



# LABOR Works...



SPECIAL RELEASE

Let LABOR Work 4 U...

OCTOBER 2008—Vol. 2 Issue 3

## The Audacity of Hope - Commissioner's Message



The Audacity of Hope! The Audacity of Hope! It is the how dare you to the world. To be audacious is to be daring, fearless and bold. How dare you hope! Today is a day I congratulate you as graduates, I congratulate Obama as the Democratic presidential candidate and Americans everywhere for their audacity. Who would have thought in our lifetime we would live to see a man of color be the frontrunner for the white house. He has reached this position because he had the audacity to hope, the audacity to dream and the audacity to work on those hopes and dreams.

As you sit there tonight, with a lot of hard work behind of you, think of the possibilities. What is it that they told you that you couldn't do? Where is it that they told you, you couldn't live? Where is it that they told you that you could not go? And who is it that they told you that you could not be? Obama has challenged us all to overcome the barriers of our mind with hope. He has given us a hammer to smash away the mental chains of slavery that hold us back. If he can do it, what is my excuse? This is a man of color born to a bi-racial couple, one from America, one from Kenya, who was born in Hawaii and has risen to be the.....dare I say it, the First African American President of the United States. It reinforces to the people of this country and the world that America is the land of opportunity. A Black man can rise

out of the ashes of slavery and run the most powerful country in the world because of hope. Hope, Hope is the fuel that powers dreams and motivates men and women to do the impossible. What is your barrier? What is your excuse? What is holding you back from living the life you know that you deserve? Education is the one commodity that they have not quite figured out how to repossess. Once you get it, you got it. No one but the good Lord can take it back. Today you will be armed with the sheepskin that is but the first step in the long road to prosperity. This diploma means that you have earned the right to certain jobs and salary levels in the marketplace. But will that be enough?

...con'd on page 4.

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## Letter to the Worker -

### Waiting for the Day to End

By Cadwell Turnbull, Summer Intern

This is more than just a job. You walk into the doors of your workplace and enter your cubby or your office not really knowing why you are there and what you are doing. You have some vague idea of assigned tasks and things that need to be completed and you look at it as a burden that needs to be offloaded as soon as possible or an obligation that needs to be postponed or neglected for as long as possible. You walk in already waiting for the day to end, already waiting for the time to come when you can check out and go out into your "real" life or perhaps drop your tired head on a pillow to go to sleep. You go through the monotonous drone of the day with your eyes heavy, wanting to close, removed from your task, detached and anxious to finish. And you may ask in your more existential moments: "Why am I here? Why am I doing this job?" The answer to this question is most likely money. Money, paper whose value depends on how much of it is in circulation, exchanged through hands until they are too old and worn to be used anymore. Is this mass accepted form of currency the key to life and happiness? Has it become you? Remove all the meaning everyone has attached to it and money will still be just paper.

It is not that you are greedy and it is not that you are materialistic, but life has been reduced to the state that this paper decides whether you live comfortably and its absence is a big deal. So you work for that paycheck which is related to your survival and the level of comfort you can experience in your real life outside of work. So much is motivated by this currency, it decides too many things in your life. Though it can provide comfort and survival to your physical self and/or your family, but can it really provide for your spirit and your heart? There is a reason why the term "slaving away" was created and why so

...con'd on page 2

## FMLA: New Requirements Without Regs and Regs with out Requirements



As if it weren't enough of a hassle, FMLA's just gotten messier. The feds have added "service member family" leave-but without the regulations needed to administer it-and "qualifying exigency" leave is not required but "encouraged." Here's what you need to know.

What the Fed's have done is added "service member leave," which allows family members up to twenty six (26) weeks off the job to care for a wounded member of the military. They've also added so-called "qualified exigency leave," which applies in any situation where the family member needs time off because their loved one is serving in the military, but for reasons other than caring for him or her.

