

NC Labor

LEDGER

July/August 2006

New Mobile Classroom Hits the Road

Labor Department Prepares for New Labor One Debut This Fall

By Dolores Quesenberry
Director of Marketing

The N.C. Department of Labor will unveil this fall a new mobile classroom that provides free, on-site workplace safety and health training aimed at reducing workplace deaths and injuries.

The mobile classroom—called Labor One—gives NCDOL trainers the opportunity to take English and Spanish safety training to worksites without major interruption to employees' work schedules.

The idea of a mobile training unit surfaced in 2001 after the labor department took a closer look at Hispanic fatalities occurring in the construction industry. Hispanics had flocked to North Carolina in the early 1990s and begun working in some of North Carolina's most hazardous jobs.

An NCDOL task force identified language barriers and cultural differences as key factors in these deaths. Labor officials thought it was time to take training on the road.

"Labor One eliminates travel time for the workers and allows us to customize the training to the type of work being done at the site," Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry said. "We want to increase the number of construction sites we visit. We want to meet face to face with workers and show them the proper way



The N.C. Department of Labor's new mobile training unit is assembled at the vehicle plant in Greensboro. Labor One provides free, on-site workplace safety and health training and is scheduled to be ready in September.

to wear a harness or the right way to use personal protective equipment. We have an obligation to educate and train these workers who are doing some of the most dangerous work in this country."

The labor department made history in 2001 when it introduced the first mobile safety training unit in the country. At the time, the department bought a used vehicle that could seat about 15 workers

in inclement weather. In fair weather, NCDOL trainers could add to their classroom space by unfurling outside awnings and teaching outdoors.

The old vehicle, which quit its teaching career when it sputtered to a stop by the side of the interstate between Greensboro and Raleigh, was replaced by a new version that offers a better training environment for workers.

In 2005, 80 workers died on the job in North Carolina. Although construction workers last year represented only 7.3 percent of the 3.2 million private sector workers in the state, the construction industry accounted for 27 of the 80 work fatalities, or 34 percent.

Labor officials will use Labor One to reduce injuries, illnesses and fatalities through education and training. Efforts will focus on commercial and residential construction, the largest and one of the most hazardous industries in the United States.

The labor department is joining with Builders Mutual Insurance Co. and the N.C. Home Builders Association to provide training *continued on page 3*

Your Opinion Counts

Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry would like your opinion on the workplace readiness of today's high school graduates and North Carolina's skilled-labor market.

Watch for the N.C. Department of Labor Skills Shortage Survey coming to you by e-mail the week of Labor Day.



**From
Commissioner
Cherie Berry**

The N.C. Department of Labor is taking steps to alleviate a shortage of skilled workers in areas such as construction, manufacturing and services, a shortage that appears to get worse by the year.

U.S. labor officials estimate that the nation's construction industry will need 1 million new workers this decade. A recent survey by the National Association of Manufacturers indicates that 90 percent of its members are experiencing a moderate to severe shortage of skilled labor.

As the association has pointed out, the shortage threatens the country's ability to compete in today's global economy and is emerging as our principal problem.

These skilled trades need workers who have manual skills and experience. In most cases, a four-year degree is not required, and the salary is often more than four-year degree holders receive.

The N.C. Department of Labor's apprenticeship program trains workers to meet the demands of the skill trades. Of the 165,000 juniors and seniors in North Carolina's high schools, only about 500 are registered in the apprenticeship program.

The labor department is interested in what you, the NC Labor Ledger subscribers, think about today's workforce. We want your opinion on today's high schools, high school graduates and the North Carolina skills market. We would like to know how adequately you think high school graduates are prepared to enter the job market. Your opinion counts whether you are an employer, parent of a high school student or a recent graduate yourself.

I will be sending out an electronic survey to you by e-mail the week of Labor Day. We ask that you take a few minutes to fill out the survey. All responses will be kept confidential.

