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Press Release

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Commissioner Drygas Honors Alaskans at Workers' Memorial Day Ceremony

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Heidi Drygas will speak today at a ceremony to commemorate Workers' Memorial Day. Local workers, officials, and faith leaders will gather at 12:30 p.m. at the Anchorage Firefighter Memorial to honor workers who died or sustained work-related injuries or illnesses. Workers' Memorial Day is also an opportunity for all workers and employers to honor fallen workers by pledging to take action to eliminate hazardous working conditions.

"Every Alaskan deserves a safe workplace so they can go home at the end of each day to be with their families and see their children grow up," said Commissioner Drygas. "In nearly every case, workplace fatalities can be prevented. Nothing is more important than protecting the lives of the men and women working in Alaska."

Nationwide, 4,405 workers died on the job in 2013 in comparison to 4,628 in the previous year. Alaska experienced 32 workplace fatalities in 2013 compared to 30 in the previous year. The long-term trend in Alaska shows significant progress with fatalities down 65 percent since 1992. However, data over the past few years illustrates a plateau in the rate of reduction. Similar to national trends, the majority of incidents occurred in the transportation industry.

The Alaska Occupational Safety and Health (AKOSH) program conducts inspections and consultation visits at more than 600 worksites per year with a goal of eliminating hazardous conditions and making sure that systems are in place to avoid serious workplace accidents. AKOSH currently has three areas of strategic focus to target resources on the following high hazard industry groups: seafood processing, transportation/warehousing, and construction.

The Consultation and Training Section is available to assist employers to identify and eliminate hazards, train workers, and establish systems to minimize the chances of a fatality or other serious accident. For information, call 1-800-656-4972.

To report hazardous conditions that may cause a fatality or other serious accident, contact the AKOSH Enforcement Section Hotline at 1-800-770-4940.

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