



## Commissioner Brad Avakian

Bureau of Labor and Industries

### COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE – December 22, 2010

Dear Friends:

I have always found the holiday season to be a great time to celebrate the many things that unite our communities: our beliefs in hope to overcome adversity, in tolerance to build peace, and in love for our fellow people to give us the shared strength to shape the society that we all cherish. I am energized by the powerful way that Oregonians have pulled together to support our neighbors in Aumsville—this is a great illustration of our commitment to each other, both around the holidays and throughout the year.

I am excited about the opportunities on our horizon for the new year. Today I participated in the first meeting of Governor-elect Kitzhaber's transition work group on workforce development, which will play a critical role in launching the Oregon On-The-Job Training Program: one of Gov. Kitzhaber's key job-building initiatives. The driving principles here, of collaboration between the various workforce development interests and of leveraging existing infrastructure while enhancing the quality of the trained worker, are right on target. I'm pleased to be working with the Governor's team on such an urgent priority as getting Oregon's workers the skills they need to take on jobs that are available right now.

Gov. Kitzhaber's plan also dovetails beautifully with the vision that I and a wide range of supporters have outlined and will be pushing during the legislative session: bring career and technical education back to our public schools.

Oregon's economic prosperity always has, and always will, depend upon the quality of the generation of workers we are training now. In recent years, we have lost touch with this truth, and the skill gap, between what our workers are trained for and what employers will pay for, has widened ominously. Encouraging our young people to pursue "earn while you learn" apprenticeships or other post-secondary job training must be a priority, or we will soon find ourselves with only a trickle of workers prepared to take on the jobs that employers need done.

The 2011 legislative session will feature a number of complex issues that require thoughtful consideration, but taking concrete steps to mend the disconnect between public education and workforce development is critical. A modest investment that restores career and technical education (CTE) programs at ten middle and/or high schools will clearly signal the transition from denial about one of the root causes of our economic struggles to acceptance of the strong consensus that CTE in public schools is a lynchpin for our state's economic success.

Thank you, as always, for taking a few minutes to follow my work at BOLI. I wish you a wonderful holiday season, and a New Year filled with opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "B. Avakian".

Brad Avakian  
Oregon Labor Commissioner

## The Brad Tracker

**Where's he been?** Recently, Brad helped lead the religious dress work group that [crafted a model policy for school districts](#) to handle religious accommodations related to teachers' clothing, met with legislators and other interested parties in preparation for the upcoming legislative session, spoken with labor representatives and contractors about the annual determination of [prevailing wage rates](#), chaired a quarterly meeting of the [Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council](#), attended a joint meeting of [Oregon's Advocacy Commissions](#) and enjoyed invitations to a number of local holiday parties.

**Where's he going?** After enjoying the holidays with his family, Brad will seriously gear up for legislative session, although he'll make time in Salem to attend the unveiling of Gov. Kulongoski's portrait in the Capitol and the investiture of Judge Jack Landau as the newest Justice of Oregon's Supreme Court. Brad will, of course, be on hand for opening day of the 2011 Legislative Session—this year the second Monday falls on January 10.

If your group is interested in having the Commissioner come to speak, send good contact information to [Donna.Brown@state.or.us](mailto:Donna.Brown@state.or.us). Staff will respond to your request in a timely manner, but please try to provide at least 2 weeks' notice if suggesting a particular date for the Commissioner's visit.