Our ability to compete with other nations is dependent upon a skilled labor force, and many businesses nationwide are experiencing skill shortages. The survey research will be used to advocate for change and influence education and job training policies in our state.

I hope you'll take a few minutes to fill out the survey, and I look forward to reading the results.

Cherie Berry



Cherie Berry
Commissioner

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Chain Saw Safety Tips

We are in the midst of hurricane season, and the N.C. Department of Labor is reminding both workers and homeowners to work safely in the event of a hurricane. The following safety tips will be useful during hurricane or another natural disaster cleanup:

- ❖ Chain saws vary greatly by make and model. Always read the owner's manual before using. Even experienced chain saw operators need to make sure they understand the features (or lack of features) when using an unfamiliar chain saw.
- ❖ NEVER operate a chain saw when you are fatigued. Take plenty of breaks and drink a lot of fluids while working. A tired chain saw operator is a danger to himself and others.
- ❖ Chain saw operators MUST always grip the saw firmly with both hands. NEVER cut with the tip of the chain saw blade.
- ❖ Always "plan the cut" before felling or cutting through a tree or branch. Where is the tree going to fall? Do you have a clear escape path from the falling tree?
- ❖ Do not stand between logs and fallen branches that could shift while you cut them. Do not stand on logs you're going to cut.
- ❖ Never work by yourself, but make sure you know where everyone is at all times while you saw.
- ❖ Do not cut a branch if it means you would have to hold the saw over your head.
- ❖ Do not cut materials other than wood with a chain saw.
- ❖ Wear personal safety equipment. Use protective boots or steel-toe shoes. Protect your eyes and hearing when cutting. Wear bright vests or clothes so you are highly visible.
- ❖ Keep checking the condition of your chain saw. Look out for loose or dull chains. If you see a problem, stop using the saw and have it repaired immediately.
- ❖ Make sure gas and chain oil are kept in safe areas, away from fires, children and other possible hazards.
- ❖ Avoid horseplay and overconfidence. No matter how many times you have used a chain saw, never forget it can kill or injure you or someone else in a single second. Every time you pick up that saw, treat it and the job you are about to do with the greatest care and respect.

New Mobile Classroom Hits the Road

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to residential contractors. Builders Mutual, which insures the home building industry, will help the department with training sessions.

“Because of the booming construction industry in our state, large numbers of subcontractors are working on construction jobsites, and the influx of Hispanic construction workers adds to the concerns for injuries due to unsafe work practices,” said Bill Walker, MSOS, CPEA, director of risk management for Builders Mutual. “Adding another language, and a different work culture, has made injury prevention in our industry very complex. Small builders and subcontractors many times do not have the financial means to hire safety experts to train their workers. The risk of a serious disabling injury, or death, is real. Such an injury can have a huge, long-term financial and social impact on the employee, the employee’s family, other employees that witnessed the injury, and the employer.”

Allen McNeely, NCDOL Occupational Safety and Health Division director, said the labor department wants to reach out to the various trades involved in construction.

“We really want to reach the subcontractors and specialty contractors out there,” McNeely said. “These two groups account for many of our construction fatalities, and we want to share our safety message with them.”

One of the first training sessions will be scheduled with Centex Homes in the Triangle. Centex is working with labor officials to schedule a training session to reach the subcontractors at one of its residential jobsites.

“We really believe in what the labor department is trying to do to help the construction industry reduce fatalities and injuries,” said Ken Johnson, risk manager for Centex Homes. “We intend to schedule Labor One at many of our jobsites throughout the state.”

Employers can choose from a variety of training topics, including from the “Big Four” construction hazards—falls,



Early production photos offer a glimpse of Labor One’s interior classroom facility.



electrical hazards, and struck-by and caught-in/between accidents. These four areas account for nearly all fatalities in the construction industry.

On-site training will include hands-on demonstrations, presentations, and safety and health literature.

