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Commissioner's Message

Patricia Moulton Powden, Commissioner

Vermont Food Industry Claims Safest Workplaces

Montpelier – Two Vermont food industry businesses have been recognized as having the safest workplaces in the state. Governor James Douglas presented prestigious workplace safety awards in April to two Vermont companies and recognized a half dozen others for outstanding workplace safety.

The recipient, in the small company category, was Highland Sugarworks, a 21-year old firm employing 12 workers, including the owner, at its maple-packing facility in Websterville, Vermont. The company has had only one lost time injury (2 days) in the past four years, and has a workers' compensation experience Mod rate of .86.

Company representatives credit a workforce that is steeped in safety practices, and the implementation of appropriate safety measures as the key to the company's success in workplace safety.

The recipient, in the large company category, was PBM Nutritionals in Georgia, Vt. Employing 280 workers, and operating 24 hours a day, five days a week, PBM has managed to reduce OSHA recordable injuries 79% from 2004 to 2006, and has a workers' compensation experience Mod rate of .70.

Company officials point to a 12-member "dynamic and dedicated Employee Health & Safety Committee as the catalyst for that company's excellent workplace safety record. PBM Nutritionals has had no workplace fatalities or catastrophic injuries in the past three years.

Finalists for the award, IBM, Ben & Jerry's, Rio Tinto, Harbor Industries, Hancor and OMYA were each recognized for their demonstrated commitment to a safety and health culture in the workplace, resulting in improved safety performance and contribution to overall competitiveness in their respective industries.

"Workplace safety, whether on the production line, in an office, or on the road, is perhaps, the key component to the success of any Vermont business," Governor Douglas said, in presenting the awards. "A strong safety and health commitment can be the difference between profitability and economic difficulty."

"These companies," the governor said, "recognize that their employees' knowledge, skill and experience are an asset, and deserve to be protected. Working safely is the smart way to do business."

The Governor's Award for Outstanding Workplace Safety is presented annually to a company doing business in Vermont that meets certain criteria such as an experience modification rate of 0.90 or less, an active safety committee, a three-year history of no work fatalities or catastrophic injuries and significant period of time without lost time injuries.



The Edge

REPORT OUTLINES HOW TO BUILD NEXT GENERATION WORKFORCE

*Department of Economic Development
Releases Comprehensive Study of
Young People to Determine What
Draws Them to Vermont*

MONTPELIER – Young workers want to live in Vermont, but the state must create high-paying jobs and affordable housing for them – and let them know about it.

Those were among the findings of a comprehensive study of young people designed to find out what will make the next generation of Vermonters want to live and work here.

"This report tells us that young people with a connection to Vermont – including a very significant majority of those who come to attend college – also consider Vermont as a potentially attractive place to live and work," said Vermont Commissioner of Economic Development Mike Quinn.

Speaking at a briefing in Burlington late last week to announce the release of the "Growing Vermont's Next Generation Workforce" report, Quinn noted that two-thirds of nearly 2,000 alumni of Vermont's colleges and universities now living out of state said they'd consider returning.

"We need to remind them that we'd like to have them back," he said. "And in ways and through channels that work for them."

The report was commissioned by Gov. Jim Douglas in January 2006 and was prepared by a team of consultants that included Next Generation Consulting of Madison Wisconsin; the

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The Edge - (continued from front page)

University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies; and led by TIP Strategies of Austin, Texas.

Governor Douglas raised the issue in response to news that Vermont had become the second oldest state in the nation and amid reports that employers were expressing concerns about their aging workforces and their ability to find workers.

“The state of Vermont will not be able to keep all of its young people from leaving,” said Jon Roberts, Managing Director of Economic Development for TIP Strategies. “But it can persuade some to return, and attract other young people as well. Instead of worrying about ‘brain drain’ we need to think in terms of ‘brain churn.’”

Rebecca Ryan, president of Next Generation Consulting, said that nearly 1,200 “deliberators” who have considered moving to Vermont are mostly women (57 percent); single; and professionals but that work isn’t necessarily the most important thing to them.

“These are educated, talented and mobile people,” she said. “They can choose where they want to live and work, and the community they live in is as important as their job opportunities when deciding where to go.”

