

Taking it to the people:

A history of workplace safety in Oregon | page 4



Oregon Logging Memories, by Jennifer Lake — See the inside front cover.

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Meet the artist behind the cover art 'Oregon Logging Memories'

Jennifer Lake, a Sisters, Ore., artist and gallery owner, created the detailed logging site that is featured on the cover of this month's Resource. She painted the image, which depicts a working log camp in Central Oregon, in 1992 as part of her "Celebrating Oregon" series. The original piece, owned by a private collector, measures 30 inches by 40 inches. Since it was created, some 14,000 prints have been sold.



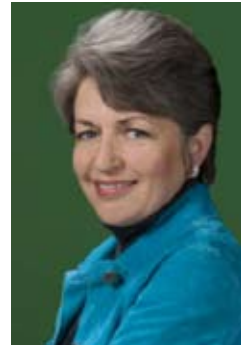
The Oregon Trail is one of the many paintings by Jennifer Lake that tells a colorful story of the people who pioneered Oregon's statehood.

"It was painted during a time when a lot of the mills were closing," Lake said. "It created memories of a bygone era for people in that heritage business."

An original work (acrylic on linen canvas) can take Lake eight to 12 weeks to complete. Many of her pieces have been used to raise money for Northwest charities.

Lake's "Celebrating Oregon" series has grown to more than 100 images, including depictions of Cannon Beach, Mt. Bachelor, and Pendleton.

For more information about artist and the "Oregon Logging Memories" painting, visit Lake's Web site at www.jenniferlakegallery.com.



Jennifer Lake

RESOURCE

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Administrator's message: Standing on the Shoulders of Giants,

Known and Unknown

**If I have seen further, it is by standing
on the shoulders of giants.**

– Sir Isaac Newton,
writing to a fellow scientist in 1676

Whether the creator of what became the science of physics was taking an ironic poke at a colleague whose physical stature was considerably shorter than normal, his observation rings true. Newton, for all his creative and mathematical genius, knew the debt he owed to many predecessors, both those who were famous and those who are largely unknown.

Even the observation itself was not original – in the centuries before Newton, various thinkers had noted that those who stand on the shoulders of giants will be able to see further than the giants themselves. And the profound truth behind his statement applies not only to physics, but to almost every walk of life. It certainly applies to the pursuit of workplace health and safety.

As we stand in the opening decade of the 21st century and look toward the future, we are indeed standing on the shoulders of giants, some unknown and others known to history.

In the early 18th century, an Italian physician named Bernardino Ramazzini literally “wrote the book” on occupational diseases. His *Diseases of Workers* paved the way for today’s occupational health professionals – and for the systematic recognition of job-related risks to the health of workers.

In the 20th century, Alice Hamilton pioneered the study of occupational health and examined health and safety practices in the workplace. And safety pioneer H.W. Heinrich, for all the questions that may be raised about his methodology and conclusions, certainly blazed an early trail in the scientific and systemic analysis of workplace safety and injury prevention.

Elsewhere in this issue of *Resource*, you can find the names of some of the pioneers in Oregon’s own workplace health and safety activities. We owe them a debt – in looking toward the future, they made the successes of our past few decades possible.

Those are just a few of the names that we know. But we also stand on the shoulders of faceless giants, whose names have largely

been lost to history. Because those giants believed in the future, I want to dedicate to them this commemorative issue of *Resource*, done as part of Oregon’s Sesquicentennial.

Those of us who labor in the pursuit of workplace health and safety can sometimes be described – not without justification – as more than a bit negative. We have a tendency to point out, and to dwell on, what can go wrong. To some, we are the ultimate pessimists. But that fails to recognize the real perspective we bring to our work. We stand in a grand tradition.

We stand with those who believed decades ago that logging does not need to be more hazardous than combat.

We stand with those who believed a century ago that workers do not need to be routinely maimed and even killed as a byproduct of the industrial revolution.

We stand with those who declared years ago that the cost of building a dam, or a skyscraper, or a housing development does not need to be measured in human lives.

In short, we stand with those who believed that things could be better – that “accidents” do not need to be accepted as inevitable and unpreventable tragedies, that they do not simply “happen.”

We stand with those who looked around themselves, and then looked toward their own future and declared, “We can do better!”

As we look toward the future, we not only stand with them. We stand on their shoulders. And we can see even further than they could when they took their own stand for the safety and health of the working men and women of Oregon and of the country.

We do not know all their names, but we have learned the lessons they taught us. And we owe them an incalculable debt, a debt that we can best pay by declaring today and for the future – “We can do better!”

By Michael Wood



Michael Wood, Administrator

Taking it to the people: A history of workplace safety in Oregon



Workmen at Umatilla Ordnance Depot in front of igloo under construction, Hermiston, Ore.; Russell Lee, photographer, 1903

By Ellis Brasch

First steps: 'Factory laws cannot be too rigidly enforced'

Oregon's safety story began in 1903 when the state's Legislative Assembly created the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspector of Factories and Workshops. The legislature was following the lead of states in the industrial North that set up such bureaus in response to labor lobbying and reports of miserable working conditions in the nations' factories. Oregon's bureau was responsible for inspecting factories, enforcing child labor laws, overseeing women's working hours, and reporting its activities.

Investigations by state labor bureaus throughout the country aroused the public's interest and spurred labor's campaign for legislation to protect workers. Massachusetts led the way with the Massachusetts Factory Act of 1877 and, within 10 years, 14 other states had



Povey Bros. stained glass lampshade factory, Portland, Ore. 1907-1908

similar factory acts on their books. Oregon's Legislative Assembly would follow their example when it passed the state's first workplace safety legislation: the Factory Inspection Law of 1907, which gave the bureau's commissioner authority to enforce safety standards and regulate the safety of machinery.

Instrumental in the Oregon bureau's early factory inspection work were its first two commissioners, O.P. Hoff [1903-1919] and Charles H. Gram [1919-1943]. According to Hoff, employers who refused to accept responsibility for job safety too often placed workers at risk. After touring 13 states and

observing working conditions in 112 manufacturing plants, he concluded, "factory laws cannot be too rigidly enforced." Gram insisted that the state had an ongoing responsibility to defend the safety and security of working Oregonians: "It is our experience that all the regulations possible

After touring 13 states and observing working conditions in 112 manufacturing plants, Hoff concluded, “factory laws cannot be too rigidly enforced.”

will not make one go straight without continual watching, if he is not so inclined.” Under Hoff and Gram’s leadership the bureau’s factory inspections rose from 678 in 1905 to 2,572 in 1915 and to 5,944 by 1926.