“We want to show employers and workers the practical and efficient steps they can take to stay safe on the job,” McNeely said. “Safety and health regulations can be overwhelming for most people. Labor One is here to make sense of those regulations and to offer training that is easy to understand.”

While Labor One will focus on the construction industry, training will be available at manufacturing plants, farms and other high-risk worksites where safety and health training is requested.

To request training, visit our Web site at www.nclabor.com and click on “Labor One” or contact Dolores Quesenberry at (919) 733-0348 or dolores.quesenberry@nclabor.com or call 1-800-NC-LABOR.

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Q: *I was terminated from my job. When do I have to receive my last paycheck?*

A: If an employee is separated from a job for any reason at all—including firing, resigning or lay-offs—all wages due must be paid on or before the next regular payday. The employee may receive his or her pay by normal procedure or can request the paycheck be mailed.

Wages based on bonuses, commissions or other calculations must be paid on the first regular payday after the total becomes calculable when a separation occurs. Such wages may not be forfeited unless the employee was notified, according to the N.C. General Statute 95-25.13, of an employer policy that results in forfeiture for some reason. Employees who are not notified may not lose the wages, bonuses or commissions due.

For more information about final paychecks, visit the Web site at www.nclabor.com/wh/whfacts.htm and click on "Payment of Final Wages to Separated Employees."

Q: *What types of pay and time sheet records do I have to keep for my employees?*

A: Every employer covered by the N.C. Wage and Hour Act must keep certain records for each non-exempt employee for a period of three years. The records maintained shall be complete, accurate and show all hours worked by each employee in each workweek. No particular form is required.

The records must contain the following information for each employee:

- ◆ Full name of the employee
- ◆ Social Security number
- ◆ Home address and phone number
- ◆ Occupation or job title
- ◆ Time of day and day of week the employee's workweek begins
- ◆ Regular rate of pay (hourly or salary)
- ◆ Hours worked each workday
- ◆ Total hours worked each workweek
- ◆ Total straight-time earnings each workweek
- ◆ Total overtime earnings each workweek
- ◆ Total additions to or deductions from wages
- ◆ Total gross wages paid each pay period
- ◆ Date of each payment
- ◆ All other records required by statute or rule for enforcement of any provision of the Wage and Hour Act

Besides the records outlined above, the N.C. Wage and Hour Act also requires the following records be retained: tip credits, wage deductions, vacation and sick leave policies, and wages based on bonuses, commissions or other forms of calculations.

For more information on the recordkeeping requirements of the N.C. Wage and Hour Act, visit our Web site at www.nclabor.com.

The N.C. General Assembly raised the state's minimum wage to \$6.15 an hour effective Jan 1, 2007. Look for more information on how this will affect your business in the September/October issue of the NC Labor Ledger.

DEADLY Mistakes

By Steve Sykes
State Plan Coordinator

Fatal Events: On Feb. 28, 2006, a 29-

year-old woman was killed while operating a six-passenger golf car shuttle at an airport. Later in May, a 47-year-old car salesman died from injuries sustained after falling from a moving golf cart.

Investigative Findings: The 29-year-old woman was collecting wheel chocks as she waited for an airplane to land, using the six-passenger shuttle to go to the bin where the chocks were stored. When she did not return, her supervisor tried unsuccessfully to contact her by radio. He eventually began to look for her and found her across the ramp and underneath the passenger shuttle. There were no witnesses to the accident, but after the accident, a 13-pound chock was found on the accelerator of the shuttle. It is possible that the chock fell onto the accelerator pedal as the victim was walking in front of the shuttle. The shuttle moved forward and struck the employee and knocked her to the ground.

The 47-year-old car salesman attempted to board from the rear of a moving golf cart used to take employees from one car lot to another. The salesman slipped and suffered fatal injuries when his head struck the ground.

