

PREFERRED WORKER Adviser

Fall 2009

New electronic return-to-work newsletter

by Jake Forrey

The Workers' Compensation Division has recently been working on the development of an electronic newsletter, geared specifically toward informing employers about financial benefits available through Oregon's return-to-work programs.

The newsletter, *Employer Incentives News*, provides an overview of benefits that employers can receive when they participate in Oregon's return-to-work programs, including the **Preferred Worker Program** and the **Employer-at-Injury Program**.

Through these programs, employers can receive financial benefits that increase their bottom line. The return-to-work programs offer incentives, such as wage subsidies, worksite modifications, and reimbursement of tools and equipment purchases that help injured workers return to work quickly. The articles in the newsletter will highlight various benefits employers can receive.

The Employment Services Team will send quarterly e-mail alerts to subscribers to notify them of updates.

The newsletter will contain articles ranging from overview information to detailed program specifics and success stories.

The intent will be to encourage employers to subscribe to this newsletter to obtain the most up-to-date information about Oregon return-to-work programs. Employers will be able to view the newsletter and subscribe by visiting www.oregonrtw.info. ■

El Programa para el Trabajador Preferido de Oregon puede ayudarle a encontrar trabajo

por Delmi Hernandez

This article provides Preferred Worker Program information to Spanish-speaking preferred workers.

Si usted ya es un trabajador preferido, debería tener una tarjeta de identificación para el trabajador preferido. Si no tiene una tarjeta, pero cree que califica como trabajador preferido debido a una lesión o accidente de trabajo en Oregon, llame a nuestras oficinas y nosotros le ayudaremos.

Para obtener ayuda para encontrar trabajo lleve su tarjeta de trabajador preferido a la oficina local del Departamento de Empleo. Infórmele al representante de esa oficina que quiere inscribirse para los servicios de empleo como trabajador preferido. El Departamento de Empleo lo referirá a trabajos con empleadores que han

solicitado trabajadores preferidos. También pregunte al representante del Departamento de Empleo si hay otros servicios y recursos disponibles para usted.

El sistema que utiliza la oficina de Departamento de Empleo se llama Job Match. Job Match es una herramienta virtual que ayuda a los empleadores y trabajadores preferidos a encontrarse los unos a los otros. Algunos empleadores de Oregon anuncian en Job Match que quieren contratar a trabajadores preferidos y que desean obtener los beneficios otorgados por el Programa para el Trabajador Preferido. En Internet, visite www.oregonpwp.info y haga click en "Job Match Postings."

Si usted encuentra un trabajo en este sitio Web, contacte al empleador directamente. Asegúrese de mencionar que usted es un trabajador preferido y que encontró el trabajo en Job Match. Puede registrarse en nuestro sitio Web www.oregonpwp.info para recibir un correo electrónico que le avise cuando haya nuevos anuncios de trabajo.

Cuando contacte a un empleador, usted debe presentar su tarjeta de trabajador preferido para informarles que es un trabajador preferido. Al obtener el empleo usted debe dejar que el empleador saque una copia para que el empleador pueda recibir los beneficios del programa. ■

Worksite modification success story: property operations worker

by Heather Grogan

Worker disability

Ralph, a 72-year-old farm laborer, injured his right knee while pruning trees. As a result of his on-the-job injury, Ralph is unable to lift more than 20 pounds occasionally. He cannot walk more than an hour at a time for a total of four hours in a work day. Also, he is not able to walk on uneven ground or climb ladders.

Work setting and obstacles

Although Ralph is past retirement age, he did not want to stop working. His employer created a new job for Ralph that combined a number of his skills and did not require climbing trees. Ralph's employer used both the worksite creation benefit and the worksite modification benefit to ensure Ralph would be able to do all the tasks of his new job as a property operations worker.

Now, Ralph's job duties include going through the orchards to identify blight on trees. If he finds blight, he cuts the branches he can reach without climbing. He spot-sprays throughout the orchards for weeds and patrols rows of trees to set live traps for rodents. Ralph organizes the parts room and drives into town to pick up parts and supplies.



Modifications

For the worksite creation, the Preferred Worker Program purchased a pickup truck with an automatic transmission. The employer had a pickup truck, but it had a standard transmission and Ralph was unable to drive it due to his right knee injury. The purchase of the pickup truck with the automatic transmission enabled Ralph to drive into town to pick up parts and supplies as often as he needed.

Ralph's worksite modification included a utility vehicle, which he could drive through the rows of trees to check for tree blight and set traps for rodents. The utility vehicle also has a sprayer on the back to allow Ralph to spray for weeds without having to walk on uneven ground.