What worries employers is that although the law is in effect now, the regulations businesses need to administer them- for example, a definition of just what a "qualified exigency" is does not yet exist. Until then VIDOL advises simply viewing the changes as *amendments to the existing law*. VIDOL also suggests that you download a copy of the statute, because it shows in **bold** where the law has changed. [www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/fmlaamended.htm](http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/fmlaamended.htm). For both types of leave the standard FMLA provisions still apply: You must continue group health benefits, you must permit intermittent leave, and job restoration is required. Here are some tips for dealing with the two initial types of leave.

### Qualifying Exigency Leave Entitlement

Though the law has been passed, this provision is not in effect until the Secretary issues a definition of qualifying exigency." In the

#### A Letter to the Worker con'd...

many people use it when talking about work. In order to survive and live comfortably you slave away your life.

It's a funny trade; you work to sustain your life. If you are only working for that reason then you spend a great deal of your life waiting for your life to begin, waiting for the day to end so you can get off of work. "At work" is a peculiar phrase. "Work" has become a place to go, a place to be and not an action to be made or be enjoyed. Work has become a place you need to get off of and not a pleasurable thing needing to get done. Work used to be a verb

once. Now it's a four wall prison that confines you. The people that actually enjoy their work don't see it as work. They see it as a passion being expressed through service. They are providing a service, a service in which they enjoy and are being rewarded for. It is a beautiful thing when a person can wake up in the morning and want to go to work; when one doesn't view work as a separate entity but an important part of your own growth and pursuit of happiness.

Money should be the second or the third concern. Passion should be the first. When you approach your job with passion you can begin to experience something greater than running the treadmill of survival; you now have a sense of purpose.

If you work 8 hours a day you accumulate approximately 70 days a year at work alone. If you are a working adult, for 20 years you amass approximately 4 years worth of work hours. You have an opportunity to make those years as rewarding as possible or a meaningless waste of time that its only purpose is to provide a cash flow. You have the opportunity to make this subtraction from your already short life mean something for yourself and those around you. You can find for yourself a service you want to give, a purpose you want to live, and you can be free from the slavery of a workday so you can stop looking forward to the day ending.

~Written by Cadwell Turnbull .  
Summer Intern, Office of the  
Commissioner

Type of Leave Issue	Qualifying Exigency Service member Family Section 102(a)(1)(E)	Service member Family Leave Section 102(a)(3)
<b>Family relationship</b>	Service member must be spouse, son, daughter, and or parent of employee	Employee must be spouse, son, daughter, parent or <u>next of kin</u> of service member
<b>Military status of service member</b>	On active duty or being called to active duty	Member of the armed forces who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, therapy, is in outpatient status or is on the temporary disability retired list for a serious illness
<b>Connection of leave to service member's military service</b>	Employee is needed to address qualifying exigencies arising out of active duty or call to active duty	Employee is needed to care for covered service member

interim VIDOL *encourages* employers to provide this type of leave. To offer it now, but not expose yourself to problems when the regs do come out, including a vague definition for "qualifying exigency" in your policy. Give a few obvious examples (some have suggested the need for childcare because a spouse is on duty, or time off to attend predeployment briefings), then handle requests on a case-by-case basis.

## Role of the Local One Stop Centers

The Workforce Investment Board’s (WIB) strategic plan identifies the valuable role of the one-stop career center system. The Virgin Islands Department of Labor serves as the storefront that delivers products and services to advance the WIB’s mission: to connect businesses with a skilled workforce and create economic vitality for the United States Virgin Islands. The matrix (pictured across) was developed for the WIB’s strategic plan in conjunction with a locally-customized concept by Workforce Development Consultant Sandra Hastings. The diagram illustrates the connection between Business Services and Job Seeker Services, the drivers of business needs in consideration of Job Seeker Service Design, and the role of the WIB in connecting the elements together for a seamless, strategic one-stop workforce system.



