of 3.4 is a record low in Oregon. It represents an overall reduction from 1988 of 39.3 percent. The public-sector rate is 2.8, a 24.3-percent reduction from 1988.

Workers' compensation premium rates declined by 3.7 percent for calendar year 2001. This marks 11 consecutive years of rate reductions in Oregon, totaling a 57.3 percent cut in workers' compensation insur-



ance costs since 1990. Oregon's national ranking in workers' compensation costs moved from sixth-most-expensive in 1986 to about 34th in 2000.

Workplace injury and illness rates in Oregon have declined by nearly 36 percent in the private sector and 33 percent in the public sector since 1988. That includes all work-related injuries and illnesses recordable under OSHA standards, regardless of whether they later resulted in accepted claims for workers' compensation benefits. During the same period (1988-1999), the total number of injuries and illnesses subject to

workers' compensation coverage rose 37.6 percent.

House Bill 2830, passed during the 1999 Oregon Legislative session, directed Oregon OSHA to identify "high hazard" employers and advise them that they have a higher potential for inspection.

These employers were identified by two factors: 1) employers with an injury and illness rate greater than Oregon's average rate, and 2) high-hazard-industry employers with an injury and illness rate above the average within their Standard Industrial Classification. The law

doesn't mandate that these companies be inspected, only that they be informed that they have a greater chance of being inspected. In May, OR-OSHA sent notification to these employers. The notification letter also suggested that employers contact OR-OSHA for a consultation. It should be noted that employers who take advantage of OR-OSHA's consultation services are treated no differently from a compliance perspective than those who don't receive a consultation.

## Summary

We believe Oregon OSHA's efforts, in conjunction with the efforts of all our labor, management, and government partners, have resulted in safer workplaces.

Oregon OSHA's continued efforts to review, revise, write, and administer safety and health rules that protect Oregon's workers, and support Oregon's economy, demonstrate the necessity and desirability of having a wide array of people involved in the process. Involving stakeholders — all those people affected by the way we do business — is good government. ■



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(All phones are voice and TTY)

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# Students learn how to recognize hazards in mills

By Craig Hamelund, Training Specialist, Oregon OSHA

This year's student program at the 10th Annual Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers Safety and Health Conference drew 88 high school students and nine teachers from across the state. The program targeted third- and fourth-year students enrolled in professional technical programs with the goal of teaching the students how to identify safety and health hazards in pulp and paper mills.

Two mills participated in this year's event – Boise Cascade, St. Helens, Oregon, and Weyerhaeuser, Longview, Washington. Both mills donated time, energy, and great lunches to ensure the experience would be worthwhile!

Thanks to the efforts of Bob Ritson and Ed Uecker of the Oregon Department of Education, the students and instructors received study materials prior to the conference. These materials included a hazard-specific brochure and information about job safety analyses and chemical, ladder, and electrical safety and fundamentals. All of these materials will be integrated into their respective curriculums.

The students and teachers arrived early in the day and were divided into teams. Due to its size, the Weyerhaeuser mill hosted slightly more than half of the group. Each mill presented an orientation video and gave pre-trip instructions. Then, the teams were off!

Upon arriving at the mills, students and teachers were provided with appropriate personal protective equipment. Tour routes were designed to provide students with a



*Students gather for a mill tour.*

comprehensive look at the entire operation – from the chips to the paper or from the paper to the chips (some teams began at the end or middle for efficiency)! Each team had a mill guide who described departments, explained job functions, ensured that teams stayed together, and answered questions. The group touring Boise Cascade had a bonus experience when the fire alarm sounded during the walkaround!

The program wrapped up back at the conference center, where each team's spokesperson presented hazard findings to the entire group.

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***When surveyed, the students and teachers verified that their exposure to this industry provided an invaluable experience.***

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*Ed Uecker prepares the Weyerhaeuser student group for its tour.*

It's my conclusion that the student program benefits everyone involved. It allows Oregon OSHA, the Department of Education, and participating employers to provide learning opportunities to future Oregon workers. The program starts students thinking about safe work practices that they can use at home right now and when they enter the workforce. Finally, the students and teachers had an experience that was exciting, educational, and worth telling others about. ■



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**“Bechtel,”** from page 1

An on-site review team conducted an extensive review of the entire project prior to making its recommendation for STAR recognition to the administrator. OR-OSHA team leader, George Vorhauer commented, “It was outstanding to see the level of cooperation among all of the different trades and the site management team.”

