Wyoming’s Top Safety and Workforce Efforts Recognized at 2016 Summit
CHEYENNE – Governor Matt Mead joined the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) and its partners in honoring Wyoming employers or individuals demonstrating excellence in safety and workforce practices Wednesday evening.

The awards ceremony took place at the 2016 Wyoming Safety and Workforce Summit, a joint effort between DWS, the Wyoming Oil and Gas Industry Safety Alliance (WOGISA) and the Wyoming Workforce Development Council. The Summit is an event held by the partners and speaks to both safety as way of life and the strengthening of Wyoming’s workforce.

Governor Mead emphasized the work of Wyoming Safety Alliances. “Workplace safety is critical – we want our workers to come home safely,” said Governor Mead. “We have made progress but more work needs to be done. I thank the Alliances, as well as Wyoming employers and employees, for their efforts year-round and I commend the award recipients for recognizing safety as a priority.”

WOGISA President Chris Corlis assisted with the presentation of the WOGISA Stop Work Authority Award. “The Stop Work Authority Award recognizes an immediate and proactive mechanism to identify and prevent incidents and fatalities,” said Corlis. “I applaud award recipient Reuben Hernandez. By calling for work to stop, Reuben prevented a potentially serious accident, ensuring he and his team returned home safely.”

DWS Director John Cox assisted with the presentation of the Governor’s Safety Awards for Mining and Industry. “The Governor’s Safety Award recipients set the bar for excellence in safety,” said Director Cox. “The department and its partners are grateful to these outstanding employers and workers for their leadership on this issue critical to Wyoming.”

Wyoming Workforce Development Council Chairman Jim Engel presented the Council’s Outstanding Business Contribution to the Workforce Award. “Simon Contractors has given generously of its time to participate in statewide initiatives to improve career readiness and develop Wyoming’s workforce across all industries,” said Engel. “With employers like Simon Contractors operating in our state, we cannot help but remain optimistic about the future of Wyoming’s workforce.”

The Governor’s Stop Work Authority Award
The Stop Work Authority Award recognizes an action that has taken place at a project or work site in Wyoming. The award honors an individual or group who engaged in a tangible action to stop the work or task due to a perceived, potential or actual hazardous condition.

Award recipient: Reuben Hernandez

The Governor’s Safety Awards for Mining and Industry
The Governor’s Safety Awards for Mining and Industry are presented annually to acknowledge an employer’s commitment to excellence in safety and health. The winners of the awards are chosen based on strong safety records, management and employee involvement in health and safety decisions and a robust hazard identification program, among other elements.

Award Recipients:
- Mandros Painting, Inc., Green River, Mine-Site Contractor - Small Employer
- Searie Bros. Construction Co., Rock Springs, Mine-Site Contractor - Large Employer

The federal government has issued new rules on employee overtime. Employers can:
1) Pay time-and-a-half for overtime work.
2) Raise workers’ salaries above the new threshold.
3) Limit workers’ hours to 40 per week.
4) Some combination of the above.

The new federal overtime rules go into effect December 1, 2016. For more information contact DWS Labor Standards (307) 777-7261.

Workers’ Compensation Officer/Owner Average Wage for 2016
$11,673.51/quarter; $3,891.17/month

Unemployment Insurance Taxable Wage Base for 2016
$25,500
CHEYENNE – Governor Matt Mead joined the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) Occupational Safety and Health Administration division (OSHA), will increase in Wyoming in February of 2017. The change is the result of Congressional action which required federal agencies to index civil penalties by the inflation rate, with a one-time catch up provision. DWS, which operates an OSHA State Plan, is required to adopt maximum penalty levels that are at least as effective as federal OSHA penalties.

The federal legislation mandated the first OSHA penalty increase since 1990. The one-time catch-up will increase penalties by 78 percent, and will be adjusted annually to keep pace with inflation. Penalties assessed on or after February 1, 2017, will be subject to the new fine structure, pending final approval of the rule by the OSHA Commission.

“The new maximum OSHA penalties represent a sizeable increase for businesses out of compliance with OSHA standards,” said DWS Director John Cox. “Contacting the Department’s Workers’ Compensation Safety and Risk Unit (WCSR U) for a free safety consultation is always a good idea for employers who are uncertain about safety standards. The WCSR U is a no-cost resource created specifically for employers seeking safety expertise and is staffed with advisors who provide safety and health assistance without assessing fines.”

The WCSR U is a new DWS program offering free health and safety surveys to help employers recognize and remedy safety hazards in their workplace without fines or penalties. Employers can request a consultation by calling (307) 777-8901.

New Penalty Structure

“Other Than Serious” Violation - A violation that has a direct relationship to job safety and health, but probably would not cause death or serious physical harm.

New Maximum: $12,471 per violation
Current Maximum Penalty: up to $7,000 for each violation

“Serious” Violation - A violation where there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result, and the employer knew of, or should have known of, the hazard.

New Maximum: $12,471 per violation
Current Maximum Penalty: up to $7,000 for each violation

“Failure to Abate” Violation - Failure to correct a previously cited violation.

New Maximum: $12,471 per day beyond the abatement date for each violation
Current Maximum Penalty: up to $7,000 each day beyond the abatement date for each violation

“Willful” Violation - A violation that the employer knowingly commits or commits with plain indifference to the law. The employer either knows that what he or she is doing constitutes a violation, or is aware that a hazardous condition existed and made no reasonable effort to eliminate it.

New Maximum: $124,709 per violation
Current Maximum Penalty: up to $70,000 per violation

Penalty Reductions

DWS OSHA maintains the ability to provide reductions on penalty amounts. OSHA penalty reductions can be taken on a case-by-case basis and are based upon federal regulation or guidelines which take into account a variety of factors, including size, industry, good faith, immediate resolution and prior history along with a severity and probability assessment. Penalties may be recalculated as the employer provides additional information and evidence through the appeals process.