\*For more information regarding The Virgin Islands Workforce Investment Board (WIB) information please contact: **Adele C. Soto, Executive Director**  
**Sunny Isles Professional Building, Suite #7**  
**St. Croix, VI 00820**  
**P: 340.773.5237 F: 340.778.4693**

## Conducting the Administrative Hearing

In keeping with our goal to improve the administrative hearing process, on Tuesday, July 1, 2008 the Hearings & Appeals Unit held an all day, in-house, Administrative Hearing Training Workshop-Part 1. In order to continue to provide high quality, consistent, accurate and up to date information to our customer, the entire staff participated in an intensive classroom session where the implementation of new techniques were analyzed and adopted. Some topics covered were, “Demeanor & the Presiding Officer”...“The Opening Statement-Communicating With Understanding”...“How to conduct a fair Telephonic Hearing” and “The Nuts & Bolts of Due Process”. The staff was very enthusiastic and fully engaged in all aspects of the problem-solving modules

distributed and looks forward to Part 2 of the planned training, which will resume in November 2008. One objective accomplished was to have all staff disseminate the same information, another was to create, upgrade and edit all printed materials utilized in the hearing process, with the ultimate desire to compile these documents into a “How To...” manual.



### Legal Corner

Update your legal humor:

- In the 1900’s, an elephant was actually tried, convicted, and hanged for murdering a politician’s daughter during a circus parade.
- Dueling is legal in Paraguay so long as both parties are registered blood donors.
- In Texas, it’s illegal to put graffiti on someone else’s cow.
- Nearly fifty percent of all bank robberies take place on a Friday.
- The Declaration of Independence was written on hemp paper.

## Audacity Of Hope

**Con'd...**The Federal Department of the Labor estimates that 90 % of the jobs created within the next ten years will need some type of post secondary degree or certification. It is great that you have a diploma but in today's world you will need more. Education is a continuous process. It could be as simple as learning how to program that remote control or figuring out the impact of the mortgage crisis on the gross territorial product. No matter how simple or difficult, knowledge is valuable. Make sure that you learn something every day.

Almost daily I hear someone talk about the difficulty of our times and how there are no jobs to be found on the island. I know how hard the times are and I often wonder how some of my people are making it, but the job statistics speak to another story. One of our initiatives at the Department of Labor is to create a data driven decision making environment. This means that we will use actual information that can be validated to make our decisions. For example if you have 20 bags of Sello Rojo in your cupboard and you have a family of 3 and none of you like rice then you don't need to buy anymore. That's a simple data driven decision. This is different to how we have traditionally made decisions, "well I feel that it don't have enough rice and maybe my kids gone start liking rice soon so I gone buy 10 mo bag."

In light of this new initiative we have developed a job tracking report and have found out some amazing statistics. Would you believe that between January and May, only 5 months, we have had over 1000 different jobs posted at the Department of Labor in the Territory? Where were the majority

of those jobs? In St. Thomas right? ..... Wrong, they were in St. Croix. There were 380 job openings in St. Thomas and 581 in St. Croix. That's over 200 more job openings and that does not include any central government jobs because we don't list them. This is the private sector and semi-autonomous agencies only. I am going to give you a minute to digest that information because it took me a minute when I saw the numbers.



The data tells another story, out of the 1000 jobs that were available only about 132 or 10% of them were filled by people we had referred from the Department of Labor. It could mean that we weren't referring enough people but the stats also showed that we had over 2000 referrals. This data has led us to believe what we have been hearing all along on the news. We have a serious gap between the employment available and the skill level of our job seekers. If you don't believe me, check the stats. The V.I. Police Department can't find enough people that can pass their test, neither can HOVENSA, neither can the Bureau of Corrections. The turnover rate of the tellers in the banks is high, the Divi has resorted to recruiting staff on the radio and the Buccaneer has a constant ad for staff in the Avis.

I say all of this to prove to you that in the abundance of water the fool is

thirsty. There are opportunities, they are not abundant and times are hard but if you prepare yourself, you can take advantage of them. What are your next steps? At the Department of Labor, we recognize these skills gaps and are working to build a talent development system to make sure that you have options. This is no easy task, we have to put together the right combination of education, training, counseling and skill building in order to create an adaptable, technologically literate and employable workforce.

You have made it across the start line. I didn't mis-speak, you made it across the start line. Now that you have your diploma, you have to go ahead and acquire more education. This will make you a viable part of this workforce. Be audacious, and move fearlessly to devour as much knowledge as possible. You have to approach your work from a value added perspective. You have to add value to you and what you do. This means that when you come to work you add value to the people you interact with, the product that you produce and the company that you work for and, if you work for yourself, all the better.