Bechtel credited SAIF Corporation, the insurance carrier for the project, for helping it achieve STAR status and providing valuable proactive safety and health services to the project.

“This project is an exceptional example of collaboration, a belief in the ideal of zero workplace injuries, and an example of what can be done to protect workers in construction and all industry,” commented Dave Thurber, vice president, policyholder services, SAIF Corporation.

Project team members include Siemens, Stacy & Witbeck, Mass Electric, Dirt & Aggregate, Goodfellow Brothers, Tice Electric, C&J Rebar, Ming Consultants, Town and Country Fence, and Blessing Electric. In addition, union leaders and members of the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council have provided outstanding cooperation and support. Bechtel safety manager Gerry Palm said, “The safety effort put forward by our subcontractors and trades employees and the commitment of their management are an impressive part of our overall program.” ■

*For more information about OR-OSHA's VPP contact Phyllis Straight-Millan, (503) 378-3272 (V/TTY) or toll-free in Oregon, (800) 922-2689.*

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**“Committee,”** from page 1

Safety committee costs are directly offset by the effectiveness of the committee in reducing workplace injuries and illnesses. The average direct cost of a single accepted disabling workers' compensation claim in 1996 was \$9,790. This amount does not include hidden costs of accidents: production delays, time lost by workers and supervisors attending to the victim, clean-up and start-up of interrupted operations, costs related to conducting an accident investigation, time spent retraining to replace the injured worker, and possible reduced worker morale and efficiency. Hidden costs run 5-10 times the actual cost of a workers' compensation claim. This could mean \$48,000-\$98,000 per claim!

**Are you required to have a safety committee?**

All employers with 11 or more employees must have a safety committee. Certain agricultural employers with fewer than 10 employees are exempt. Refer to OAR 437-004-0240 and 0250 for details. Employers with 10 or fewer employees must have a safety committee if they have a lost workday case incidence rate in the top 10 percent of the rate for their industry or their workers' compensation premium rate is in the top 25 percent.

Each November, the Information Management Division of the Department of Consumer and Business Services prepares a report to let small employers (10 or fewer employees) know who is required to have a safety committee. This information is available on the Web, [www.orosha.org](http://www.orosha.org), under “Information.” To use the tables, you'll need to know your SIC (standard industrial classification) and NCCI (National Council on Compensation Insurance) codes. These numbers are available in your workers' compensation documents or from your workers' compensation insurance carrier.

**How does a safety committee work?**

Okay, now that you've determined that you must have a safety committee, what are the basic requirements?

**Regular meetings** – at least once a month for most businesses; a **written agenda and minutes**; a **written system for receiving and responding to safety suggestions**; and **quarterly inspections**.

The purpose of a safety committee is to bring workers and management together in a non-adversarial, cooperative effort to promote safety and health in each workplace. A safety committee helps the employer by making recommendations on how to address safety and health issues in the workplace. Committees are usually made up of an equal number of employer and employee representatives. Employers with more than 20 employees need at least four members and employers with 20 or fewer employees need at least two committee members.

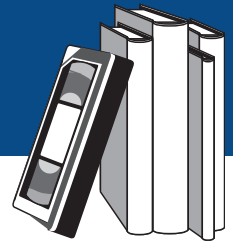
Guidelines to help you develop a safety committee are available on the Web or from the Oregon OSHA Resource Center, (503) 947-7447. Ask for publication 440-2341, “*Workplace Safety Committees – A basic guide to developing and implementing an occupational safety and health committee.*”

**The results.**

It's been 11 years since the first reforms took place, and safety committees have become a part of Oregon's workplace culture. Employment is at a record high, and on-the-job injuries and illnesses are at a record low. Oregon workers' compensation costs are now ranked 34th of all 50 states. Cumulative savings to employers, resulting from rate cuts since 1990, amount to approximately \$5.6 billion. Although we can't say precisely what part safety committees played in this remarkable turnaround, they *did* play a part. ■

# The OR-OSHA Resource Center and Audiovisual Library

A RESOURCE FOR PROMOTING  
HEALTH & SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE



## And the winner is . . .

by Don Harris, AV Librarian, Oregon OSHA

I can't think of a nice way to say it . . . so I'll just say it: Safety training videos aren't much fun.