Oregon’s labor leaders pushed for more safety legislation in 1910, when they circulated a petition to put an Employers’ Liability Act on the November ballot. In a show of solidarity, the state’s 14,878 union members persuaded 56,258 voters to pass the measure and the Employer’s Liability Act became law in 1911. The act required employers in hazardous industries to provide a safe place of employment and took away their three common-law defenses against liability for work-related injuries: assumption of risk, contributory negligence, and the negligence of a fellow worker.

‘Workmen’s’ compensation and the Industrial Accident Commission

In 1913, the Legislative Assembly crafted the state’s first Workmen’s Compensation Act. The act expressed the need for accident prevention and recognized that it was better for employers to prevent workplace injuries than to pay for them. The act encouraged employers to prevent injuries by offering them an incentive: a reduction in the premium rate. However, not everyone shared the legislature’s support and the legislation was




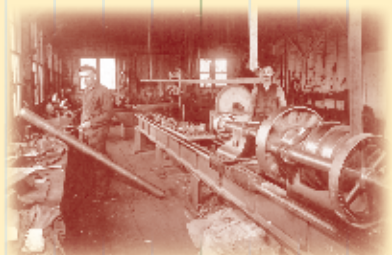





Oregon Lumber Mill, 1930s

Gram insisted that the state had an ongoing responsibility to defend the safety and security of working Oregonians.

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Workplace safety in Oregon from 1900-2009

The Progressive Era (1890-1913)		World War I (1914-1918)		1929: Stock Market Crash	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early 1900s: U.S. Steel and DuPont develop corporate safety programs  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1903: Wright Brothers' first flight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1906: San Francisco earthquake • Early 1900s: Corporations initiate worker/management safety committees for inspections and accident investigation  <p>Mission Mill, Marion County Ore. Courtesy of Salem Public Library</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1911: American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) formed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1917: United States enters World War I  <p>Machine Shop, Yamhill County Ore. Courtesy of the Yamhill County Historical Society</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1925: Steel-toe shoes available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1927: Charles Lindbergh makes the first solo nonstop trans-atlantic flight  <p>St. Johns Bridge, Willamette River, Portland Ore., construction workers, photograph: 1931, Ingham.</p>
1900	1905	1910	1915	1920	1925

continued 

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referred to the voters, who endorsed it in the Nov. 3, 1913, election.

On July 1, 1914 – the day the Workmen’s Compensation Act became effective – William E. Smith, an electrician employed by Oregon Power Company, became the first claimant. He lost one-and-a-half days for which he received compensation of \$2.70. The doctor’s bill was \$5. Total claim cost: \$7.70.

Under the act, participating employers paid into an Industrial Accident Fund, which was managed by a three-member Industrial Accident Commission appointed by the governor. The commission had the authority to “make, enforce and administer rules and regulations necessary to ensure safety in the workplace.” The act provided that “one commissioner each shall



Women preparing produce at Northwest Canning Company, 1925

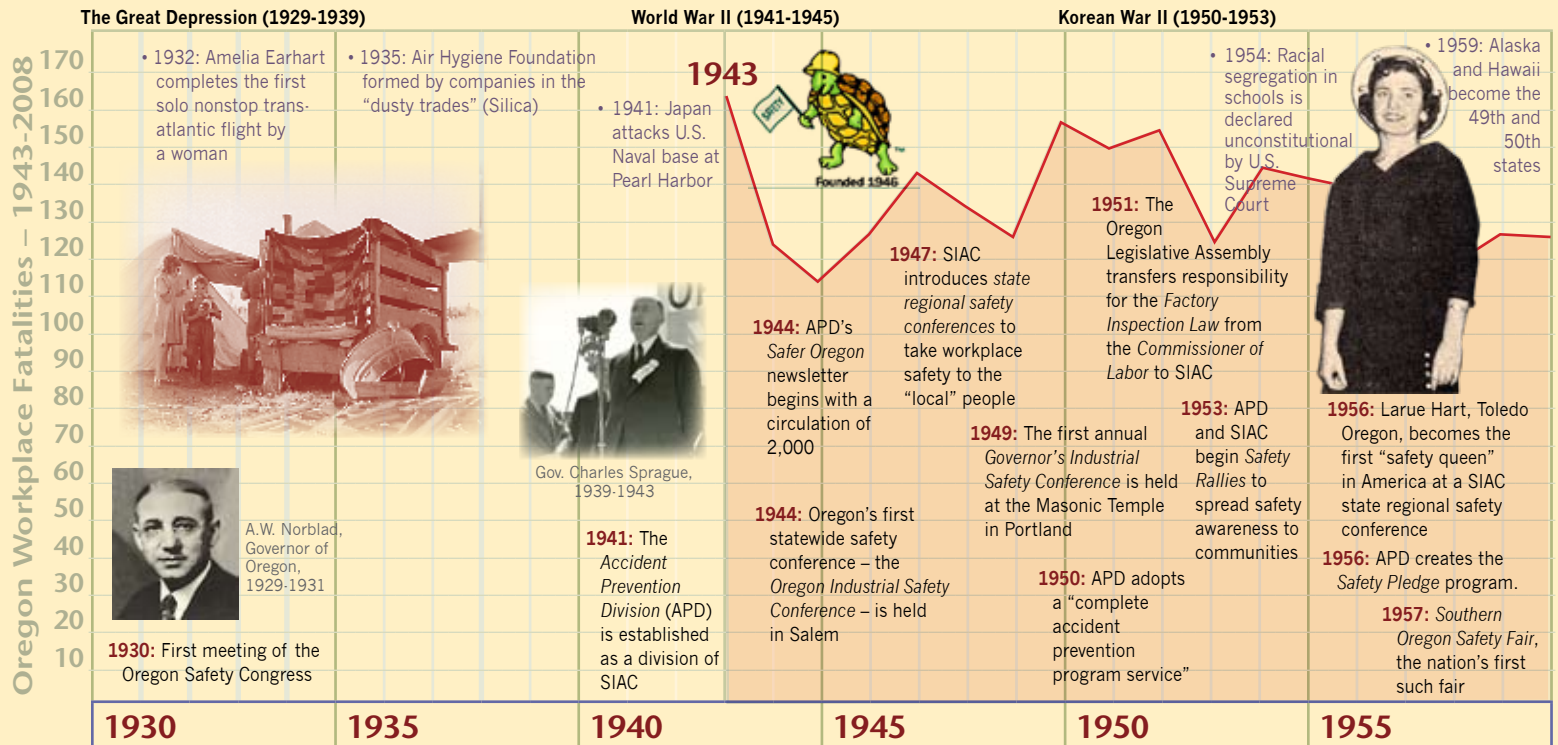
represent the public, the employer, and labor.”