I hope that whatever you decide to do from this day forward that you remember that you are the master of your fate and you are the captain of your soul. Empower yourself to have total control over your life and the decisions that you make. Hold yourself accountable for all your actions, constantly assess to make sure you are improving and this will lead to achievement. Remember that Hope is the fuel that drives dreams but persistence and determination is the magic that makes them real.

*~ Commissioner Albert Bryan, Jr.'s speech at Adult Education 's 2008 Commencement Ceremony.*

## Minimum Wage Cranks Up Again. Do You Have the Correct Posters Up?



The latest minimum wage increase has taken place effective July 24, 2008 at a rate of

\$6.55 per hour, and a big change in FMLA is in effect now. Please ensure that you have posters reflecting the changes in a prominent place.

Here's a run down of the most important local and federal requirements.

**Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).** Employers must display a notice of information for employee's on the minimum wage, overtime pay, child labor laws, enforcement of the FLSA, and contact information for the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

**Job Safety and Health.** Employers engaged in interstate commerce and

subject to the requirements of OSHA must display a copy of the poster "Job Safety and Health – It's the Law." This poster notifies employees that they are entitled to a workplace free from recognized hazards and explains how to report workplace hazards.

**Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).** Employers with fifty (50) or more workers must display a notice explaining an employee's rights and responsibilities under the FMLA, including eligibility for leave, notice requirements, job protection, health benefit continuation, and contact information for DOL. **Consolidated Equal Employment Opportunity.** All employers covered by the federal nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws, including **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, the **Age Discrimination in Employment**

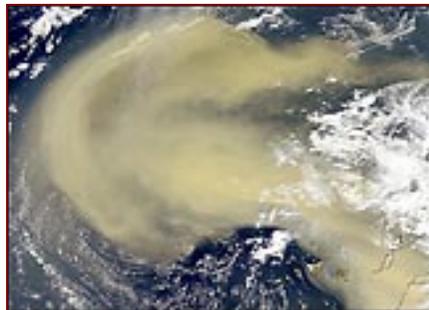
**Act**, the **Americans with Disabilities Act**, the **Equal Pay Act**, and laws protecting veterans from discrimination, must display this poster. **Employee Polygraph Protection Act.** All employers engaged in interstate commerce (which is defined broadly to include virtually all private employers) must display this poster. **Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).** Employers must display the revised USERRA poster titled "Your Rights Under USERRA" that explains the rights, benefits, and obligations of employees covered under USERRA. (There are separate posters for federal and nonfederal employers). With two wars on and veterans returning, this one's especially important these days.

## When The Dust Settles *-by June Austin*

According to a finding reported by the Division of Environmental Protection, the agency issued a public advisory alerting the public that the hazy skies observed in the Virgin Islands were a result of dust from the Sahara Desert. The advisory found that the dust reduces visibility and results in poor air quality. DPNR stated that..."Due to the dust storms and rise in warm air, the sand in the Sahara rises above the desert. This rise of accompanying warm air lifts the dust particles about 15,000 feet above the African deserts and these particles travel westward. As a result, several hundred million tons of African dust can be transported over the Atlantic basin."

Therefore, the Department advised the public in those affected areas to

remove (or discontinue) their downspouts to avoid potential contaminants from being washed into their cisterns. During this period, the Department noted that it was not necessary to boil cistern water supplies. The Department added, "This will be necessary only if it is determined that biological



contaminants were present."

Nonetheless, the agency did

recommend that bottled water be used for drinking until further assessments were made on the impact of cistern water supplies.

Sahara dust storms pass through the region several times a year, but mainly in the spring and throughout the summer months. On a more positive note, certain meteorological circles claim that the airborne particulates inhibit thunderstorms and thus tropical storm development during the hurricane season.

For more information contact the Division of Environmental Protection at 773-1082 or 774-3320 or go to [www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov) or <http://weather.noaa.gov/weather/current/TIST.html>.