She noted that 94 percent of those surveyed said that “a community where I can afford to live, work, and play,” was an important factor in choosing their home.

“But only 33 percent of those living in the state thought that Vermont offers this,” Quinn said. “Clearly, the issue of affordability – wages versus the costs of housing, taxes, and living – is one that must be addressed.”

Other recommendations included:

Strengthening the ties between education and business to help develop a workforce whose skills match employers’ needs and to inform workers of opportunities.

Actively targeting young people outside Vermont with messages about jobs, housing, educational opportunities, and other activities.

Marketing the state to potential entrepreneurs: “Current generational research strongly underscores the idea that young people see themselves as an ‘economy of one,’” the report said.

The Department of Economic Development will fully evaluate the findings and have an ongoing conversation with stakeholders before determining what its next steps are.

“There are real barriers, but there are real opportunities here as well,” Quinn said. “Now that we have real data and concrete recommendations based on that data, we have a roadmap. We can do this.”

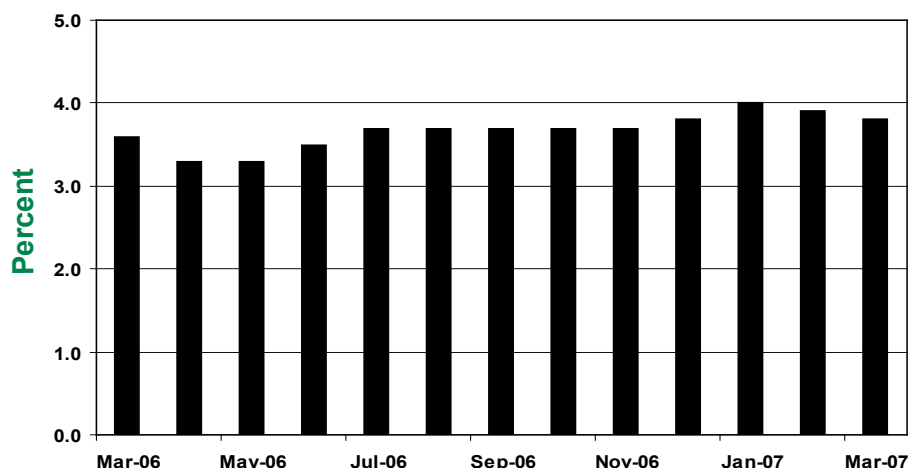
To read the full report, visit the Department of Economic Development’s website:

<http://www.thinkvermont.com/publications/>

Contact VDOL

If your address has changed or to discontinue your subscription, please email: sredpath@labor.state.vt.us

Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate



Vermont Unemployment Estimates Statewide *(Seasonally Adjusted)*

| | Mar. '07 | Feb. '07 | Mar. '06 | Changes from: | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|----------|
| | | | | Feb. '07 | Mar. '06 |
| TOTAL LABOR FORCE¹ | 362,700 | 362,000 | 359,800 | 700 | 2,900 |
| EMPLOYED | 348,800 | 348,000 | 346,900 | 800 | 1,900 |
| UNEMPLOYED | 13,800 | 14,100 | 12,900 | -300 | 900 |
| RATE (%) | 3.8 | 3.9 | 3.6 | -0.1 | 0.2 |

¹Includes proprietors, professionals, and unpaid family workers.

Labor Market Areas By Residence *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