The Industrial Accident Commission – popularly known as SIAC or the State Industrial Accident Commission – would assume responsibility for educating workers, employers, and

the public about accident prevention while the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspector of Factories and Workshops would focus on factory inspections.

By 1939, the Legislative Assembly had given SIAC jurisdiction for most of the state’s workplace safety laws (the Factory Inspection Law wouldn’t fall under SIAC’s jurisdiction until 1952) and authorized the agency to spend 2.5 percent of its income on accident prevention. SIAC now had the authority to promulgate safety codes, which, when filed with the Secretary of State, had the force of law. That set the stage

Workplace safety in Oregon from 1900-2009



APD had three sections – Engineering, Education, and Enforcement – and its director reported to SIAC’s three commissioners.

According to SIAC chair William A. Callahan, 1943 was a pivotal year in APD’s safety effort. Of the three E’s – education, engineering, and enforcement – education would shape much of the division’s activities well into the 1960s.

for the longest running workplace safety agency in the state’s history: the *Accident Prevention Division*.

Full-service safety and the rise of APD

“We must double and triple our efforts to educate the public in safety as industry has been educated. There is no way we can legislate common sense or prudence.”

– Gov. Robert D. Holmes (Opening address at the Governor’s Seventh Annual Industrial Safety Conference, 1953)



Robert D. Holmes, Governor of Oregon, 1957-1959

Prevention Division to direct it.” APD had three sections – Engineering, Education, and Enforcement – and its director reported to SIAC’s three commissioners. But APD’s first life was a short one. Less than a year later, 15 million men and several hundred thousand women – one in nine Americans – left home for military training camps. APD’s safety program was suspended as Americans prepared for war.

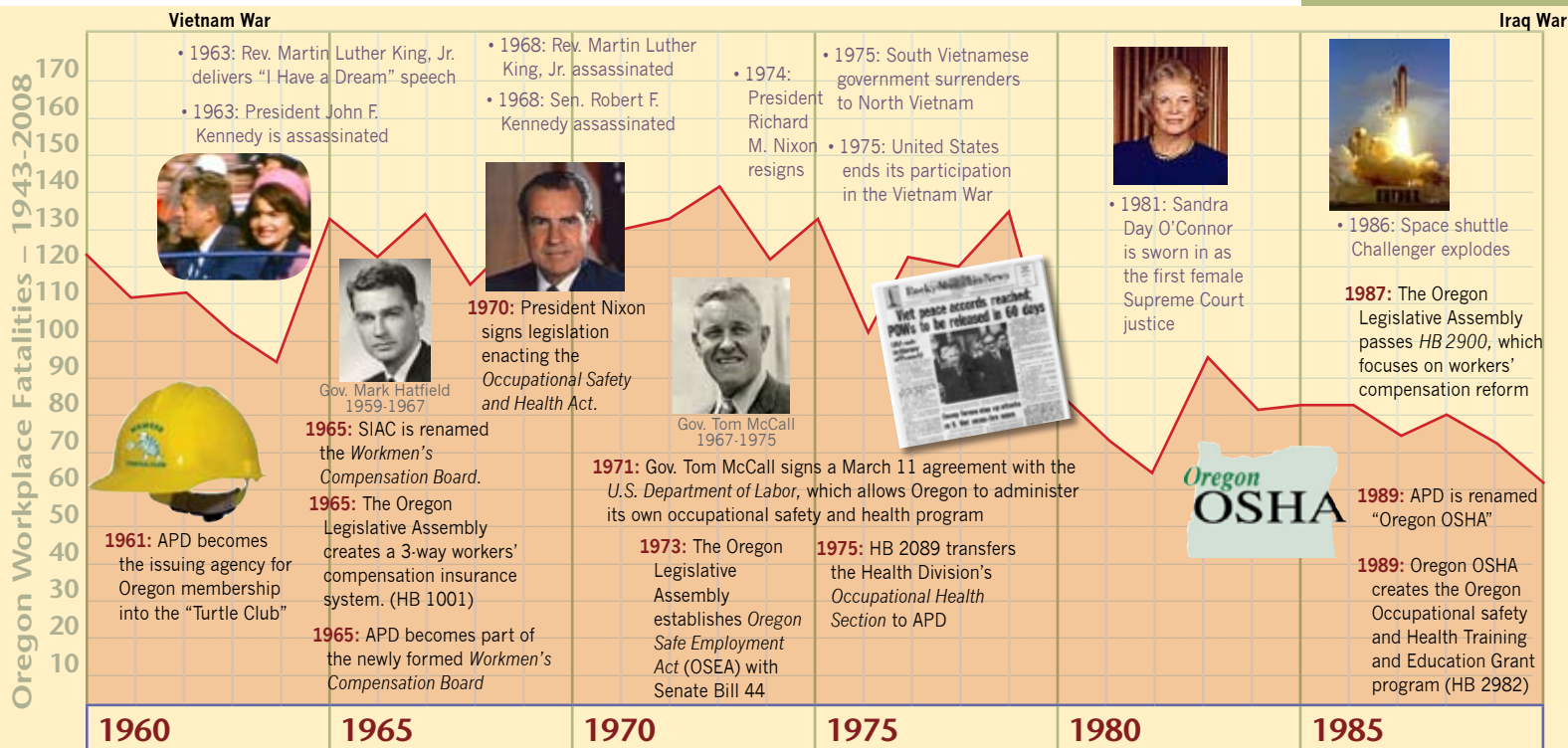
Then, in 1943, APD was reactivated “because of hazards in the war industry” with a force of 19 people directed by Robert Evenden who would soon hire and train 23 more “safety men.” According to SIAC chair William A. Callahan, 1943 was a pivotal year in APD’s safety effort. Of the three E’s – education, engineering, and enforcement – education would shape much of the division’s activities well into the 1960s.



Robert M. Evenden, director of the Accident Prevention Division, 1943-1950

In 1941, the Legislative Assembly appropriated a separate fund for “the safety of workmen in covered firms and designated the *Accident*

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In 1965, the Legislative Assembly revamped the old workmen's

compensation law and created a new "three-way" system (HB 1001). Under the old law, affected employers could buy insurance through the Industrial Accident Fund or self-insure. Now they had a third choice: private insurance. The legislation split SIAC into two new agencies. SIAC became the Workmen's Compensation Board and its insurance function moved over to a new State Compensation Department – the forerunner of the State Accident Insurance Fund (SAIF) and later the SAIF Corporation.