## Energy Costs Push Utah to Move to Four-Day Workweek

Governor's office estimates that 1,000 of 3,000 state buildings will be closed on Fridays, cutting energy costs by about 20 percent. Utah will evaluate the initiative for a year to allow for adjustments in the future.

### Energy Costs Push Utah to Move to Four-Day Workweek



Soaring energy costs have prompted Utah to announce it is moving to a four-day workweek, making it the first state in the nation to do so.

With gas prices racing past \$4 a gallon creating an unprecedented burden on many workers, on June 26, Gov. Jon Huntsman announced the Working 4 Utah initiative. Beginning in August, state government service

hours will be extended from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday. State administrative offices will be closed on Fridays, with the exception of essential public services.

"We live in a dynamic, ever-changing environment and it's crucial that we take a serious look at how we can adapt and maintain our state's unparalleled quality of life," said Huntsman in a statement about the program.

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It's only a matter of time before other state governments follow in Utah's footsteps, says Susan Seitel, president

of WFC Resources, a Minnetonka, Minnesota-based consulting firm.

"Minnesota is looking at this too," she says. "This is absolutely the beginning of a trend."

Many state governments, as well as companies, recognize that moving to a four-day workweek not only helps save energy costs but also appeals to younger workers, she says.

"It solves so many problems—it reduces the carbon footprint, saves on commuting costs, makes companies look more responsible and gives people more flexibility," Seitel says.

Utah will evaluate the initiative for a year to allow for adjustments in the future.

## Tool: Employer Pay Equity Self-Audit

Business and Professional Women/USA, an advocacy organization for working women, adapted this audit from a Department of Labor document to help employers gauge whether they are paying men and women employees equally. The organization notes that discrepancies can lead to costly lawsuits.

In a time when women make up nearly half the workforce, many think that the issue of equal pay no longer exists. Business and Professional Women/USA begs to differ.

According to the organization, the latest Census Bureau estimate reports that full-time year-round female workers make 77 cents for every dollar a male earns. For minority women this statistic worsens, as African-American women make 66 cents, Latinas make 55 cents and Asian-American women make 80 cents. "Given the current rate of

change, it will be another 50 years before women achieve equal pay," according to the organization, which believes that gender discrimination "is not only a women's issue but a business issue."

"Employers play a major role in helping to end the wage gap and to treat women fairly in the workplace," according to the group. Employers will suffer from pay discrimination not only because of expensive lawsuits but also because women—whether as customers or employees—will have less money to spend and invest, the group argues.

BPW/USA believes in the three-pronged approach to addressing the issue of pay equity. "We believe that legislation should be passed to enact tougher laws; businesses should be held accountable for their unfair pay practices and mindful of what they pay their employees; and women

should be given the knowledge and tools to empower themselves to get even at work."

The employer pay equity self-audit was developed to assist employers in analyzing their own wage-setting policies and establishing consistent and fair pay practices for all. BPW/USA encourages employers to answer all of the questions in the audit to further examine how they are doing with paying and promoting their female employees fairly.

For more information about BPW/USA, please go to [www.bpwusa.org](http://www.bpwusa.org).

*Business and Professional Women/USA is a leading advocate for working women and a multi-generational, bipartisan membership organization with 20,000 active members nationwide. BPW/USA's legislative platform revolves around the issues of workplace equity and work/life balance. The organization believes that pay equity undeniably falls within this focus, and so fair pay for working women is one of its top policy priorities.*



## Labor Department Web Site Encourages Hiring Of Wounded Veterans By Mark Schoeff,



Wounds Mike Bradley suffered in Iraq have become signatures of the

conflict. He took early medical retirement in November after an improvised explosive device caused a traumatic brain injury. Finding a job with a Washington national security consulting firm has contributed substantially to his successful return to civilian life. The company, Halfaker & Associates, has taken simple steps to help Bradley cope with lingering effects of his injuries, like providing him time to “relax ... take [a] break and regroup” when headaches hit or he’s having trouble concentrating. “My employer understands me and the issues I need to deal with on a daily basis,” Bradley said at a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington on Wednesday, August 20. Bradley participated in the launch of a Web site sponsored by the Department of Labor, America’s Heroes at Work ([www.americasheroesatwork.gov](http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov)), that encourages employers to hire returning veterans who have brain injuries and/or post-traumatic stress disorder. The agency collaborates with the departments of Defense,

Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services and Education as well as the Social Security Administration on the site, which was set up at a cost of \$300,000 to \$500,000. It provides fact sheets, training tools and a hot line to educate companies about ways to accommodate employees who suffer from the injuries. Problems they experience may include headaches, vertigo, anxiety, sleep disorders, short-term memory deficiencies and difficulty making decisions.