| AREA | Total Labor Force | Number Employed | Number Unemployed | Mar-07 Rate (%) | Feb-07 Rate (%) | Mar-06 Rate (%) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Barre-Montpelier | 29,000 | 27,400 | 1,600 | 5.5 | 5.7 | 5.2 |
| Bennington | 12,950 | 12,400 | 550 | 4.3 | 5.1 | 4.0 |
| Bradford | 5,200 | 4,950 | 250 | 5.2 | 5.0 | 4.9 |
| Brattleboro | 24,000 | 23,250 | 950 | 4.0 | 4.2 | 3.6 |
| Burlington-South Burlington | 113,400 | 109,300 | 4,150 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.6 |
| Hartford | 19,850 | 19,300 | 500 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.2 |
| Manchester | 12,200 | 11,700 | 500 | 4.2 | 4.6 | 3.9 |
| Middlebury | 19,550 | 18,750 | 800 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 3.8 |
| Morristown-Stowe | 20,200 | 19,050 | 1,150 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.0 |
| Newport | 14,350 | 13,250 | 1,100 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 7.3 |
| Randolph | 9,000 | 8,550 | 400 | 4.6 | 5.1 | 3.7 |
| Rutland | 29,400 | 28,100 | 1,300 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 3.8 |
| Springfield | 11,000 | 10,450 | 550 | 4.9 | 5.1 | 4.3 |
| St. Johnsbury | 15,550 | 14,850 | 750 | 4.7 | 4.8 | 5.0 |
| Swanton-Enosburg | 14,600 | 13,650 | 950 | 6.7 | 6.9 | 6.7 |
| Warren-Waitsfield | 3,600 | 3,450 | 150 | 3.7 | 3.6 | 2.6 |
| Woodstock | 4,200 | 4,100 | 100 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 2.3 |
| Vermont Total | 360,550 | 344,600 | 15,900 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 4.1 |

AREAS FROM ADJOINING STATES INCLUDING VERMONT TOWNS *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| Colebrook, NH-VT | 3,900 | 3,700 | 200 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 4.1 |
| Lebanon, NH-VT | 47,200 | 45,950 | 1,250 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.3 |
| Littleton, NH-VT | 14,750 | 14,150 | 600 | 4.0 | 4.1 | 3.7 |
| North Adams, MA-VT | 17,100 | 16,000 | 1,100 | 6.5 | 7.7 | 6.2 |

Monthly estimates are preliminary and subject to revision. Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

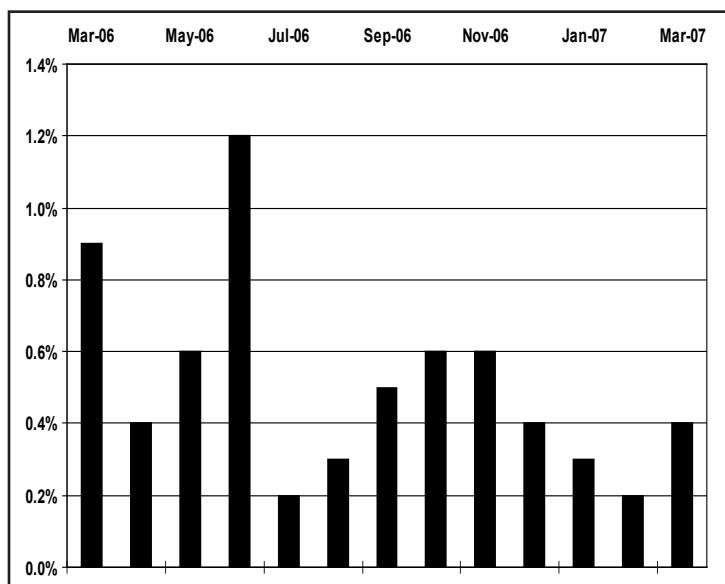
Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment in Thousands

| BY NAICS | Prelim. | Revised | Revised | Changes From: | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| | Mar. '07 | Feb. '07 | Mar. '06 | Feb. '07 | Mar. '06 |
| Total - All Industries | 307.9 | 307.8 | 307.4 | 0.1 | 0.5 |
| Private Industries | 254.3 | 254.1 | 253.8 | 0.2 | 0.5 |
| Construction | 17.2 | 17.1 | 17.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Manufacturing | 35.6 | 35.9 | 36.2 | -0.3 | -0.6 |
| Durable Goods* | 25.9 | 26.2 | 26.2 | -0.3 | -0.3 |
| Non-Durable Goods* | 9.7 | 9.7 | 10.0 | 0.0 | -0.3 |
| Trade, Transportation & Utilities | 59.6 | 59.7 | 59.5 | -0.1 | 0.1 |
| Retail Trade | 40.3 | 40.4 | 40.4 | -0.1 | -0.1 |
| Trans., Warehousing & Utilities* | 8.9 | 8.9 | 8.7 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Financial Activities | 13.2 | 13.3 | 13.3 | -0.1 | -0.1 |
| Professional & Business Services | 22.5 | 22.6 | 22.2 | -0.1 | 0.3 |
| Professional., Scientific & Technical* | 13.5 | 13.5 | 13.2 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| Administrative Support & Waste* | 8.8 | 8.9 | 8.7 | -0.1 | 0.1 |
| Education & Health Services | 55.8 | 55.8 | 54.9 | 0.0 | 0.9 |
| Private Ed. Services | 12.8 | 12.7 | 12.6 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 43.0 | 43.1 | 42.3 | -0.1 | 0.7 |
| Leisure & Hospitality | 33.5 | 33.1 | 33.3 | 0.4 | 0.2 |
| Arts, Entertainment & Recreation* | 4.1 | 4.1 | 4.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Accommodation & Food Services* | 29.4 | 29.0 | 29.3 | 0.4 | 0.1 |
| Other Services | 10.0 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Total Government | 53.6 | 53.7 | 53.6 | -0.1 | 0.0 |
| State Government* | 17.9 | 17.9 | 17.8 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Local Government* | 29.6 | 29.8 | 29.8 | -0.2 | -0.2 |