When was the last time you stood in line at the local theater waiting eagerly to see something like "Practical Rigging Geometry?" Or rushed out to buy the soundtrack to "Ergonomics: Your Friend & Mine?" Or read a glowing critical review of "The Mysterious MSDS: 17 Secrets Revealed?" Or had a child beg you for her "very own" lockout/tagout lunchbox? As a form of popular entertainment, safety training will probably never catch on. I've never seen a training tape nominated for an Academy Award.

The fact is, "having fun" is good as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. Think for a moment of those persons, places, and things that genuinely sustain, protect and promote your life – your home, your workplace, your relationships. Fun may be a real aspect of each of these – and I hope it is – but I'm sure you would agree that it's not the most important aspect. Cotton candy is "fun food," but few of us would consider a steady diet of it. When we're intent on maintaining our bodies in good working order, we're more likely to choose a peanut butter sandwich. In the same way, we rely on the more serious aspects of our lives to give meaning and perspective to our play time.

Staying safe and healthy at work is one of those serious aspects of life. By extension, this is true of the safety training video. If a particular safety video is entertaining, so much the better. But accurate, effective instruction in the principles of occupational safety and health is the primary objective of our programs, and it's this accuracy and effectiveness that we look for when considering new additions to our video library.

Having said this, let's have some fun. A few moments ago, I noted that there are no academy awards for safety training videos. I'd like to remedy this by offering my own version of the Academy Awards – a brief review of some of the safety videos which you, our borrowers, have judged to be outstanding.

The Safety Attitude Award goes to two programs: "Dancing Alone" and "I Felt Comfortable." Both videos present gripping real-life stories involving people affected by workplace accidents. Of the two, "Dancing Alone" is more poignant and "I Felt Comfortable" is more graphic. Either program is invaluable as a "wake-up call" particularly for the occasional complacent or "hardened" audience.

The Outstanding Local Production Award also goes to two programs: "Workers Exposed" and "Targeting Violence in the Workplace." Both were produced by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) with monies from Oregon OSHA's Training and Education Grant Program. "Workers Exposed" presents a brief but compelling overview of bloodborne pathogens, especially appropriate for service workers and other non-medical personnel. Through a number of well-acted scenarios, "Targeting Violence in the Workplace" demonstrates ways to recognize and defuse potentially violent incidents. Like all OR-OSHA grant program videos, these two programs may be duplicated — and often are!

My choices for awards in specific topics: Most Popular Safe Driving Program, "The Ultimate Driving Challenge" (now available in Spanish!); Most Popular HAZCOM Program, "Hazard Communication"; Most Popular Forklift Program, "Unstable Machine: The Nature of the Forklift." There are many other forklift safety videos nearly as popular.

Due to space limitations, we've barely scratched the surface. An extended Borrower's Choice Awards list is available to you from the AV Library.

Although excellent, none of the programs listed above could be described as fun. They aren't meant to be. Safety training is one of the more serious aspects of life, one that busy people working in lovely spring weather may be tempted to ignore.

Here at Oregon OSHA, we want you to be able to enjoy the good things that each season has to offer, so don't ignore that safety training. Have fun this spring. Work hard, but stay safe. And don't forget, we're here to help. All you need to do is ask. ■

– New –

All of OR-OSHA's standards for general industry, construction, agriculture, and forest activities are now available free of charge in CD-ROM format. The CD also contains program directives, letters of interpretation, and most OR-OSHA publications.

Call (503) 378-3272 or (800) 922-2689.



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# Zephyr Industries, Inc. honored for training partnership

by Jerry Cotter, Training Coordinator, Oregon OSHA

When brothers and co-owners Clay and Brent Dennis of Zephyr Industries opened the doors to the Oregon-OSHA Training Section four years ago, little did they know that they were forming a partnership that would continue to this day.

In 1996, the brothers opened their metal fabrication shop to groups of new OR-OSHA compliance officers, allowing them to see a variety of machine-guarding techniques. The shop features machinery from many different eras, and allows newly-hired compliance officers to see firsthand the many different ways machinery can be guarded.

To date, more than 50 new OR-OSHA compliance officers have toured Zephyr and seen everything from traditional machine guarding techniques to state-of-the-art light curtains and interlock mechanisms.