Neil Romano, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy, said most steps employers can take are simple, such as providing a quiet room or replacing flickering lights. Labor and defense officials at the Web site rollout stressed that about 80 percent of the ailments are caused by concussions and are temporary. They touted the benefits of hiring veterans, who they said possess initiative, leadership and the ability to work in teams.

David Chu, Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, said service members must have a high school degree or the equivalent and 60 percent must score above average on an aptitude test. “The best of the best reside, many of them, within the veterans community and those with injuries,” said Arend, who is co-founder of the Ability First Business Resource

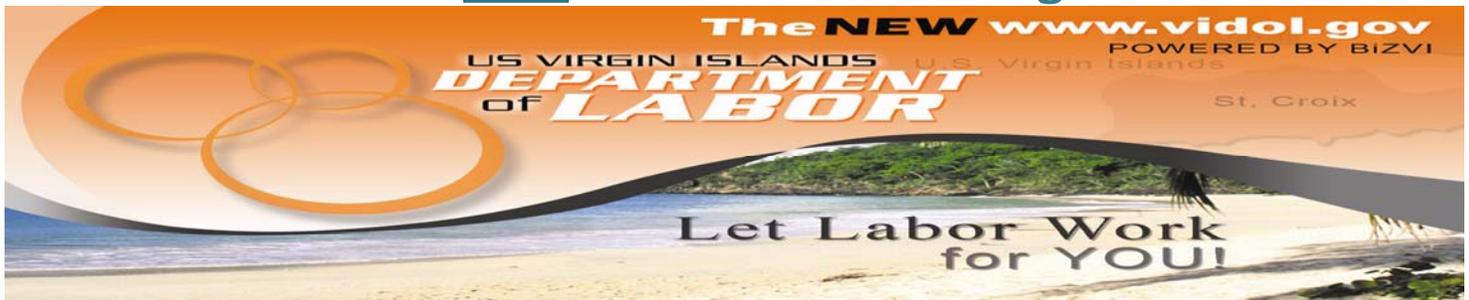
Group.

If more companies are to join Deloitte & Touche in hiring injured veterans, the movement will have to begin in HR departments. That’s why the Labor Department tapped the Society for Human Resource Management as a partner.

SHRM will provide on its own Web site a link to the veterans Web site and will highlight it at conferences and in other outreach to its 245,000 members. For two years, the organization has had an alliance with Labor Department’s Office of Disability Employment Policy. “America’s HR professionals stand ready to welcome our returning service members,” said Shirley Davis, SHRM Director of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives.

Each year, about 250,000 military personnel leave the service, Chu said. About 150,000 come off of active duty. An additional 100,000 members of the National Guard and Reserves go back to civilian life. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001—and U.S. military activity in Afghanistan and Iraq—about 10,000 military personnel have sustained traumatic brain injuries, Chu said. The Web site promoting injured veterans was created to educate employers, not to address a particular hiring problem. This article can be found at <http://www.workforce.com/section/00/article/25>

## VIDOL Launches its NEW Website - [www.vidol.gov](http://www.vidol.gov)





## St. Thomas Career Fair Pics-Sept 27 and Business After Hours-Sept 25



**St. Thomas:**  
54 A&B Kronprindsens Gade  
St. Thomas, VI 00802  
Phone: (340)-776-3700

**St. Croix:**  
#2203 Church Street  
Christiansted, VI 00820-4612  
Phone: (340)-773-1994  
Fax: (340)-773-0094

Visit us on the Web:  
[www.vidol.gov](http://www.vidol.gov)