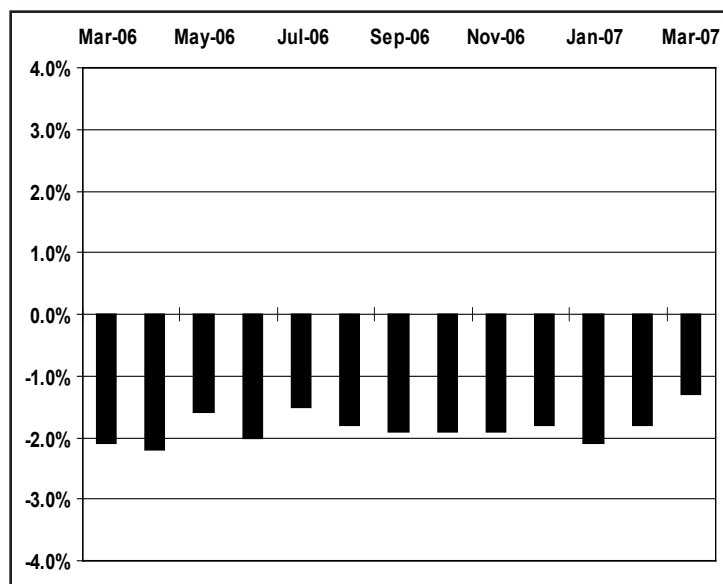
Note: Retail, Private Ed. Services and Health Care & Social Assistance are now estimated using the official BLS methodology. Total - All Industries estimate is seasonally adjusted independently. All seasonal adjustment performed with X12-ARIMA. Seasonal factors available from VDOL/LMI on request. Produced by the Vermont Department of Labor in cooperation with the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, unless otherwise noted. * New series for 2007.

Vermont Annual Job Growth Not Seasonally Adjusted Data

All Industries



Manufacturing



Nonfarm Employment In Vermont *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

Compiled by the Vermont Department of Labor in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

