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NEWS RELEASE

North Carolina's injury and illness rate drops for third consecutive year

North Carolina's private industry injury and illness rate dropped to a historic low in 2009, making North Carolina one of the safest states in which to work. The rate now rests at a historic low 3.1 cases per 100 full-time workers—a decline from 3.4 in 2008.

In 2007, the rate stood at 3.7 per 100 full-time workers after resting at 4.0 in 2005 and 2006. North Carolina's rate continues to be below the national average. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics compiles the data.

“As I travel across the state meeting with small and large businesses and their employees, I am seeing firsthand one common denominator that is fueling North Carolina's success,” Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry said. “Safety initiatives are being embraced from the top down. You have to have the support of management to reach those on the front lines, especially in some of the most dangerous industries like construction and manufacturing.”

Insurance is another driving force. Over the past several years, many businesses have benefited from fewer injuries with lower insurance premiums and reduced workers' comp rates.

While the Labor Department credits employers and employees for North Carolina's success, the OSH Division has played a key role in the down economy by launching an online safety and health training program, establishing partnership and alliances with industry and creating special emphasis programs for hazardous industries like construction.

The rate for construction dropped to 3.1 per 100 full-time workers in 2009 from 3.7 in 2008. Manufacturing dropped to 3.5 per 100 full-time workers in 2009 from 4.2 in 2008.

“Everyone deserves a safe and healthy workplace, but at the end of the day, it's really about making it home to family and loved ones that matters most,” Berry said.

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