Discussion: The N.C. Department of Labor investigates some fatalities each year related to off-road vehicles, but the accidents usually happen on construction sites. However, low-speed vehicles on public roads have become so prevalent that the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has

developed rules for certain vehicles that have a maximum speed of more than 20 mph but not greater than 25 mph. Most off-road golf carts and shuttles run under 20 mph. Research has shown and investigations have documented that even at speeds under 20 mph, injuries and death can result from being struck by or thrown from these vehicles.

Golf carts are being used increasingly for work and leisure activities. Remind family and friends of the potential hazards associated with the use of golf carts and shuttle vehicles at airports, retirement communities, golf courses, hotels and vacation resorts. Passengers in golf carts are likelier to be injured than drivers, especially young children.

Recommendations:

- ✖ Companies that use golf carts and shuttles should implement a safety program.
- ✖ Employees should be trained on the manufacturer's recommendations for use of shuttle vehicles and golf carts.
- ✖ Manufacturer's instructions should be followed.
- ✖ Riders should remain seated and hold on when the vehicle is moving.
- ✖ Riders should not try to board a moving vehicle.
- ✖ When not in use, the vehicle should be placed in park, neutral or turned off, and if equipped with a parking brake, the brake should be engaged.
- ✖ Seat belts are required on all low speed vehicles that go faster than 20 mph, but consideration should also be given to the installation of seat belts on golf carts and shuttles with top speeds under 20 mph.

Carolina Star Conference Scheduled in Greensboro

By Heather Crews
Public Information Officer

Employees and management personnel of Carolina Star worksites will gather Sept. 20-22 in Greensboro at a conference aimed at helping businesses across North Carolina learn more about the state's premier safety and health recognition program.

The Carolina Star Program is designed to recognize and promote effective safety and health programs and management systems. As part of the program, company management officials, employees and the N.C. Department of Labor establish a cooperative working relationship to create a safe and healthful working environment.

The 10th Annual Carolina Star Safety Conference will be held at the Sheraton Greensboro Hotel at Four Seasons. Keynote speakers include state Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry; Mike Collins, president of The Perfect Workday Company; and UNC-Wilmington professor John Bennett.

The conference is open to those worksites already participating in the Star program and those businesses that would like to become Star sites.

"The Star Conference is a chance for businesses interested in becoming a Carolina Star to learn what it takes to enter the program," program coordinator LaMont Smith said. "They'll have the opportunity to speak to safety and health

professionals and employees from other sites that have already reached Carolina Star status."

The Carolina Star application process is rigorous. The conference offers workshops that prepare businesses as they try to enter the program. Workshops also will be held for those sites applying for recertification.

Benefits of being a Star site include fewer workers' compensation claims, improved employee motivation to work safely, and lower injury and illness rates. Statistics show that Star sites experience between 60 percent and 80 percent fewer workplace injuries than an average worksite of the same size and industry classification.

Visit the conference Web site at www.carolinastar.org for an agenda and registration information.

Summary of Carolina Star Programs

Carolina Star—recognizes general industry worksites that can sufficiently control safety and health hazards in the workplace.

Rising Star—recognizes worksites that have good safety and health programs but must take additional steps to reach Carolina Star quality.

Building Star—recognizes construction worksites that have Carolina Star quality safety and health programs.

Public Sector Star—recognizes state and local governments that have exemplary safety and health programs.

New Plumbing Apprenticeship Program Begins in Fall

By Barney Stegall
Apprenticeship Consultant

Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte this fall is offering a series of plumbing classes as part of a new apprenticeship and training program.

The plumbing curriculum is designed to give students the chance to learn the basic skills needed to help with plumbing system installation and repair in residential and small buildings. Course work includes sketching diagrams, interpreting blueprints and learning practices in plumbing assembly.

Students will gain knowledge of state plumbing codes and requirements. Graduates will be qualified for jobs at parts supply houses, maintenance companies and plumbing contractors.

For more information on the CPCC apprenticeship training program, call (704) 330-4408.