| INDUSTRY BY NAICS | Prelim. | Revised | Revised | Changes From: | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Mar. '07 | Feb. '07 | Mar. '06 | Feb. '07 | Mar. '07 |
| TOTAL NONFARM | 307,200 | 307,350 | 306,050 | -150 | 1,150 |
| TOTAL PRIVATE | 251,150 | 251,300 | 250,200 | -150 | 950 |
| GOODS PRODUCING | 50,650 | 50,600 | 51,100 | 50 | -450 |
| MANUFACTURING | 35,200 | 35,300 | 35,650 | -100 | -450 |
| Durable Goods | 25,750 | 25,850 | 25,800 | -100 | -50 |
| Computer & Electrical Equipment Mfg. | 9,250 | 9,200 | 9,150 | 50 | 100 |
| Fabricated Metal Products Mfg. | 3,050 | 3,000 | 2,950 | 50 | 100 |
| Non-Durable Goods | 9,450 | 9,450 | 9,850 | 0 | -400 |
| Food Mfg. | 3,550 | 3,600 | 3,550 | -50 | 0 |
| CONSTRUCTION | 14,600 | 14,500 | 14,650 | 100 | -50 |
| NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING | 850 | 800 | 800 | 50 | 50 |
| SERVICE-PROVIDING | 256,550 | 256,750 | 254,950 | -200 | 1,600 |
| TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES | 58,550 | 58,550 | 58,250 | 0 | 300 |
| Wholesale Trade | 10,350 | 10,250 | 10,150 | 100 | 200 |
| Retail Trade | 39,400 | 39,500 | 39,350 | -100 | 50 |
| Food & Beverage Stores | 9,450 | 9,400 | 9,450 | 50 | 0 |
| General Merchandise Store | 2,700 | 2,700 | 2,800 | 0 | -100 |
| Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities | 8,800 | 8,800 | 8,750 | 0 | 50 |
| Utilities | 1,700 | 1,700 | 1,700 | 0 | 0 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 7,100 | 7,100 | 7,050 | 0 | 50 |
| INFORMATION | 6,100 | 6,050 | 6,200 | 50 | -100 |
| FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES | 13,200 | 13,150 | 13,200 | 50 | 0 |
| Finance & Insurance | 9,950 | 9,950 | 9,950 | 0 | 0 |
| Real Estate, Rental & Leasing | 3,250 | 3,200 | 3,250 | 50 | 0 |
| PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES | 21,800 | 21,700 | 21,600 | 100 | 200 |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical | 13,350 | 13,250 | 13,200 | 100 | 150 |
| Administrative, Support and Waste | 8,150 | 8,150 | 8,100 | 0 | 50 |
| EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH SERVICES | 56,200 | 56,150 | 55,200 | 50 | 1,000 |
| Educational Services | 13,300 | 13,350 | 13,050 | -50 | 250 |
| College, Universities and Professional | 7,250 | 7,250 | 7,100 | 0 | 150 |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 42,900 | 42,800 | 42,150 | 100 | 750 |
| Ambulatory Health Care Services | 15,250 | 15,250 | 15,250 | 0 | 0 |
| Hospitals | 11,350 | 11,300 | 11,100 | 50 | 250 |
| Nursing and Residential Care Facilities | 6,700 | 6,700 | 6,700 | 0 | 0 |
| LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY | 34,850 | 35,350 | 34,900 | -500 | -50 |
| Arts, Entertainment and Recreation | 3,600 | 3,650 | 3,550 | -50 | 50 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 31,250 | 31,700 | 31,350 | -450 | -100 |
| Accommodations | 12,950 | 13,550 | 13,050 | -600 | -100 |
| Hotel & Motels | 12,100 | 12,600 | 12,150 | -500 | -50 |
| Food Services and Drinking Places | 18,300 | 18,150 | 18,300 | 150 | 0 |
| OTHER SERVICES | 9,800 | 9,750 | 9,750 | 50 | 50 |
| GOVERNMENT | 56,050 | 56,050 | 55,850 | 0 | 200 |
| Federal Government | 5,900 | 5,950 | 5,950 | -50 | -50 |
| State Government Education | 9,200 | 9,150 | 9,050 | 50 | 150 |
| Local Government Education | 24,600 | 24,750 | 24,600 | -150 | 0 |
| Other State Government | 9,550 | 9,500 | 9,400 | 50 | 150 |
| Other Local Government | 6,800 | 6,700 | 6,850 | 100 | -50 |

NOTE: DATA COMPILED IN COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS .
ESTIMATES ARE PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO REVISION. SEE ANNUAL SUMMARY FOR DETAILS.



A Workplace Safety Mantra

Everyone must be involved in the development and implementation of that plan. Management and labor must work together to succeed.

Be Pro-active:

Employers need to commit to improving the company's health and safety record. Inform your employees that eliminating hazards and reducing injuries is a top priority.

Work together with your workers:

Employees can help identify existing and/or potential hazards. They can help direct attention to those injuries most prevalent in your workplace and your industry. Employers should ask their employees, and the workers should ask their employers, for help and assistance in workplace safety. Everyone is in this together.

Educate employees about workplace safety and workers' compensation:

Help your employees understand the link between workplace safety and workers' compensation. It is important that your workers understand that a high number of workers' compensation claims can lead to significantly higher costs for workers' compensation insurance, which can impact profits, wages, and even the size of your workforce. A good safety record gives your business a competitive advantage, which is good for both employers and employees.