You can network and stay connected with YouthNet powered by the Department of Labor @ [www.myspace.com/viouthnet](http://www.myspace.com/viouthnet)

Go ahead and add YouthNet as one of your contacts. We are also on facebook and hi5. Stay in the now with all the of the department's activities and programs

### Did you know...

**The EPA prohibits sex-based wage discrimination between men & women in the same establishment who are performing under similar working conditions. The Equal Pay Act of 1963.**

[www.eeoc.gov/policy/epa.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/epa.html)

### Newsletter Team:

June Austin, Cindy Richardson,  
Rhona Martinez, Gary Halyard,  
Rupert Ross, Jaynae Edney and  
Jeanna Boschulte

### VIDOL Celebrates Labor/Management Awareness Month ~ Rhona I. Martinez

On June 28, 1894, the Congress of the United States passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year, a legal holiday, *Labor Day* in the District of Columbia and the territories of the United States. Labor Day is a creation of the Labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, progress and well-being of our country. In 1971, the 9<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands went one step further to recognize the vast achievements as well as the many struggles of the Virgin Islands workforce by enacting legislation (Act 4440) which proclaimed that the month of September be celebrated as **Labor/Management Awareness Month** in the Territory. This is a very special time when we recognize and demonstrate our appreciation for the hard working men and women of our community who have made tremendous contributions to the social, cultural, economic and political advancements of the Territory. It is also a time when much emphasis is placed on the relationship between labor and management.

Every year since 1971, the Virgin Islands Department of Labor has heralded this auspicious occasion and taken the lead in organizing activities designed to spread an awareness of labor throughout the territory and to encourage healthier and more harmonious relationships between employees and their employers. This year's theme, "*Let Labor Work For You*," focused on customer outreach. Our aim was to reach out to our customers to solicit feedback, and ideas for improving customer satisfaction. Customer surveys were distributed at all VIDOL office locations Territory-wide. An e-mail address where comments, questions, concerns and recommendations could be registered was established at [letlaborworkforyou@vidol.gov](mailto:letlaborworkforyou@vidol.gov). In addition, complaints could be left at 715-5725. We hosted 'Career Fairs' in both districts designed to connect job seekers to employers and/or on a career path. Our 'Business After Hours' event which was also celebrated in both districts showcased the department's new website [www.vidol.gov](http://www.vidol.gov), new initiatives, new programs and new services in a social setting with employees, employers, businesses and the general public. Social activities included *Karaoke Night*, *Old School/New School Jam*, and a *Walk-for-Health and Fitness* which was jointly coordinated with the Women with Focus Group.

In addition, the management and employees of the Department of Labor literally flooded the airways and TV stations to educate the general public about the myriad of programs and services we provide. Each of our divisions were featured and given an opportunity to share vital information regarding employee as well as employer rights, products and services, and where to go for help. Many of the shows allowed for the listening and/or viewing audience to interact with the department by posing questions, issues and concerns affecting them. Many of these concerns were addressed on the spot by providing accurate information and instruction.

Formal and informal workshops/presentations in *Labor Relations*, *Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)*, *Sexual Harassment Awareness*, *Preparing for the World of Work*, *Stress Management*, *Resume Preparation*, *Workers' Compensation Process* and *Occupational Safety and Health Standards* were conducted. Customer Appreciation Days were celebrated throughout the month by providing refreshments and give-a-ways to our customers.

It is an understatement to say that the **Month of September** was a busy month for the **Department of Labor**. Nevertheless, we were honored and thrilled to be able to celebrate the hard working men and women that make up the Virgin Islands workforce. Although, some of our activities were stymied by inclement weather, overall, *Labor Awareness Month* was a great success. The organizers of *Labor Awareness Month* are commended for their hard work, commitment, team spirit, and willing attitude in designing, coordinating and performing the activities of Labor Awareness Month. We would also like to express heartfelt appreciation to the Honorable Governor John P. de Jongh, Jr. for making this proclamation and encouraging "all residents of the Territory to join in this observance and to participate in the activities...", and to the employees, employers, businesses and the general public for their contribution, support and involvement in this laudable observance.