Now, Ralph is able to perform the duties of his new job without re-injuring his knee. He is very happy to be working with his employer. ■

Preferred Worker Adviser is a publication of the Oregon Workers' Compensation Division. If you have comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter, contact Ana Contreras at 503-947-7523 or send e-mail to ana.contreras@state.or.us.

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Cool tools: file knife

by Heather Grogan

The file knife was designed for a preferred worker who had difficulty with *pinch grip*. A part of the worker's job involved retrieving files from shelves. The files were tightly compressed, which made removing them difficult. The process involved wedging the worker's fingers between files and then pinching the selected file while trying to slide it off the shelf.

The file knife was a cool tool that helped make retrieving the files much easier for the worker. The file knife has a handle

with a perfect 15-degree angle, is large enough to minimize pinching, and has rounded edges. Also, the blade is made of thin stainless steel with a small hook on the end. To use the file knife, the user pushes the blade to the rear of the shelf and slices between files until the hook engages the opposite end of the file. Then, all that is needed is a gentle pull to dislodge the file from the shelf. ■



Another Preferred Worker Program worksite modification success story

by Bruce Friedrichsen

Worker disability

John sustained a severe low-back injury and could not return to his regular work as a sawyer, thereby becoming eligible for the Preferred Worker Program (PWP). John started his new job as a burn table operator with Carothers & Son Inc., a Eugene custom steel fabrication business. John told his new employer that he was a preferred worker and benefits were available; however, his employer, Rick Boatwright, was not interested at first.

Work setting and obstacles

One of the problems that John faced in his job duties involved handling steel sheets, which commonly were five feet by 10 inches and a half-inch thick. Although John used a jib crane, the task still required forceful maneuvering of the load because the crane was not designed to work with the burn table. The crane's location was so the fabricators could offload steel supply from trucks. The crane boom reach was insufficient, requiring John to forcefully

push and pull the steel plates onto the burn table. This duty requirement caused him low-back pain on a daily basis and exceeded his injury-caused permanent restrictions. After a period of time, John decided to pursue the PWP worksite modification assistance, even though he and his employer were both skeptical a "government program" would help them.

Modifications

The successful worksite modification consisted of relocation of the burn table, a bridge crane and electric hoist to handle the steel sheets, and an ergonomic chair. Carothers & Son invested much in the cleanup and setup of the burn table relocation. The burn table relocation from the fabrication shop to the vacated paint shop proved invaluable in unexpected ways. John said not only is the space the perfect size for the table and crane, the new work space is cleaner and quieter. The crane allows John to lift the steel

sheets and position them on the burn table without forceful maneuvering. Finally, the ergonomic chair replaced an unsupportive worn-out chair, and now, John can sit comfortably at his computer station.

The employer was thrilled with his PWP experience and the completed modification. Boatwright described his experience with the worksite modification process as efficient, timely, with no waste, and no bureaucracy. "It was great to experience my tax dollars being spent wisely," said Boatwright.

John said that even though he was skeptical at first, the modification could not have turned out any better. "My life is easier and less stressful," said John. "The program is truly a value for the employer, the worker, and the state. Now, I can go home after work and enjoy playing with my 10-year-old and 4-year-old without being in severe pain and grumpy because my back pain is much less." ■



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The Preferred Worker Program (PWP) has benefits for you!

- Are you using the PWP benefits to offer incentives to an employer to hire you?
- Are you using the PWP benefits to modify a job to allow you to work within the limitations caused by your on-the-job injury?
- Are you using PWP benefits to purchase employment items such as tools and clothes?
- Did you know the PWP benefits are easy to access?

**JUST CALL AND ASK
800-445-3948**

El Programa para el Trabajador Preferido (PWP) tiene beneficios para usted!

- ¿Está usted usando los beneficios que el PWP ofrece para incentivar a que un empleador le dé trabajo?
- ¿Está usted usando los beneficios del PWP para modificar su trabajo y así poder trabajar dentro de las limitaciones causadas por su lesión en el trabajo?
- ¿Está usted usando los beneficios del PWP para adquirir lo necesario para el trabajo como herramientas o ropa?
- ¿Sabía usted que es muy fácil usar los beneficios del programa?

**SOLO LLAME Y PREGUNTENOS AL
800-445-3948, ext. 7584**

Программа преимущественных прав (PWP) имеет льготы для вас!

- Используете ли вы льготы программы преимущественных прав (PWP) для побуждения работодателя принять вас на работу?
- Используете ли вы льготы программы (PWP) для модификации рабочего места, чтобы облегчить ограничения, имеющиеся после травмы, полученной на производстве?
- Используете ли вы льготы программы (PWP) для покупки рабочих предметов, таких как инструменты и одежда?
- Знали ли вы, что льготы программы (PWP) могут быть легко достижимы?

**Вы можете узнать больше
позвонив по телефону
800-445-3948, ext. 7639**