

**Remarks Prepared for Delivery by
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**Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association
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Good afternoon! It is great to be with you today at the 30th annual VPPPA conference. To echo Secretary Perez, thank you all for the great commitments you have made to protect the safety and health of your employees. And I cannot emphasize enough that word "commitment."

Investing in the safety and health of workers is about growing a culture; not simply developing a safety management program and then hoping it works - you have to feed it and care for it so that it succeeds and continues to succeed. That's what sets our VPP partners apart - you all commit to going that extra mile and it pays off.

Every year, our VPP partners come together to discuss best practices in keeping our nation's workers safe and healthy on the job - I appreciate the opportunity to update you on the work we are doing at OSHA, and talk about how vital our partnership with VPP participants really is.

You are role models for protecting the safety and health of workers across this country. You are the best of the best. But VPP participation isn't just about being the best, it's about helping others be better as well.

Other employers look up to you, including many who may never become part of VPP, and teaching them is part of your obligation, too. I know that many of you are already doing this, but we need - this country needs - every single person in this room to reach out to these other employers, large and small, to show them why safer, healthier workplaces are better for business, better for workers, better for the economy, better for the country.

- Teach them what everyone in this room knows - that investing in safety and health isn't just the right thing to do - it's also good for the bottom line. When employees feel protected, morale goes up, and both performance and profitability increase.
- Tell them that workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities take an enormous toll, not only on workers and their families, but also on our nation's economy and businesses. The National Safety Council estimates that in 2012, fatal and non-fatal work injuries cost our economy \$198.2 billion - that's over half a billion dollars every day!
- Explain to them that this is money they could be saving by incorporating better safety and health practices. For every dollar spent on an injury and illness prevention program, they can expect up to six times a return on their investment.

This is the message we need you to share.

When OSHA and businesses work together, we can save lives and jobs. Through targeted safety campaigns, we react quickly when specific areas of concern come to light. Our VPP partners can and do play a major role in the success of these campaigns.

We have known for decades that temporary workers are at greatly increased risk of injury - and we know why. Too often these workers are not adequately trained to identify potential hazards at a job site or the measures they can take to protect themselves.

Many temporary workers are new to a jobsite several times a year; and it's possible that some employers, thinking the temp worker may only be around a few days or a few weeks or even a few months, are less willing to devote the resources required to fully train that worker.

OSHA has launched a concerted initiative, involving enforcement, outreach, and training to ensure that temporary workers are protected from workplace hazards.

And I would like to announce that, today, in partnership with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, we are releasing a new publication: recommended practices for staffing agencies and host employers to better protect temporary workers from hazards on the job.

An employer's commitment to the safety of temporary workers should not mirror these workers' temporary status. All workers have the right to safe work, and employers have the duty to provide **all** workers with a workplace free of recognized serious hazards. And that includes necessary safety and health training.

Staffing agencies and their client employers who host temporary workers share the legal obligation to provide workplaces free of recognized hazards. Our new recommended practices publication highlights this joint responsibility.

We recommend that staffing agencies and host employers should: evaluate the worksite; train staff to identify and eliminate potential safety and health hazards; and implement injury and illness prevention programs.

Our guidance also recommends that staff agency/host employer contracts clearly define the temporary worker's tasks and the safety and health responsibilities of each employer. Staffing agencies should maintain contact with temporary workers to verify that the host has fulfilled its responsibilities for a safe workplace.

I urge VPPPA members, as our national leaders in protecting the safety and health of workers, to be the champions of these recommended practices. I ask that you implement these practices at your worksites, share innovative approaches with us and with other employers, and ensure that safety and health information is shared between host employers and staffing agencies. It is imperative that these employers see their joint responsibility in protecting temporary workers for what it really is - as a partnership, not a burden - and every one of you can help greatly with that message.

A great example of a VPP site doing its part to help protect temporary workers is the GE Healthcare Tower Avenue Plant in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At this plant, contractor and temporary employees

are trained to the same level as permanent GE employees, depending on the work area and work performed. All temporary workers and contractors performing construction work are required to complete an 8-hour safety orientation and pass a comprehension quiz to be able to work at the company their first day on site. This training must be repeated annually for even long term, or frequently-utilized contractors.

With everything we know about how to work safely, it's troubling to see how many workers are killed and seriously injured every year from falls. In fact, falls are still the leading cause of construction fatalities - they account for more than a third of all deaths in this industry.

For the third year now, OSHA has joined with stakeholders from industry and labor, and with NIOSH for a nationwide outreach effort to prevent fatal falls in construction. In June, OSHA and partners from industry, labor, academia and community organizations reached more than one million workers and 25,000 businesses as part of a National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction.

