



LABOR NEWS

A Publication of the
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Mike Beebe, Governor

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James L. Salkeld, Director



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ON-LINE SERVICES – www.arkansas.gov/labor

On-line service offerings allow the Department of Labor to improve customer service by providing renewals and information to citizens using e-government. This is important for the Department as we continue to focus on improving customer service. Electricians and boiler operators or their agents may complete license renewal in a secure, encrypted environment. Electronic license renewal is fast, reliable, and convenient.

Since 2001, the Arkansas Department of Labor has partnered with the Information Network of Arkansas (INA) to provide its on-line government services to citizens and businesses. The agency began offering electrician license renewals in October 2001; and since then more than 5,100 electrician licenses have been renewed on-line. In 2003, the agency launched on-line license renewals for boiler operators and optional pocket cards for licensed boiler operators. More than 1,600 boiler operator licenses have been renewed on-line, and more than 3,800 boiler pocket cards have been issued to date.

Today, the agency's on-line offerings to citizens and businesses include renewal of electrician licenses, renewal of boiler operator licenses, and payment of elevator permit renewal invoices. The agency also provides a searchable on-line roster of licensed electricians that can be searched by name, city and county. The entire list of all licensed electricians and the list of all boiler operators throughout the state can be downloaded for a fee, or an electronic roster is available on CD at no charge.

The Department looks forward to expanding its on-line offerings and making additional agency services available via the Internet. The agency's web site is www.arkansas.gov/labor and selecting On-line Services (in the left menu area) allows direct access to the license renewals web page.

Other frequently used agency on-line offerings:

- The agency's Safety Division has two media libraries, where businesses and individuals can borrow safety videos without cost for safety training. The video listing and loan form is on the media library web page at:
http://www.arkansas.gov/labor/divisions/film_video_p1.html.
- The agency's Wage Claims section is responsible for collection of unpaid wages, vacation, bonuses, commissions, sick and severance pay. There is no charge to the public for these services. This section assists workers in trying to collect wages that they have been unable to receive from their employer. A wage claim form or a wage and hour

complaint form can be completed on-line, and then e-mailed to the department. More information is available under Employment Standards at:

<http://www.arkansas.gov/labor/divisions/index.html>

- The agency's Planning and Publications Division is responsible for all printing, publications, webpage management, and public relations contact for the department. A number of publications on a variety of topics can be mailed free of charge upon request, or they may be accessed on-line. Various laws, agency publications and other helpful information can be reviewed at:

http://www.arkansas.gov/labor/laws_regs/index.html

http://www.arkansas.gov/labor/laws_regs/law_p1.html#publications

<http://www.arkansas.gov/labor/publications/index.html>

The department's web site also offers information on board meeting schedules, statutes and regulations, training, frequently asked questions and answers (FAQ's), and various other forms that may be submitted through e-mail. We invite you to visit our web site.

OSHA ANNOUNCES EMPLOYER-PAID PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FINAL RULE



The U.S.
Department of
Labor's
Occupational Safety
and Health

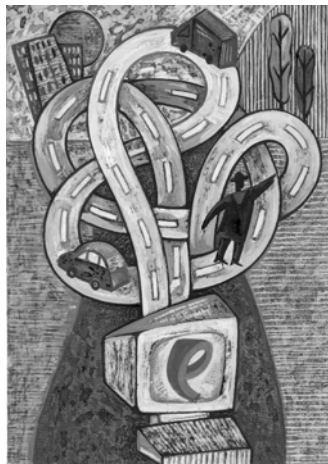
Administration (OSHA) recently announced a final rule on employer-paid personal protective equipment (PPE). Under the rule, all PPE, with a few exceptions, will be provided at no cost to the employee. OSHA anticipates that this rule will have substantial safety benefits that will result in more than 21,000 fewer occupational injuries per year. The rule, which is expected to be available any day, will be published in the Federal Register.

"Employees exposed to safety and health hazards may need to wear personal protective equipment to be protected from injury, illness and death caused by exposure to those hazards," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Edwin G. Foulke Jr. "This final rule will clarify who is responsible for paying for PPE, which OSHA anticipates will lead to greater compliance and potential avoidance of thousands of workplace injuries each year."

The final rule contains a few exceptions for ordinary safety-toed footwear, ordinary prescription safety eyewear, logging boots, and ordinary clothing and weather-related gear. The final rule also clarifies OSHA's requirements regarding payment for employee-owned PPE and replacement PPE. While these clarifications have added several paragraphs to the regulatory text, the final rule provides employees no less protection than they would have received under the 1999 proposed standard.

The rule also provides an enforcement deadline of six months from the date of publication to allow employers time to change their existing PPE payment policies to accommodate the final rule.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to assure the safety and health of America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual process improvement in workplace safety and health. For more information, visit www.osha.gov.



THINKING ABOUT A CAREER IN ARKANSAS?

The Department of Workforce Services' Discover Arkansas website has the perfect tool to narrow your search! It's called Real-Life Arkansas (see www.real-life.arkansas.gov). This "lifestyle budget calculator" approaches the subject from three different useful angles.