The legislation also made the Workmen's Compensation Board responsible for administering the state's "Safety Law" – Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 654 – which covered all phases of workplace safety, from the employers' basic responsibility for a safe place of employment to outreach and education.



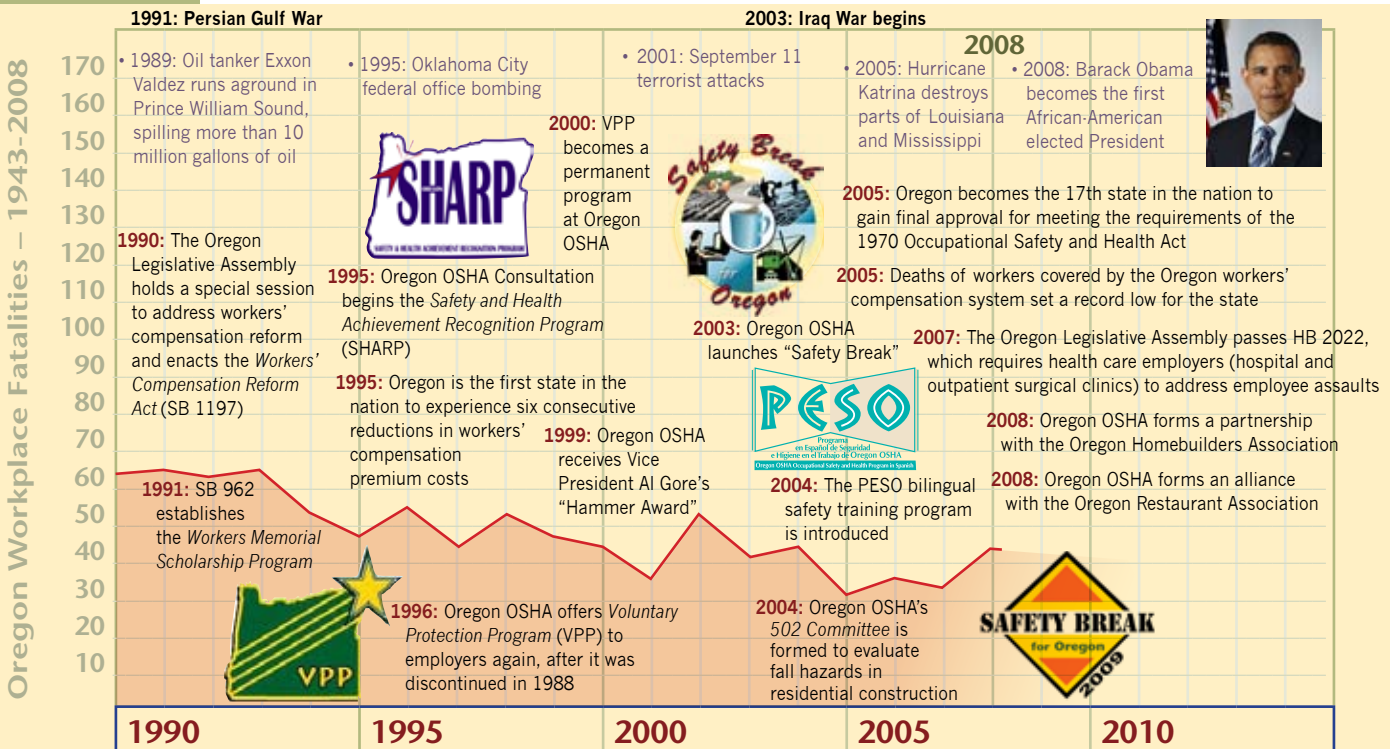
APD became part of the board and assumed responsibility for enforcing the Safety Law.

The 'OSHA' connection

Just five years later, President Richard Nixon signed the nation's first law that provided baseline safety and health protection for most American workers: the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. The OSH Act required a fundamental change in APD's approach to enforcement. It assumed that an employer knew the law and would comply with it *before* an inspector arrived and it allowed employees to participate in the inspection process.

The act also allowed states to administer their own safety and health programs if they could meet its standards. That got the attention of Workmen's Compensation Board member George A. Moore, who pledged that Oregon would become the first state in the union to be

Workplace safety in Oregon from 1900-2009



certified to administer its own program. But, he was wrong. Gov. Tom McCall would sign an agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor on March 11, 1971, that made Oregon the **second** state in the union (after South Carolina) to be certified.

Oregon's Safety Law now had to be at least as effective as "equivalent federal standards." And the Workmen's Compensation Board and APD needed a means to ensure safe, healthful workplaces for all the state's workers. On July 22, 1973, just two years after Gov. Tom McCall signed the state-plan agreement with the feds, he signed Senate Bill 44, which established the Oregon Safe Employment Act (OSEA). It was landmark legislation with a purpose to "assure as far as possible safe and healthful working conditions for every workingman and woman in Oregon."

OSEA required employers to know the occupational safety and health requirements for their industry, train their employees, and follow rules that are specific to their workplaces. APD could now inspect most workplaces in Oregon and insurers were required to help employers develop effective safety and health management plans.

By mid-1974, more than 50,000 Oregon employers had been added to the roster of firms subject to the Oregon Safe Employment Act, which brought the number of employers under APD's jurisdiction to more than 66,000.

Many employers had never been inspected and weren't aware of the OSEA. Others knew about the act but weren't sure what they were supposed to do to meet its requirements. APD officials expressed concern that too many employers ignored citations and alleged violations or incurred "failure to correct" penalties because they failed to return "Notice of Compliance" cards to the division by the date required. Nevertheless, APD's recently

renamed "compliance officers" (formerly "field representatives") completed an impressive 12,583 safety and health inspections and issued 39,880 general violations and 303 serious violations during the first full year under the OSEA. For the next year, APD and the Workmen's Compensation Board would spend much time revising Oregon's safety and health standards and adopting new standards so that Oregon's rules would be as effective as equivalent federal standards.

William Callahan once said, "In Oregon, safety is so intertwined with workmen's compensation that it is impossible

to talk of one without speaking of the other." There would only be a subtle change in context when the Legislative Assembly reorganized the Workmen's Compensation Board and replaced it with the Workers' Compensation Department in 1977: "workmen" became "workers," thus changing the law's title and the agency's name.