If you are an employer in the plumbing industry and are interested in the apprenticeship program, call Barney Stegall, N.C. Department of Labor apprenticeship consultant, at (704) 549-1400.

APPRENTICESHIP ADVANTAGE

Don't miss the annual apprentice contests at the 2006 N.C. State Fair! See the best and brightest apprentices from across our state compete for top honors. The contests are held daily under the big white tents near Gate 9.

HV/AC-R Contest.....Monday, Oct. 16

Masonry Contest.....Monday, Oct. 16

Electrical Contest.....Wednesday, Oct. 18

Carpentry Contest.....Thursday, Oct. 19

Plumbing Contest.....Friday, Oct. 20





Bulletin Board

2006 Fair Schedule

- Aug. 19-26.....Alleghany County Agricultural Fair
- Aug. 22-26.....Drexel Community Fair
- Aug. 29-Sept. 2.....Alamance County Fair
- Aug. 30-Sept. 4.....Hickory American Legion Fair
- Aug. 31-Sept. 4.....Stanly County Fair
- Sept. 4-9.....Iredell Co. Agricultural Fair
- Sept. 5-9.....Halifax-Northampton Agricultural Fair
- TBA.....Lenoir County Fair
- TBA.....Macon County Agricultural Fair
- Sept. 8-16.....Cabarrus County Agricultural Fair
- Sept. 8-17.....N.C. Mountain State Fair
- Sept. 11-16.....Stokes County Fair
- Sept. 12-16.....Chatham Co. Agricultural-Industrial Fair
- Sept. 13-16.....Warren County Fair
- Sept. 14-24.....Cumberland County Fair
- Sept. 15-24.....Central Carolina Fair
- Sept. 18-23.....Davidson County Agricultural Fair
- Sept. 18-23.....Surry County Fair
- Sept. 18-23.....Rowan County Fair
- Sept. 19-23.....Avery County Agricultural Fair
- Sept. 19-24.....Wilson County Fair
- Sept. 20-24.....Vance County Fair
- Sept. 25-Oct. 2.....Haywood County Fair
- Sept. 26-30.....Chowan County Regional Fair
- Sept. 26-30.....Caldwell County Agricultural Fair
- Sept. 28-Oct. 7.....Cleveland County Fair
- Sept. 28-Oct. 7.....Robeson Regional Agricultural Fair
- Sept. 28-Oct. 7.....Rocky Mount Agricultural Fair
- Sept. 28-Oct. 7.....Wayne Regional Agricultural Fair
- Sept. 29-Oct. 8.....Dixie Classic Fair
- Oct. 2-7.....Pitt Co. American Legion Agricultural Fair
- Oct. 3-7.....Atlantic District Fair
- Oct. 3-7.....Cherokee Indian Fair
- Oct. 3-7.....Moore County Agricultural Fair
- Oct. 9-16.....Lee County Agricultural Fair
- Oct. 9-14.....Columbus County Agricultural Fair
- Oct. 10-14.....Wilkes County Agricultural Fair
- Oct. 10-14.....Richmond County Fair
- Oct. 11-14.....Burke County Fair
- Oct. 13-22.....N.C. State Fair
- Oct. 13-22.....Coastal Carolina Fair and Expo
- Oct. 16-21.....Onslow County Fair
- Oct. 17-21.....Alexander County Agricultural Fair
- Oct. 26-Nov. 4.....Cape Fear Fair and Expo

30-Hour Construction Industry Workshop

Sept. 11-15

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, Concord

Space is limited to 75 participants.

Contact Dee Flaten at dee.flaten@nclabor.com.

Western North Carolina Safety School

Nov. 2-3

Renaissance Asheville Hotel, Asheville

www.westernmcsafetyschool.com

Wage and Hour Seminar

Sept. 26

Stanly Community College, Albemarle

Register at www.nclabor.com

To ensure your safety during the fair season, visit www.nclabor.com to learn more about our



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