One of the companies that participated in this national event was LPR Construction, a steel erection and industrial services contractor based in Loveland, Colorado - a VPP Mobile Workforce company for 15 years. LPR construction was instrumental in the development of the mobile workforce program and in the demonstrating to the construction industry how to get fall protection right.

In 1991, LPR construction implemented a proactive fall protection policy that required all ironworkers to maintain 100% tie off above 6 feet, despite federal regulation only requiring 15 feet and 30 feet tie off for ironworkers. Since implementing this program, LPR has saved the lives or the bones of more than 60 workers who fell and who otherwise would have been seriously injured. They've also developed and pioneered the use of the Beam Safe station, a horizontal life line that attaches to steel beams so that workers are protected on every jobsite.

We ask all of you, as VPP partners, to follow LPR's lead in implementing proactive fall protection policies and to encourage other employers, whether or not they are currently VPP partners, to do the same.

These safety campaigns represent OSHA's strong commitment to ensuring all workers are protected and that all employers have the necessary information and resources to make workplaces safer. And, as you can see, it all comes back to everyone working together.

We are very proud of our VPP partners and the great things you are doing to protect your workers. As of July 2014, there were 2,293 active VPP participants, protecting more than 875,000 workers. The nation knows that VPP participants are the cream of the crop when it comes to protecting the safety and health of workers, so as the program grows, we know that we have to ensure the program is attracting, accepting, and retaining the best of the best.

And we know, from your experience, that Safety and Health Management Systems work in enterprises of all sizes and in every industry. The keys to success are management commitment to safety, and workers who are empowered to participate.

We are focused on making VPP as good as it can be. We have to do this, though, in a fiscal climate where we simply cannot fully fund everything we want to accomplish, including many of our top priorities. This is why we have to become more efficient with the resources we do have. We need to "grow smart" to help VPP stay strong.

VPP remains a very high priority for OSHA and we want to see the program continue to thrive. Administrations change, but our commitment to the program doesn't waver. Last night, your Board of Directors held a reception to honor plants that had been in VPP for more than 30 years. I was very proud to stand together with my predecessors from the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush Administrations, handing out the plaques to the managers and workers at those facilities who are so dedicated to worker safety.

But to make VPP thrive, we have to continually improve our internal processes and ensure that only the highest quality of applicants, those with the best safety and health management systems, are accepted into the program.

However, in order to continue providing the greatest assistance to businesses, the most help for hard-to-reach and vulnerable workers, as well as the myriad of other benefits of VPP, we must work together to make sure that all businesses and stakeholders understand that working with us makes good business sense.

We, especially, need to reach out to companies, organizations, and policy-makers that don't currently get the message and, as a result, needlessly contribute to jeopardizing workers' lives and limbs.

And this is where we really need your help - to share your successes and "pay it forward" by convincing others that what we say is true... that businesses succeed when they protect their workers.

As VPP participants, we need you to not only be great employers for your workers - we need you to be great advocates of safety and health protections - we need you to help educate other employers.

Over the past year, our priorities have remained focused on eliminating the reapproval backlog, working on new applications from Department of Defense sites, and scheduling other new approvals. Several regions have already effectively eliminated their backlogs and have begun aggressively evaluating new applications.

I have made a strong commitment to help our nation's armed services protect their uniformed and civilian workers, and we are fulfilling that by growing the number of partnerships we have with DoD sites. Eight new DoD applications have been submitted and two of these sites have already been approved - a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredging project in Portsmouth, Virginia and a Naval Surface Warfare Center in Indian Head, Maryland.

A great example of one of our existing DoD VPP partners is Honeywell Technology Solutions Inc., based in Colorado Springs. Honeywell assists in the operation, control, and maintenance of satellites, as part of the Air Force Satellite Control Network.

This Honeywell site developed several processes to drive to zero defects and zero injuries, helping them achieve and maintain their VPP Star program. These processes foster safety discussions between managers and workers, who together monitor leading and lagging indicators each month. And the site's "Good Catch" system requires all employees to identify and keep an eye out for hazards, take time to correct hazards or report them to the team who can properly address them.

Another area on which we are working is to revise the policy on the how VPP should evaluate sites where there are extensive process safety hazards. Think about it - in general, one of the primary criteria we use to evaluate the effectiveness of a site's safety program is the site's injury and illness rates. But for PSM sites, this is clearly not the best measure since the greatest risk at such sites is a catastrophic event.

We are developing a demonstration program to explore alternative methods for PSM participants to meet VPP requirements, and we want you to play an active role in the development of this program.