Highlighting the safety-compensation connection were House Bill 2900 and Senate Bill 1197. In 1987, the Legislative Assembly passed HB 2900, which focused on workers' compensation reform and extended APD's outreach to include research, education, conferences, publications, and "accident prevention materials, including audio and visual aids." In 1990, the Legislature held a special session to address workers' compensation reform. The outcome was SB 1197, which required most employers to establish joint labor-management safety committees.

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William Callahan once said, "In Oregon, safety is so intertwined with workmen's compensation that it is impossible to talk of one without speaking of the other."



William A. Callahan, chairman, SIAC

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

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SB 1197's impact would ripple across the country. It came at the same time that Oregon's workplace fatality rate was the lowest in the state's history and fatalities were the lowest since 1943. But the numbers got even better: fatalities *and* the state's workers' compensation premium rates fell for the next four years. In 1993, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass) said Oregon was one of the models for a key proposal in his workplace safety reform bill. He invited officials from Oregon and the Canadian province of Ontario to testify before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee about their programs. The Kennedy bill called for the mandatory creation of joint employee-employer safety committees.

What's in a name? Oregon OSHA and the future



Almost lost amid the legislation and the praise for Oregon's program was the minor detail of a name change. On Oct. 2, 1989, APD became Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division. The new name was intended to "help workers and employers identify the division as the state's occupational safety and health enforcement agency and to more accurately reflect its diverse mission." However, what emerged, at least informally, were two other names: OR-OSHA and Oregon OSHA.

Nevertheless, there's a strong continuity between APD and Oregon OSHA, linked by the Oregon Safe Employment Act and by APD's innovative efforts to "take safety to the people." Oregon OSHA continued the tradition with regional safety and health conferences, the

biennial Governor's Conference, and a yearlong schedule of education workshops including the innovative PESO program, which offers employers easy-to-use materials for training Spanish-speaking workers.

Oregon OSHA's status as an independent state-run program became final in 2005 when acting Assistant U.S. Secretary of Labor Jonathan Snare presented the final approval agreement to Gov. Ted Kulongoski – 38 years after Tom McCall signed the initial state-plan agreement with the feds. Final approval meant that Oregon OSHA could run its own program, for the most part, without federal enforcement authority. Coincidentally, workplace fatalities in Oregon would fall to their lowest levels ever during that year as if to showcase what Oregon OSHA could achieve with its own program.

William Callahan said there were three "yardsticks" that could be used to evaluate the safety program of any state: the benefit schedule, the premium rate, and the solvency of the fund. Today, the measure of a state program's effectiveness is not so clear-cut, nor is safety as "intertwined with workmen's compensation" as it was in Callahan's day. "Assuring as far as possible safe and healthful working conditions for every workingman and woman in Oregon" is a task that doesn't lend itself to simple measurement. Effectiveness is a moving target.

Oregon OSHA's expressed mission – "to advance and improve workplace safety and health for all workers in Oregon" – suggests that the future of occupational safety and health in the state will offer new challenges that go beyond "accident prevention." ■

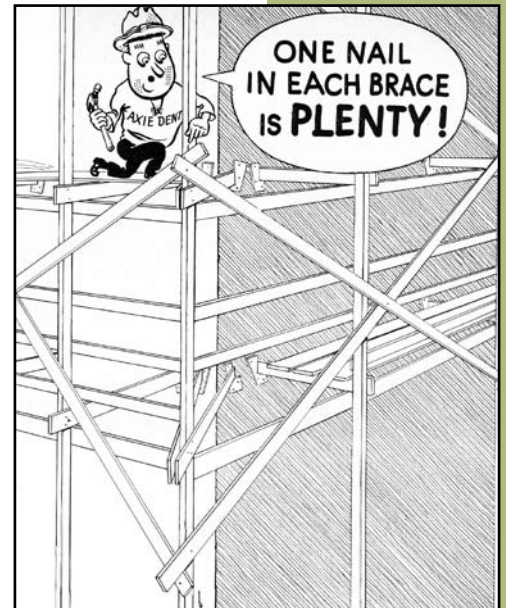
Characters from Oregon OSHA's past



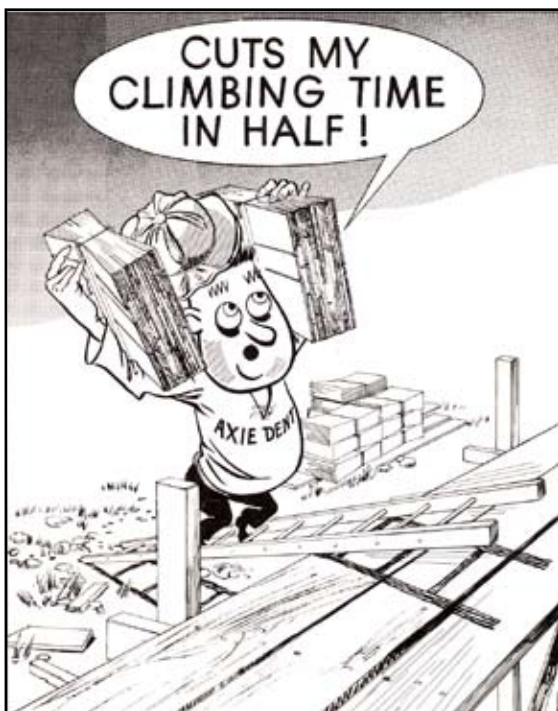
1962

One of the ways the state of Oregon shared the safety message was through the popular **AXIE DENT** and **SLIP SHODD** cartoon characters.

Cartoonist George Dow drew the popular characters for the Accident Prevention Division's *Safer Oregon* newsletter from 1962-1971. Their misadventures provided readers with dozens of examples of unsafe work practices during the nine years that Dow worked for the division. He also drew the Illustrated Fatals that appeared in *Safer Oregon* and other division publications. George Dow retired in September 1971.