David Sparks, Clay Dennis, Brent Dennis, and Jerry Cotter

OR-OSHA deputy administrator David Sparks and training coordinator Jerry Cotter recently went to Zephyr's new location in southeast Salem to present the Dennis brothers with a plaque in recognition of this continuing partnership. ■

## Tax credit helps meet farm labor housing needs

Farmers, developers, and nonprofit organizations who want to build housing for farm laborers in Oregon may qualify for the Farmworker Housing Tax Credit Program. \$3.3 million in projects can be funded in 2001 on a "first come, first served" basis.

The Farm Worker Housing Tax Credit Program was established by the Oregon Legislature to provide tax breaks to those constructing, rehabilitating, or installing housing for agricultural workers. Repairs of normal wear and tear on existing structures are not eligible for tax credits, but new construction and rehabilitation costs to restore housing to a habitable state are eligible.

Tax credit awards are based on estimated eligible costs indicated on the tax-credit application forms. "Eligible costs" include finance, construction, excavation, and installation and permit costs. Land costs are excluded. The taxpayer is allowed to take a credit equal to 30 percent of the eligible costs paid, but not exceeding the estimate

approved by DCBS. The tax credit must be taken in five equal installments over a period of five consecutive tax years.

Applications will be evaluated by Oregon OSHA and Oregon Housing and Community Services Department. Awards will be made to projects that are ready to proceed to construction in the current year to ensure that the limited tax credits are used to provide housing for the current season whenever possible.

Once the \$3.3 million "cap" has been reached, applications may be retained on a standby basis. If funds become available, standby applications will be processed in chronological order. ■

**Additional information and application forms are available on the Web, [www.orosha.org](http://www.orosha.org) or from the Oregon OSHA Resource Center, (503) 947-7463 or toll-free in Oregon, (800) 922-2689.**



# Law changes regarding hazardous substance reporting

On December 31, 2000, a change in the Oregon Community Right to Know Protection Act went into effect requiring Oregon businesses and governmental facilities that possess reportable quantities of hazardous substances to notify the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM). Previously these facilities did not have to notify the OSFM that they had reportable quantities of hazardous substances unless the OSFM notified them that they were required to report.

A hazardous substance as it applies to this reporting requirement is any substance for which the manufacturer is required to develop a material safety data sheet (MSDS). If at any time a facility has a hazardous substance present in one of the quantities listed below, it is to notify the OSFM.

- **Any substance for which an MSDS is required:**
  - Liquids: 50 gallons or more
  - Solids: 500 pounds or more
  - Liquified or compressed gases: 200 cubic feet or more
- **Poisons or explosives:**
  - Liquids: 5 gallons or more
  - Solids: 10 pounds or more
  - Liquified or compressed gases: 20 cubic feet or more
- **Any quantity of a non-sealed source of radioactive material**

This change occurred due to the passage of House Bill 2431 during the 1999 Legislative Session. The intent of the bill is to improve public access to information regarding hazardous substances that are used, stored, manufactured, and disposed of throughout the state.

“The reason for the legislation remains clear, to provide emergency planners, emergency responders and the public with information about hazardous substances that are present within our communities,” said acting State Fire Marshal Glen Andreassen. “The Office of State Fire Marshal will continue to seek out facilities that are required to report the possession of reportable quantities of hazardous substances, but we want to make all facilities within the state aware of the change in the law,” he added. “Facilities already reporting under the hazardous substance information system are not affected by the change.” ■

**Questions? Call the Office of State Fire Marshal  
Hazardous Substance Information Hotline,  
(503) 378-6835.**

## RESOURCE

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**Return to: Oregon OSHA Resource Center, 350 Winter St. NE, Salem, OR 97301-3882**

*“Health-care,” from page 6*

Then work with your safety committee and/or a consultant to find alternatives to the work practice, workstation, or work flow issues that are causing or could cause MSDs.

An ergonomic consultant from OR-OSHA or from the private sector can help you with the following and more:

- Workstation design
- Training and education
- Setting ergonomic-need priorities

Remember, ergonomic solutions don't have to be expensive. There are usually some simple commonsense changes that can save your company money and ensure a safer work environment. And, if you do invest in ergonomics, it's an investment that probably makes good business sense, considering the high cost of MSDs in the health-care industry. ■

440-2850 (3/01)

**Questions?** *OR-OSHA has field offices across Oregon. If you have questions or need information, call us toll-free (800) 922-2689, or phone one of the offices listed below. (All phone numbers are V/TTY.)*

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