First, it lets you choose the city in Arkansas you'd like to live in and then helps you prepare a budget for living in that area. It gives a description of basic apartment amenities, as well as

average and luxury apartments and houses, and calculates the monthly cost. Then you choose the utilities you will need/want, such as electricity, phone, cable, internet, cell phone, and calculates that total. Next you choose what your eating habits will be, i.e. eating at home, dining out, half and half, and calculates what that will cost you. Next you choose from a menu how much you will be spending on clothing, entertainment, personal upkeep, and miscellaneous items. Finally, it asks you to calculate how much of your salary you will want to put in savings for the future.

Once you've made all of these choices, it prints out a budget so you can begin looking for a career that will allow you to live within this budget.

You can then enter the educational level you have achieved, or plan to achieve, and the area of work that interests you, such as marketing, manufacturing, construction, etc. Then finally, the tool indicates if you need to stay in school in order to achieve your dreams, or if you need to adjust your vision of where you will be living, what you will be eating, etc. according to the educational level you have chosen.

If you already know how much money you want to earn, you can simply enter that amount and then enter the educational level you have attained or will attain, and the area of interest you are seeking a job in, and it will let you know if you need to adjust your plans anywhere.

If you already know the occupation you want to pursue, you can enter that and it will compute the average annual salary, your yearly taxes, and give you your monthly income. At that point, you can then see how you can afford to live according to the city you choose and the other choices you opt for in your profile, i.e., utilities, housing, etc.

This is an invaluable tool for students to help them set goals in order to achieve the lifestyle they aspire to in the future, as well as proving the importance of staying in school in order to achieve their goals!



IN THE WORKS

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, nationwide, women were 46.3 percent of all employed workers in 2006, and accounted for more than half of all workers within financial activities, education and health services, and leisure and hospitality. However, they were underrepresented in construction, mining, manufacturing, and transportation and utilities – accounting for less than 1/3 of the workforce in each of these industries.

In the third quarter of 2007, median weekly earnings of the nation's 96 million full-time wage and salary workers age 25 and over were \$745. Of those workers who had no high school diploma, the women earned an average of \$368 and the men earned \$472. Those with no college but who were high school graduates had median weekly wages of \$512 for women, and \$697 for men. Median weekly earnings for workers with a bachelor's degree (and no additional education) were \$868 for women and \$1,141 for men. Among college graduates with advanced degrees (professional or master's degree and above), female workers made \$1,080, compared with \$1,475 for their male counterparts.

Average pay in the San Francisco metropolitan area was 19 percent above the national average in 2006, the highest among the 78 areas studied. Pay was the lowest in the Brownsville, Texas metropolitan area where workers earned an average of 78 cents for every dollar earned by workers nationwide. In the Memphis, TN/AR/MS area, Arkansas workers earned an average of 95 cents for every dollar earned by workers nationwide.

ATTORNEY GENERAL WARNS PART-TIME JOB SCAMS MEAN FULL-TIME TROUBLES

Most of us would welcome the opportunity to make a little extra money with little effort. Accordingly, when consumers get emails or read ads in the newspaper about part-time jobs that will only require a couple hours of work per week and put a few hundred dollars in their bank accounts, they are understandably tempted to take the position. Unfortunately, these new employees soon find out that instead of making money, they lose it to a scam artist. While many of these part-time job schemes are not new, they continue to victimize Arkansas consumers. Thus, Attorney General Dustin McDaniel issued this consumer alert to help Arkansans identify and avoid part-time job scams.

While these scams can take many forms, they have some common characteristics. Bogus job offers almost always require the "employee" to deposit checks, money orders, or accept funds wired into his or her own personal bank account or credit card account, then keep a commission and wire the balance somewhere else, often to places outside of the United States. Some victims of these scams have also been asked to process packages or perform certain tasks, such as envelope stuffing.

"Whether the task is stuffing envelopes or forwarding checks, the net result is the same for the consumer, who almost always ends up losing a lot of money and getting a lot of trouble for their effort," said McDaniel.

Victims, who are promised big returns for performing tasks, often pay up front costs and never receive a dime in return; while others later learn that the money they are transferring is stolen, making them party to illegal activities.

Here are some tips to remember to avoid falling for a part-time job scam:

- Don't do business with any entity you do not know or trust. If you are unsure about a company, check their credentials by contacting the Better Business Bureau, www.bbb.org, and the Attorney General's Office, www.ArkansasAG.gov.
- Don't take a job that requires a payment up-front for a paycheck later. If you send the company money, you are unlikely to get any of it back.
- Never give your personal information, like your bank account number, in response to an unsolicited job offer.
- Never accept money from an unknown source.
- Always remember the old adage, "if something sounds too good to

(Continued on next page – see AG)

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_____ Add my name

_____ Remove my name

_____ Change my information (please include old label)

_____ E-mail Labor News

Name and title _____

Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-mail Address _____



LABOR DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE HONORED

Sharon Adams with the Arkansas Department of Labor was recently named Professional Assistant of the Year by the State of Arkansas

Interdepartmental Relations Committee.

The announcement was made at the 36th Annual Conference for Professional Assistants at the Embassy Suites in Little Rock.

The award is in recognition of her outstanding service and professionalism. Nominations were taken from across state government and winners were chosen according to their professional accomplishments; effectiveness working with people, management, and their organization; professional improvement, as

well as community involvement.

Adams has been with the Arkansas Department of Labor since 1987.

AG (*Continued from page 3*)
be true, then it probably is."

If you receive a part-time job solicitation, you can forward it to the Public Protection Department of the Arkansas Attorney General's Office via email, oag@ArkansasAG.gov or via fax, (501) 682-8118.

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