1965



1966

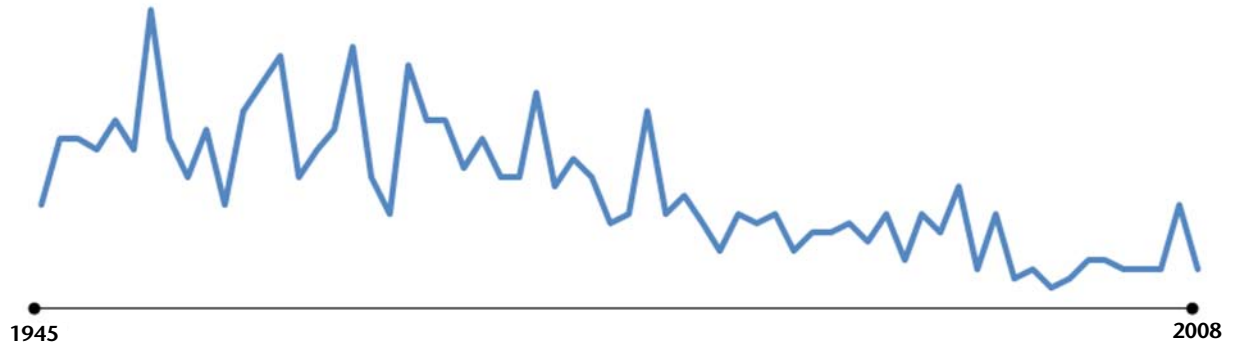


1969

1951 — The deadliest year

By Ellis Brasch

33 construction workers died in 1951



“What will be the accident picture for the construction industry at the end of the year?” *Safer Oregon*, August 1951.



Gov. Douglas McKay

Gov. Douglas McKay had few words of encouragement for members of Oregon’s 46th Legislative Assembly on Jan. 8, 1951. “Once again the forces of destiny and despotism and tyranny are on the march,” he reminded them, noting that the Korean War now had the nation under a state of emergency. The situation wasn’t much better in the Beaver State. McKay warned the legislators, “We are faced with a serious situation in our state finances. ...Considering the conditions that have developed since the budget was completed, you may well see fit to curtail further the expenditures that have been approved.”

Of course, if you were lucky enough to own a television, you could tune out all that bad news and catch the premiering episodes of Superman, I Love Lucy, and Dragnet. Or you could get back to work and finish your backyard A-bomb shelter.

Nevertheless, the state’s economy was expanding as Oregonians toiled to produce goods for the war effort. And despite the state’s sagging budget, McKay had good news

for one state agency: the Industrial Accident Commission. Concerned about “employment in hazardous defense industries of unskilled and untrained workmen,” he encouraged the Legislative Assembly to increase the Commission’s fund for accident prevention from 4 percent to 5 percent. The legislators obliged; House Bill 40, which granted McKay’s request, enabled the Accident Prevention Division (APD) to hire 15 additional safety inspectors.



Construction of Rocky Point Bridge on Oregon coast highway, 1950.



Construction of the First Christian Church in Salem, Ore., 1951. Scaffolding can be seen on the front end, as workers install the rose window. The photo is from the Hugh Stryker Collection.

McKay had good reason to be concerned about unskilled and untrained workers in hazardous defense industries, but it was the construction industry that needed help preventing accidents in 1951. An article in the August issue of APD’s monthly newsletter, *Safer Oregon*, reported that construction accidents were “on the increase,” and noted that 17 construction

workers died during the first seven months of the year. “What will be the accident picture at the end of the year?” the article asked. By the year’s end the industry toll had climbed to 33 workers – an astounding 83 percent increase over the previous year (*Safer Oregon* mistakenly reported 22 percent). Never before had 33 construction workers died on the job in one year.

Why did so many die in 1951? The spike in the numbers is a mystery. Could it have been simply a random fluctuation? Even *Safer Oregon* admitted in its year-end assessment of the situation that the “statistics are not too revealing.” We know this much: Most of the workers were independent contractors, most were working independently doing routine tasks – and most of the accidents could have been easily prevented with standard safe practices.

Speaking at the Governor’s Third Annual Safety Conference in November, Industrial Accident Commission chair Paul E. Gurske described what he considered the real challenge facing the state’s safety professionals: educating and motivating the “many and small operations throughout the state.” It seemed to be an



Construction of Marion Street bridge across the Willamette River, Salem, Ore. Workmen are waiting on scaffolding to place the first steel girder being lowered into place in the construction of the Marion Street bridge in 1952.

ongoing problem in spite of APD’s early efforts to reach the “local people.” Gurske stressed that those most in need of help were the least likely to receive it. “They work with limited capital, they are scattered in isolated locations, and they do not belong to trade associations.” What could be done to convince these small operations that safety was “an important factor in production?”

Many of the 33 construction workers who died in 1951 probably fit Gurske’s profile – of limited means and isolated from the networks that benefited larger organizations. Today, that number “33” is just a curious statistic on a ragged 63-year trend line – although one with a downward slope. Today, Oregon’s construction industry has more than 15,000 employers, many of which are “small operations.” Reducing the annual number of construction industry fatalities is still serious business. And convincing employers that safety is an important factor in production is no less challenging than it was in 1951. Gurske’s insight still resonates in 2009. ■



Construction of Detroit Dam on the North Santiam River in Marion County, Ore., 1950. Detroit Dam, a 463-foot high concrete gravity structure, is built on the North Santiam River about 47 miles east of Salem.

Photos of 1950s construction sites in Oregon, courtesy of the Salem Public Library Historic Photograph Collections, Salem Public Library, Salem, Ore.



Ralph Huffman, 1950s

Lifelong loggers reflect on safety in the woods

By Melanie Mesaros

A second-generation logger, 71-year-old Ralph Huffman has memories of setting chokers when he was 12 years old. The prosthetic leg and hearing aids he wears today are reminders of the decades he spent working in the woods.

“Back then, loggers made three times what everybody else did,” he explained.

Logging’s allure was more than steady cash. It was a family business. Huffman’s father owned a 519-acre ranch in Riddle, Ore., and they started logging after World War II. Soon after his father decided to retire, Huffman went into business with his then brother-in-law, Roger Wright, creating Huffman and Wright.

It wasn’t long after he took ownership of the business that he lost his foot in 1959. A log rolled off the back of a truck, smashing his boot.

“I tried to get out of the way and didn’t make it,” said Huffman, who went back to work just two months later.

The story starts off similarly for another son of a logger, Norbert Schmitz. He started working full time in the woods when he was just 17. The oldest of nine children, he said he was attracted to the challenge of the work and the freedom of the outdoors.

“We weren’t in as big of a hurry as they are today,” explained the 73-year-old, who stills helps his son with the family business that bears his name, Schmitz Logging. “We weren’t as aggressive and we used to take an hour for lunch. Now, they don’t even stop.”



Ralph’s son, Tim Huffman, the rigging slinger, working with the rigging crew.



Huffman & Wright Logging Co. was featured in *Loggers World* magazine, 1978.



Photos from the *Loggers World* magazine article about Huffman & Wright Logging Co. (1978).

The pace of the work isn't the only thing that has changed. Schmitz said safety was always a concern, but not like it is today.

“I didn't have a tin hat until I was in my second year in the woods,” he said. “I found one some timber faller had left behind.”