Finally, I want to mention that we are considering ways to expand the role and expectations of our Special Government Employees (SGE). SGEs represent the cooperative spirit of VPP and embody the idea of continuous improvement through the sharing of information and best practices. We have put together a workgroup that will include VPPPA to come up with ideas on how the SGE program can have the broadest impact.

In closing, I want to thank the leadership of VPPPA for their great work, and I want to reiterate my thanks to every one of you for your commitment to protecting the safety and health of your workers. There is no doubt that, together, we have saved thousands of lives, and limbs, and lungs. Still, despite our efforts, far too many preventable injuries, illnesses and fatalities continue to occur.

Workers and families should never have to accept the risk of death as a condition for employment - and neither should any employer.

VPP participants have shared their success stories with us over the years and the results are consistent and clear - investing in effective and protective Safety and Health Management Systems results in: reduced numbers and severity of injuries; lower costs associated with injuries; increased productivity; decreased absenteeism and employee turnover; increased worker satisfaction; and increased profits.

I strongly urge you to share your success stories with others and help us get the word out that partnering with OSHA pays off. We must continue to work together to ensure these positive results are seen by the business community, policy-makers, and others with a stake in what we do.

Remember... in order to continue this forward momentum and help create more success stories, we have to make VPP as strong as it can be - to "grow smart" - and continue touting the benefits of our partnerships.

Please, when you return home, champion our new recommended practices for protecting temporary workers. Serve as role models by implementing them in your workplaces and encouraging others to

do the same. All workers deserve a safe and healthful workplace and with your help, we will continue to pursue this goal.

VPP participants are in the best position to advocate for all of this - and I encourage you to "pay it forward" by offering your perspective and experience to help us educate the rest of the country on the benefits of investing in safety and health protections for workers. You are the leaders in safety and health. Your experiences, your opinions, your voices carry great weight - and you will be listened to.

Taking these steps helps us all maintain the stellar reputation of the VPP, strengthens our partnerships, and puts us in a better position to achieve our shared goal of saving lives and jobs.

I thank you again for inviting me today and I wish you all a great conference.

But before I leave the stage, it is my honor to present the annual SGE of the Year Award.

OSHA is grateful for the commitment of VPP employers who sponsor their SGEs' participation.

Let's take a quick moment to recognize all of our SGEs in attendance today. Can everyone who is a SGE please stand up and be recognized.. Thank you all for your great work!

The SGE of the Year Award was established ten years ago to honor the important contributions of these individuals who are so important to VPP's success. This award recognizes a Special Government Employee "who epitomizes and exhibits exceptional support, effort and action in VPP, and in so doing sets him-or-herself apart from other SGEs."

The person selected must: be actively involved in volunteer activities that benefit VPP; perform outreach and assistance to employers and workers outside their own company; and have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to the partnership ideals of VPP.

Ten worthy SGEs have been nominated for this annual award. As I announce the nominees for the 10th Annual SGE of the Year Award, I ask that they please join me on stage.

Region 1: Stephen Gauthier, General Electric, Lynn, MA

Region 2: Stuart Mirowitz, Pfizer, Pearl River, NY

Region 3: Kristyn Grow, Cintas Corporation, Richmond, VA

Region 4: Maxwell C. Bassett, Naval Air Station Jacksonville, FL

Region 5: Bill Nelson, Hendrickson Trailer Commercial Vehicle Systems, Lebanon, IN

Region 6: Haney D. Robertson, LANXEES, Baytown, TX

Region 7: Mike Murphy, Ply Gem, Kearney, MO

Region 8: Ed McGrail, Bechtel National - Pueblo Chemical Agent Pilot Plant, Pueblo, CO

Region 9: Charles Keegan, Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow, CA

Region 10: Michelle Steeler, URS, Boise, ID

Congratulations on your nomination and your commitment to worker safety and health. Each of you is a champion, a true VPP Star!

Let's give this year's nominees a big round of applause.

It is now my honor and pleasure to announce the recipient of the 2014 SGE of the Year Award. Please join me in recognizing this year's recipient: Region 7's Mike Murphy.

Now, let me say just a few words about Mike's extraordinary initiative and dedication to VPP.

Mike serves on the Region VII VPPPA as Director-at-Large. He also serves on the Region VII VPPPA Mentoring Program.

Mike volunteered his own facility to host the 2013 SGE class due to travel restrictions. Had Mike not taken this initiative, the Region VII SGE class would have been cancelled for the first time in twelve years.

Mike also mentored 3 private sector sites and 2 DOL sites during 2013.

Finally, Mike volunteers his site so that his local fire department can coordinate in-service training exercises for their fire and rescue personnel.

Mike: On behalf of OSHA, the entire VPP community, and the federal government, we sincerely thank you. Congratulations and good work!