



Happy New Year!

January, 2010

***Greetings and Best Wishes from all of us at UCLA-LOSH.*** With the new decade upon us, we have been reflecting on the challenges and successes in advancing worker health and safety during the last ten years and the opportunities that lay ahead. We look forward to partnering with you in implementing some of LOSH's education, research and policy initiatives in the future.

### **Worker Education and Leadership - Our Cornerstone Activity**

The cornerstone of LOSH's efforts focuses on education and leadership skills to empower workers to protect their health and safety on the job. To this end, LOSH continues as the lead organization for the five-university Western Region Universities Consortium to provide hazmat training to workers throughout the West from the U.S.-Mexico border to Alaska and the Pacific Islands

(<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/careers/hazmat/awardees/wruc.cfm>). With funding from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), our consortium trained close to 15,000 workers in the last five years --from longshore workers at West coast ports to school and car wash workers-- helping them to identify hazardous materials and develop the skills to protect themselves and their communities. In November, we completed a grant proposal to NIEHS to continue our training program for another five years, and we have big plans to expand our efforts during this period.

In California, we are working with our partners at U.C. Berkeley-LOHP and U.C. Davis to create a statewide network of health and safety leaders through the WOSHTEP Program. Awarded three year funding from the California Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation, we provide 24-hour leadership courses, shorter courses for small businesses, an annual three-day academy for young workers and technical assistance to groups ranging from office workers to janitors to refinery workers. Our follow-up evaluation demonstrates that our efforts help empowered workers to participate in health and safety programs at their workplace.

### **Good, Green, Safe Jobs**

Among LOSH's biggest accomplishments over the past year was coordination of the Community Scholars program at UCLA. Three critical issues--environmental degradation, unemployment, and health problems that stem from our built environment--were the focus of this year's program. Led by LOSH staff, the course brought together graduate students with labor and community leaders to create recommendations to implement LA's groundbreaking green building retrofit ordinance. Working with the LA Apollo Alliance, we focused on three areas of sustainability--the environment, health and the economy--with the goal of revitalizing LA's underserved communities. See the LOSH website for information about the class, our City Hall briefing and community conference, and a copy of the final report, "Green Buildings, Good Jobs, Safe Jobs: Pathway to a Sustainable LA": <http://www.losch.ucla.edu/projects/green-jobs-conference.html> and [www.losch.ucla.edu/pdf/green-jobs-report.pdf](http://www.losch.ucla.edu/pdf/green-jobs-report.pdf).

We continue to work to ensure that green jobs are also good, safe jobs. We are fortunate to be recipients of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding through NIEHS to develop training and education materials for workers in green construction and retrofits as well as those involved in handling of new green chemicals. Look for popular education materials and training on green buildings and green chemistry in the coming year.

### **Low Wage Workers, Immigrant Workers, and the Informal Sector**

On average, a worker dies every three days in Los Angeles County, many of them low wage or immigrant workers. Many more are injured -- a new IRLE study demonstrates that more than 1 in 10 low wage workers experience a serious on-the-job injury but less than 5% ever receive any workers' compensation: <http://www.irle.ucla.edu/events/2010/pdf/LAwagetheft.pdf>

Working with labor, community groups and small businesses, LOSH programs have reached taxi drivers; car wash, hotel domestic, and restaurant workers; day laborers and truck drivers. This year LOSH implemented a new Community Outreach Model by partnering with community-based organizations to build their capacity to reach and educate workers who traditionally lack resources and support. To better reach these underserved populations, LOSH and the collaborating organizations develop shorter educational sessions and materials that are adapted to the distinctive needs of the workers they serve, in

terms of language, literacy, hazards specific to their community, etc. We also are developing community leaders/health promoters who are working with SoCalCOSH to reach workers where they congregate, including consulates, health fairs, and street corner day laborer sites.

In the coming year we are embarking on a new initiative with workers in nail salons in Southern California to investigate hazards of chemical exposures. We are also expanding our work through a statewide initiative to prevent work-related heat illness.

LOSH also collaborates with the California Department of Public Health to translate and disseminate factsheets about work-related fatalities and how they can be prevented: [www.losh.ucla.edu/resources-publications/FACE-fact-sheets.html](http://www.losh.ucla.edu/resources-publications/FACE-fact-sheets.html). And, we worked with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to create an assessment tool to create effective educational materials in Spanish: [www.losh.ucla.edu/projects/spanish-resources.html](http://www.losh.ucla.edu/projects/spanish-resources.html)

Last January, we launched our redesigned LOSH website. Look for the LOSH Spanish website to go live in the next couple months!!

Many of our publications in the last year address critical issues affecting workers' health and safety -- from the disproportionate impact of workplace hazards on immigrant workers to green buildings and good, green jobs. Recent reports and publications include:

- "Cananea Copper Mine: An International Effort to Improve Hazardous Working Conditions in Mexico," *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health*, January 2009: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19267122>
- "Risk Amid Recovery: Occupational Health and Safety of Latino Day Laborers in the Aftermath of the Gulf Coast Hurricanes," *Organization and Environment*, December 2009: <http://www.coba.usf.edu/jermier/TOC22four.html>
- "Green Buildings, Good Jobs, Safe Jobs: Pathway to a Sustainable LA," 2009: <http://www.losh.ucla.edu/pdf/green-jobs-report.pdf>
- A special issue of the journal *New Solutions* featuring articles from the Fifth International Congress on Women, Work and Health in Zacatecas, Mexico, forthcoming: <http://www.newsolutionsjournal.com>

## Students and Interns

We sponsored another year of amazing interns through the national Occupational Health Internship Program (OHIP). The students researched job stressors facing household cleaners, the effect of ports truck driver employment relations on job safety conditions, and the hazards and benefits of green building retrofit jobs (see Community Scholars Report, Appendix). For information about OHIP, see: [www.losh.ucla.edu/about/ohip-internships.html](http://www.losh.ucla.edu/about/ohip-internships.html).

We also collaborated with UCLA professors to provide internships for students: <http://www.losh.ucla.edu/youngworkers/about/internship.html>

**For information about upcoming LOSH courses and events, see:**  
<http://www.losh.ucla.edu/training-events/index.html>

## New OSHA Leadership

In conclusion, as we prepare for this new decade of advances in worker health and safety preventions, we are thrilled to welcome David Michaels as the new Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA. Check the OSHA website ([www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)) for new initiatives, including a Hispanic Worker Health and Safety Conference April 14-15 in Houston. We look forward to sharing our experiences from LA at the conference and collaborating with the OSHA leadership team on this and other events.

With warmest wishes,

*The Staff of UCLA-LOSH*