Like many lifelong loggers, Schmitz didn't escape the woods without an injury. In 1979, he was working with a crew about to change the road-line. A turn was being landed with one log and it landed on its end. The slack came out of the choker and the log jerked up, swinging in an arc-like fashion. Schmitz was knocked off his feet and ended up with two broken legs and a torn ankle tendon.

“I learned to never turn your back on a log when it's moving,” he said. “I just wasn't paying attention.”

For the next five months, Schmitz was wheelchair bound. But it didn't stop him from heading back into the woods to check on his crew.

“My wife's car was an automatic and I could drive that,” Schmitz said as he recalled taking the car to park and watch his men on the work site. Even after he was out of the wheelchair, the accident caused him to walk with a limp. While his legs have healed, he admits to waking up with ankle soreness today.

One of his worst days came in 1998, when the company lost an employee.

“It's something you never forget,” he said.

Despite their battle scars, both men say shifting attitudes have made logging safer.

“We didn't have safety meetings (in the early '70s),” Schmitz said. “Now we have a safety consultant that comes by and goes through stuff day to day. It's just a fact of life.”

Continued on page 16



Ralph Huffman with his father (left).



Ralph Huffman takes a break with his father (right) in front of a loaded log truck.



Ralph Huffman in a photo from the 1970s.



Ralph Huffman in his Canyonville-based office.

Continued from page 15

"We had quite a time in the '70s," Huffman said. "That's when they (Oregon OSHA) started pushing the rules. It's when ear plugs, chaps, and corks really came in."

According to Oregon compensable fatality data, the logging industry averaged about 31 fatalities

a year in the 1970s. That average is down to about six deaths a year for the current decade.

In addition, technology has changed the work, which has also had a positive impact on accidents.

"A lot of the machinery is better guarded," Huffman said. "The equipment has also gotten so much better – the cats, the log loaders, shovel excavators. It's eliminated a lot of the chasers and choker setters."

Schmitz believes the challenge in the future will be to train a shrinking workforce, which has made experienced loggers harder to come by.

"It takes years to learn this type of work," he said. ■



3rd Annual

Blue Mountain Occupational Safety & Health Conference

Blue Mountain Conference Center
La Grande, Oregon

Wednesday, June 10, 2009

Working together to strengthen your safety culture

A joint effort of the Oregon SHARP Alliance, Oregon OSHA, and employers and employees from Northeast Oregon.

This third annual, one-day event focuses on helping you and your organization strengthen your safety culture, no matter the company size or industry.

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Exhibits featuring the latest in safety and health products and services

Fallen workers honored with newly constructed memorial

Flanked by flowering shrubs and park benches, the plaque on the new memorial outside the Labor and Industries Building in Salem reads, "Mourn for the dead. Fight for the living."

That message was shared at the Workers Memorial Day event Tuesday, April 28, when Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski, labor leaders, and other state officials dedicated the Fallen Workers Memorial. The event attracted about 200 people, including some family members of those who were killed on the job.

"It is important to look beyond the rates and the statistics and to spend time remembering the individual lives involved," said Oregon OSHA Administrator Michael Wood.

State Sen. Margaret Carter read the names of 73 Oregonians who died in 2008 — 62 workers killed on the job and 11 military personnel killed at war.

Wood brought some in the crowd to tears as he read from an e-mail sent by the mother of an Oregon Department of Agriculture worker killed in a single-car accident while he was doing seasonal work.

"The individual stories will vary," Wood said. "What does not vary is the fact that each name we remember reflects just such an individual story and an individual tragedy. Each name on the list, whether young or old, male or female, civilian or military, represents a life that ended too soon, a life that ended with hopes and dreams for the future yet to be realized."

Kevin Leader, a 46-year-old research biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, was among those honored. He had been working long days on the coast doing salmon counts and died in a single-vehicle crash on his way home. His wife, Roxane Leader, came to the memorial with their 8-year-old son, Samuel.

"It's just really important to honor all of the families," she said.

The memorial was placed on land donated by the state and was paid for by donations.



Samuel Leader, 8, and cousins Olivia Dennis, 9, and Mathew Frantz, 14, look at the bronze plaque on the memorial. Samuel's father, Kevin Leader, a research biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, died in a single-vehicle wreck on his way home from working on the coast.



Oregon OSHA Administrator Michael Wood spoke at the dedication.



Relatives of those killed on the job listened as the names were read.



The Oregon State Defense Force Pipe Band provided somber music for the event.



Covanta Marion safety committee members and Oregon OSHA staff.

Brooks facility earns VPP "Star" designation

Covanta Energy is the latest company to join Oregon OSHA's VPP program. The Covanta Marion facility, located in Brooks, earned "Star" status. To prepare for VPP certification, Covanta Marion joined SHARP and spent three years in that program.

VPP "Star" status is the highest honor given to worksites with comprehensive, successful safety and health management systems.

"VPP status isn't a magic bullet that suddenly makes a facility safer," said Oregon OSHA Administrator Michael Wood. "It's recognition of all that the facility has already achieved. Covanta Marion has worked with us and with their employees for several years to weave safety into everything they do, and the success of those efforts is reflected in the award."

Covanta Marion operates the energy-from-waste facility under contract with the Marion County Department of Public Works Environmental Services and serves the solid-waste management needs of more than 300,000 people in Marion County. The facility processes 550 tons of solid waste each day, generating more than 13 megawatts of clean, renewable energy.

Safety Break for Oregon celebration held at Capitol

Safety Break for Oregon was celebrated with speeches this year on the steps of the Capitol in Salem. The event, sponsored by the Oregon SHARP Alliance, featured remarks from Oregon OSHA Administrator Michael Wood, state Sens. Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day) and Rod Monroe (D-Portland), and others.



Ali Afghan, global construction manager for Intel

Ali Afghan, a global construction manager with Intel, spoke about the company's safety culture and high standards of excellence – even in countries abroad.

"Safety cultures are known as 'before Intel' and 'after Intel,'" Afghan said.

Intel's reportable injury rate when down from six a year in 1994 to 0.5 in 2008.

"When looking at injuries in my projects, I used to look at what we did yesterday and ask, 'How could we have prevented this?'" Afghan said. "Now, I look at what we are doing today and say, 'How can we prevent an injury from happening tomorrow?'"

"I challenge you all to do whatever that is necessary and prevent another name being added to the Fallen Workers Memorial in Salem," said Afghan.



Sen. Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day)

Both senators talked about the importance of the state's continued focus on protecting workers and the responsibility businesses have to send employees home safely.

