



Commissioner Brad Avakian
Bureau of Labor and Industries

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE – October 27, 2010

Dear Friends:

Last Wednesday was another of the days when I am most thankful for the opportunities that I have as Oregon Labor Commissioner. I was at the Lane Events Center, celebrating Construction and Utilities Career Day with about 500 Lane County high school students. The annual event is a joint effort between some terrific Oregon businesses, led by Staton Companies who hosted last year's Career Day, and some key public entities like Lane Education Service District, Lane Workforce Partnership and Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries.

Of course, there are a lot of reasons to like this kind of event: seeing hundreds of excited kids who are so enthusiastic about getting to work with their hands, explore career options and learn more about what the construction and utility trades are all about; having fully one-third of the students be young women, who are not traditionally directed toward the construction career pathways that can lead to high-skill, living-wage jobs; getting some [media attention](#) for an event that lots of people worked hard to bring together.

What this event also showed is the energy behind bringing career and technical education back to all of Oregon's communities. This time it was 500 students in Lane County who benefited from a long list of engaged sponsors: Edge Construction Supply, Hamilton Construction Company, National Association of Women in Construction, Northwest College of Construction, Staton Companies and Twin Rivers Plumbing to name just the private entities; EWEB, ODOT, Lane Community College and Springfield Public Schools were also critical.

Meanwhile, BOLI has youth trades programs in 14 schools around the state, with five new programs incorporating three more schools that are in various stages of completion. A long list of diverse supporters are coming together again in support of career and technical education classes in all of Oregon's middle and high schools, because anything less means thousands of our kids going without the opportunity to learn about different career options and the skills needed to succeed in those fields. Restoring programs to every school over a period of years is not only in the best interest of the students who would benefit from the experience, but it helps reverse the trend that has added a full decade to the average age of apprentices in Oregon, seen a steadily aging workforce in all of the skilled trades, and left employers statewide scrambling to fill the pipeline of future workers.

With the economy the way it is, it's more important than ever to invest our public money wisely. The bottom line for our state is that Oregon must get its workforce development efforts working in concert with K-12 education, or our economic woes will be greater and longer lasting than they already have been. There has been no better, or more necessary, time than now to invest in job training and public education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "B. Avakian".

Brad Avakian
Oregon Labor Commissioner

The mission of the Bureau of Labor and Industries is to protect employment rights, advance employment opportunities, and protect access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination.

The Brad Tracker

Where's he been? Earlier this month, Brad spoke to the East Suburban Democrats in Gresham and to the Multnomah Neighborhood Association, met with U.S. Department of Labor officials about regulatory issues, attended the Oregon Business Association's Statesman Dinner and lunched with the other statewide elected officials in Salem. Brad has been in Lane County several times: he spoke at the Oregon League of Minority Voters' "State of Civil Rights-Oregon" luncheon at U of O, headlined the Lane County Construction and Utilities Career Day, spoke to the League of Women Voters of Lane County and [helped conciliate discrimination complaints](#) filed by a registered apprentice against her employer and the local Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee.

Where's he going? In the next few days, Brad will be speaking to the Employment Law Society at Lewis and Clark Law School (his alma mater), attending the Urban League of Portland's Equal Opportunity Day Dinner and then heading to Taiwan on a fact-finding mission with fellow members of the National Association of Government Labor Officials.

If your group is interested in having the Commissioner come to speak, send good contact information to Donna.Brown@state.or.us. Staff will respond to your request in a timely manner, but please try to provide at least 2 weeks' notice if suggesting a particular date for the Commissioner's visit.



FREE EMPLOYER SEMINAR: Determining Employee vs Independent Contractor

As part of a coordinated campaign, BOLI and Oregon's other independent contractor agencies are raising awareness of independent contractor issues and the potential consequences for employers who misclassify their workers. In cooperation with our partner agencies, BOLI's TA Program will host two free sessions of a 1.5-hour seminar on worker classification on [November 8 in Portland](#).

Efforts are increasing at both the state and national level to ensure proper classification of workers, both to protect the rights of individual workers and to make sure that payroll taxes and other costs are being paid correctly. The upcoming seminars will cover relevant laws, the tests that enforcement agencies use to determine proper classification, and a range of resources available to help make determinations easier. Of course, some resources are already easily accessible at www.oregonindependentcontractors.com, and more information is set to be added there and on [BOLI's TA website](#).

Avakian Announces New Committee Appointments

*Labor Commissioner names 3 new members, expanding
Oregon's Prevailing Wage Advisory Committee*

Commissioner Avakian has announced the appointments of three new members to the Prevailing Wage Advisory Committee (PWAC), filling one pending vacancy and creating two new positions. Receiving appointments are Greg Held, Business Manager for the Oregon and Southern Idaho District Council of the Laborers International Union of North America, Dee Burch, P.E., President of Advanced American Construction, Inc., and Kevin Jensen, Business Manager for Local 29 of the Ironworkers Union. The vacancy comes November 1, when the appointment of Pete Savage of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters will expire.

"Pete Savage has given great service to Oregon as a member of this committee," Avakian said. "We are fortunate to have other talented individuals, like Greg, Dee and Kevin, who are ready to step up and help PWAC continue its important work."

PWAC was created by legislative action in 2003, with the Commissioner of Labor and Industries appointing representatives from management and labor in the building and construction industry who perform work on public works contracts, as well as interested public individuals. Statute does not specify the number of committee members, so long as they are equally balanced between management and labor. The committee is charged with assisting the Commissioner in administering prevailing wage rate laws that apply to public construction projects. Burch is a new management representative while Held and Jensen will represent labor.

"PWAC's membership features years of experience on all kinds of public works projects," Avakian added. "The Labor Commissioner is not the only official who looks to this committee for thoughtful analysis of prevailing wage issues, and rightly so."

For more information about PWAC and Oregon's prevailing wage rate laws, visit BOLI's website at <http://www.oregon.gov/BOLI/WHD/PWR/index.shtml>.

Upcoming BOLI Events

Date	Event Type	Location	Subject	Contact
Oct. 26	PWR Seminar	County Library, Baker City	PWR for Contractors and Subcontractors	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Oct. 26	PWR Seminar	County Library, Baker City	PWR for Public Agencies	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Nov. 2	TA Seminar	Lane Comm. College, Eugene	Recordkeeping Requirements	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Nov. 3	TA Seminar	State Office Building, Portland	Payroll Issues	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Nov. 8	Special Free TA Seminars	State Office Building, Portland	Determining Employee vs Indep. Contractor	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Nov. 9	PWR Seminar	DHS McKenzie Center, Eugene	PWR for Contractors and Subcontractors	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Nov. 10	PWR Seminar	ODOT Training Center, Salem	PWR for Contractors and Subcontractors	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Nov. 10	PWR Seminar	ODOT Training Center, Salem	PWR for Public Agencies	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Nov. 16	TA Seminar	Chemeketa Comm. College, Salem	Wage and Hour Laws	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Nov. 17	PWR Seminar	State Office Building, Portland	PWR for Contractors and Subcontractors	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Nov. 23	PWR Seminar	City Hall, Albany	PWR for Contractors and Subcontractors	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Nov. 23	PWR Seminar	City Hall, Albany	PWR for Public Agencies	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Dec. 1 & 2	Annual Law Conference	Oregon Conv. Center, Portland	All the laws that Oregon employers need to know	TA Program @ 971-673-0825

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