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### **Avakian Honors Outstanding Oregon Employers**

*BOLI chief names champions of civil rights, fair workplaces and workforce development*

Commissioner Avakian has announced the winners of this year's BOLI Business Leadership Awards—four Oregon employers recognized for their significant contributions to our communities. The champions of civil rights, fair workplaces and workforce development were chosen for their embodiment of BOLI's mission: to protect employment rights, advance employment opportunities, and protect access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination. This year's honorees are:

**Civil Rights Champion – VERDE of Portland**

**Fair Workplaces Champion – Continental Mills of Pendleton**

**Fair Workplaces Champion – MaPS Credit Union of Salem**

**Workforce Development Champion – Columbia River Bar Pilots of Astoria**

“Many of this year's nominees, and the majority of the winners, were nominated by their own employees,” Avakian noted. “Our champions represent a very diverse pool of nominees from around the state, which includes many small or mid-sized businesses that are doing really good things for their workers and communities. In relation to their resources, Oregon's small businesses are going to great lengths to take care of their employees.”

Avakian created the BOLI Business Leadership Awards, now two years old, to recognize the good work that Oregon employers do every day for the community, their workers, and the future of Oregon's economy. Nominations from throughout Oregon were received and reviewed by agency staff and the Commissioner for commitment and successes in the area of nomination, taking into account the size and location of the business.

[Click here](#) for more about the award categories and each of this year's winners.

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## **BOLI opens competition for \$1 million in supportive services contracts**

*BOLI-ODOT partnership to fund programs for training, retention of construction workers*

Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) has issued a statewide Request for Proposals (RFP) to parties interested in seeking a portion of the \$1 million now available to fund supportive services programs that increase diversity in the highway construction workforce. The contracts, funded with an allocation of federal highway dollars via BOLI's partnership with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), will be administered by the state Apprenticeship and Training Division (ATD), a part of BOLI.

"ATD and ODOT have done great foundational work for this project," said State Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, head of BOLI. "This partnership and the services we will be able to fund in the community send a clear message that Oregon values its workers, including the women and people of color who are not traditionally directed toward the construction career pathways that can lead to high-skill, living-wage jobs."

ATD plays a key role in workforce development throughout the state, working with local training committees and their community partners to ensure a high-quality, competitive workforce for Oregon in 119 skilled occupations. The supportive services project will increase diversity in the highway construction workforce by enhancing existing apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and offering support and retention services to help address the high dropout rate of women and minorities in apprenticeship programs.

"To maximize the impact of this funding, we will favor proposals that build on existing efforts," Commissioner Avakian said. "However, BOLI is committed to workforce development throughout Oregon and is budgeting for a minimum of \$100,000 in contracts to each of five state regions, with no more than \$400,000 going to any one region."

ODOT divides Oregon highways into [five geographic regions](#): Portland/METRO, Willamette Valley/Coast, Southwestern Oregon, Central Oregon and Eastern Oregon.

To view the RFP and its submission requirements, interested parties must register as a "supplier" on the state's procurement web page, the Oregon Procurement Information Network, at [ORPIN.Oregon.gov](http://ORPIN.Oregon.gov). **All proposals must be submitted by 3:00pm, Pacific Time, on December 30, 2010.** Proposals should anticipate an early January start date, as ATD staff will evaluate and issue decisions after no more than 30 days. Questions should be directed, in a written format, to:

Joshua Rogers, Single Point of Contact  
1225 Ferry Street SE U140 | Salem, OR 97301-4285  
[Joshua.Rogers@state.or.us](mailto:Joshua.Rogers@state.or.us)  
or FAX: 503-373-1626

## **Upcoming BOLI Events**

*Stay tuned for additional listings coming in January!*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Type</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Jan. 11	TA Seminar	State Office Building, Portland	Wage and Hour Laws	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Jan. 20	OCCR Quarterly Mtg.	State Office Building, Portland	The Co-Chairs are developing the agenda	Civil Rights @ 971-673-0795
Jan. 20	PWAC Quarterly Mtg.	I.U.O.E. Hall, Gladstone	<a href="#">Prevailing Wage Advisory Committee</a>	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0837
Feb. 9 & 10	TA Seminar	State Office Building, Portland	Leave Laws in Oregon: A 2-Day Training	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Feb. 22	TA Seminar	State Office Building, Portland	Documentation, Discipline & Discharge	TA Program @ 971-673-0825

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