Dozens of companies across the state held their own Safety Break events and celebrations. For instance, employees at Gerber Legendary Blades in Tigard played safety-themed games and took part in demonstrations led by the company's safety committee.

One Gerber employee said the activities were inspirational, "The safety event helped me be more aware of safety when working."



Violence Against Health Care Employees report available



For the 2008 calendar year, Oregon OSHA collected a record of assaults committed against employees in the health care industry. The report was compiled as part of House legislation that required health care employers to keep a record of such incidents, develop and implement assault prevention and protection programs, and to offer training and security assessments.



The report found 1,061 recorded assaults during 2008, with nearly all occurring in a hospital setting. Half of the assaults were in the behavioral health/psychiatric unit. In almost all of the cases, the patient was the assailant. Certified nursing assistants, orderlies, aides, and registered nurses were the majority of victims.

While the report indicates that most injuries were minor, resulting in small bruising, scratches, and mild soreness, almost 20 percent were major, leaving the victim with major cuts, bruises, and soreness. Only 2 percent of the cases reported resulted in severe injury, such as a bone fracture or head injury.



Congratulations to these new SHARP employers:

- Henningsen Cold Storage Co., Forest Grove
- Milgard Manufacturing Inc., Tualatin
- Port of Portland, Portland



Congratulations to the new VPP company:

- Covanta Energy, Brooks — VPP “Star”

Darrel Douglas

Started in 1978 as administrator of Accident Prevention Division

If you wear a respirator while performing your job, you may want to thank Darrel Douglas. Douglas was a leader in respiratory research before taking over what was then Oregon's Accident Prevention Division. Before coming to Oregon, he led studies on respirators at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in New Mexico. He became interested in the subject almost two decades earlier because of all the misuse he witnessed in industry.

"I've seen a respirator with a hole cut out so you could put a pipe or cigarette in there," Douglas said. "Other times they were using a dust mask when they were exposed to a fume."

Douglas understood that while many workers were using respirators, they were being used the wrong way for the jobs they were performing. One significant rule change under his watch required workers not have a beard or large mustache while wearing a respirator.

"Now, beards were quite in vogue at that time," he said. "I put that out and enforced it and faced a great amount of consternation."

In fact, Douglas recalls the safety and health movement overall was undergoing "a time of great trial" when he was the administrator. Going to court was an arduous process. Businesses were unhappy they were being required to pay fines for violations. Since then, he has witnessed a major shift in the attitudes of workers and employers.



Darrel Douglas

"When I first got into this business in the '50s, they would look at me and say, 'That's interesting, but you need to get out of my way. I have to work,'" Douglas said.



"When I first got into this business in the '50s, they would look at me and say, 'That's interesting, but you need to get out of my way. I have to work,'" Douglas said.

"There was very little concern. Today, the workforce is very interested in doing things the right way."

In fact, Douglas believes today's concerns can often manifest into fear.

"Workers have overreacted at times," he said. "Just look at what happens when you mention the word asbestos."

Not only have accident rates been significantly reduced since Douglas served, technology has also allowed for more precise sampling. He remembers having to capture dust particles in water and then looked at them under a microscope.

"We would spend our evenings counting the dust particles," he said with a smile. "That's right, we were dust counters."



Dianne Mekkers

Started as a compliance officer in 1976

One of the first female safety compliance officers in Oregon, Dianne Mekkers joined the Accident Prevention Division in 1976. Armed with a list of employers and a map, she worked out of a pickup truck outfitted with a canopy.

“We had manual typewriters for reports,” she said. “You would invite the employer to sit in the box (of the truck). The only way to heat it was to keep the engine running.”

Although she admits it was difficult to find steel-toed boots in her size and safety glasses that wouldn't slip off her nose, Mekkers inspected everything from mills to manufacturing plants, and male-dominated construction sites.

“Especially in construction, you had the sense that they tolerated you,” she said.

She later went on to become a consultant and manager within the agency. In the beginning, Mekkers said she received support from her male counterparts in the field, who helped make sure she was taken seriously by employers. She also believed being a woman could help diffuse tense situations with employers.

“There were times when they would specifically send me to manage a situation,” she said.

While at APD, Mekkers noticed a shift in attitudes about workplace safety emerging among employers.

“There was a huge change in employers' understanding that accidents cause them a lot of money,” she said. “It really was about money. Big companies started to change and then it filtered down to small companies.”

This generation of workers, many raised in the Great Depression, were used to keeping a job with the same employer. She said it was a time when employees were rewarded for taking risks and doing whatever it took to get the job done.

“Today, workers are more apt to say, ‘That's dangerous. I'm not doing that. I'll just work somewhere else,’” Mekkers said.

But Mekkers said it's still difficult to hear about workplace accidents.

“It's disturbing to know compliance officers are still citing the same things I cited in 1976,” she said. “A lack of fall protection is still taking lives.”



Dianne Mekkers

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Oregon OSHA would like to acknowledge the 2009 Safety Break for Oregon participants:

- American Society of Safety Engineers Columbia-Willamette Chapter
- Ashland Incorporated
- Associated General Contractors
- Bonneville Environmental Foundation
- Brentwood Corp.
- CAPECO
- Cascade Steel Rolling Mills, Inc.
- Cascade Warehouse Company
- Charter Mechanical Contractors Inc.
- Cintas
- City of Milwaukie
- City of Sweet Home
- Comcast
- Covanta Marion, Inc.
- Emerick Construction Company
- Empire Pacific Risk Management
- Eugene Water & Electric Board
- FamilyCare Health Plans, Inc.
- Fiskars/Gerber Legendary Blades Division
- Fred Shearer & Sons
- Grainger Inc.
- Intel
- McCormack Construction
- Moonstruck Chocolate Company
- Morgan Millwright & Mechanical Services, Inc.
- Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services
- Oregon Department of Revenue
- Oregon Department of Water Resources
- Oregon DEQ Laboratory and Environmental Assessment Division
- Oregon Institute of Technology
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Oregon SHARP Alliance
- Portland Water Bureau
- Precision Wire Components
- PV Powered
- R&H Construction
- RDO-Calbee LLC
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- Reese Electric, Inc.
- Robben Heating, Air Cond. & Gutters
- Ronler Acres Construction Safety Team
- Roseburg Forest Products, Dillard plywood
- Sandvik Medical Solutions
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- The Bill Benetreu Company
- The Corvallis Clinic, PC
- The Resort at the Mountain
- Waste Management
- Willamette Lutheran Retirement Community
- Yamhill Community Action Partnership