Learn from your experiences – good and bad:

After a workplace injury has occurred, employers should make sure the hazard or the behavior that caused the injury is corrected. They should explore ways to prevent such workplace incidents from happening again.

Don't hesitate to ask for help:

Many industry groups offer safety programs. Your workers' compensation insurer can also help identify areas that need improvement. And we are here to help as well. Contact Project WorkSAFE, Project RoadSafe, or speak with VOSHA's Compliance Assistance Specialist. We are in this together to ensure that everyone succeeds – businesses and their employees.

And remember: The Vermont Department of Labor is the only department in state government that has a direct, face-to-face relationship with both employees and employers. The Workers' Compensation and Safety Division, the Unemployment Insurance Division, and the Workforce Development Division, each provide services directly to the Vermont business community and its workforce.

Benefits Accrue to Vermont Firms Who Practice Safety on the Highway

The often asked question is: How safe are our highways? The answer is: Depends on who you talk with. Some folks say the highways are worse than ever, with over-crowding causing delays and aggressive driving attitudes. Others say law enforcement is a major reason our highways are very safe. Could be that both are correct.

One perspective is to look at the drivers of motor vehicles. Look at their behavior, which is determined by their attitude. Drivers of cars and trucks that are owned by companies, large and small, have a distinct attitude that governs their behavior on the road. That attitude reinforces highway safety policies laid down jointly by company management and employees who have bought into the concept of a safety culture on the highway.

Case in point: Actually two cases in point: Hancor of North Springfield, Vermont, and Pike Industries of Colchester, Vermont.

Hancor, a 100-year old firm is one of 34 manufacturing facilities in the U.S. that is owned by Advanced Drainage Systems (ADS). They are the largest producers of High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) drainage pipe in the world ranging in size from 2" to 60" (five feet), that is used in a wide variety of applications, from residential and commercial construction to agriculture and sporting venues, as well as many local, state, and federal highway projects.

Hancor, like other safety minded firms, has a very active, eight-member Safety Committee that meets twice a month to identify and problem solve areas needing improvement. One important element in their safety policy is that all employees, including management have a voice in safety policy development.

This approach is apparently paying off in substantial dividends. The injury reduction rate at Hancor has significantly declined over the past five years, from 22 in 2002 down to 3 OSHA recordable injuries last year. While the safety policies are working well within the plant, Hancor's drivers (both company and leased) are contributing to the safety effort, having its last DOT Recordable Accident (crash) almost almost three years ago. Hancor also has a relatively strict hiring process for drivers that includes a background check, a MVR check, a requirement of 2 years of driving experience, as well as a complete physical and drug testing process. Hancor's drivers sign off on a Commitment to Safety paper each day that contains a different "Safety Thought of the Day," or a general good driving practice.

Pike Industries is one of the major paving companies in Vermont. Their highway safety record stands very tall. The company recorded nearly 2 million miles traveled in Vermont last year by a fleet of nearly 140 vehicles of all sizes, without a fatality or catastrophic injury.

This significant safety record is due in large part to strong leadership by the company's four safety committees, one of which includes representatives of on-the-road employees. Each of these safety committees meets once a month to review and act on safety procedures, both on the ground and on the road. Pike's fleet safety program requires all new drivers to receive classroom training and each is assigned a

veteran "mentor." Veteran drivers attend annual classroom training, reviewing topics that include federal regulations and accident avoidance techniques. All drivers attend weekly "toolbox" talks to discuss fleet safety topics.

Because of their strong fleet safety program, Pike Industries was chosen as one of four companies from across the nation to be profiled in a national publication produced by OSHA, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety. The Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes cited Pike Industries safety program as an outstanding example of reducing highway crashes.

The booklet is available by emailing norman.james@state.vt.us. Be sure to ask for Guidelines for Traffic Safety.

2007 Teen Summer Job Safety Campaign

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Edwin G. Foulke Jr. and key construction industry stakeholders launched OSHA's national 2007 Teen Summer Job Safety Campaign to help keep teenagers safe and healthy on the job. Through the campaign, OSHA, in collaboration with the agency's 13 national and numerous regional construction industry-related alliances, will provide information on working safely and avoiding construction hazards. Check out the website for more information.

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/construction/index.html>



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