

2010 BETTER WORKPLACE AWARD WINNERS

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Fewer than 25 employees

Humanix Staffing & Recruiting, Spokane Valley
www.humanix.com

As the number of temporary employees in the workforce continues to grow, it is not always clear who is responsible for providing safety training to permanent and temporary workers. Humanix Staffing and Recruiting recognized this as an opportunity and applied for a grant from the state Department of Labor & Industries that enabled the company to promote a greater understanding of the primary and secondary employer roles concerning safety for temporary and permanent employees. Other companies received safety training material and communication tools that were developed by Humanix over many years. The companies could implement the guidelines and tools using their current staffing company provider – there was no obligation to use Humanix. After receiving the safety awareness training, 100 percent of the companies were able to determine what they had in place and schedule areas to be developed.

Tenaska Ferndale Cogeneration Station, Ferndale
www.tenaska.com

Tenaska Ferndale employees have worked for more than 15 years without an occupational injury or illness involving days away from work. It's an impressive achievement that stems from a safety culture that extends from the manager level to line employees, stressing employee-involvement at every point. Each year, the company reviews its entire safety program and establishes future goals. The idea is to go well

beyond compliance to achieve optimum safety performance. The emphasis on safety has resulted in numerous awards, including the Voluntary Protection Programs Star Worksite designation in 2008, the nation's highest safety award. The recognition comes from the Washington state Department of Labor & Industries Division of Occupational Health and Safety in cooperation with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

26-100 employees

Columbia Vista Corp., Vancouver

<http://columbiavistacorp.com/>

The worksite at Columbia Vista's Sawmill and Dry Kilns/Remanufacturing plant has many potential hazards, including lumber machinery with moving parts, electrical and thermal energy, material handling, ergonomics, walking and working surfaces, high noise levels, falls and hazardous chemicals. In spite of these hazards, the site's three-year average for injury and illness was 31 percent below the national average for similar industries and 32 percent below the national average for days away, restricted or transferred. As a result, the company received the prestigious Voluntary Protection Program Star Worksite designation in 2005 and it was re-certified in 2009 under the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act professionals from the state Department of Labor & Industries.

101-250 employees

Birds Eye Foods, Tacoma

www.birdseyefoods.com

Birds Eye Foods is proud of its Nalley's Chili and award-winning Bernstein's salad dressings, but until recently it wasn't quite as proud of its safety record. In early 2008, it

made a commitment to improve safety performance and reduce the number of recordable injuries. It quickly paid off. In 2009, total lost time injuries were reduced by 50 percent and total days away were reduced by 86 percent over the prior two years. In addition, the types of injuries sustained were less severe, so workers returned to work sooner. The turnaround came with a workforce where the average length of service is 19 years and 49 percent of employees have worked at the facility more than 20 years. Proof, Birds Eye said, that it's never too late to change a culture.

More than 250 employees

Pacific Power, Yakima, Sunnyside and Walla Walla – Continuous commitment
www.pacificpower.net

Pacific Power, winner of workplace safety awards from AWB for three years straight, implemented several new policies last year and strengthened existing policies that further enhanced its position as a safety leader. Innovations include an emphasis on preventable vehicle accident reduction that lowered an already-low incident of such accidents by 20 percent compared to 2008. Also, the company held its OSHA-recordable incidents to the same low number (five) it achieved in 2008, but with greatly reduced time loss/work restrictions associated with the incidents. The Walla Walla Public Works Department recognized Pacific Power's efforts to educate customers and contractors who live and work around its power lines. And the company continued its Fitness for Duty program that includes numerous health-and-wellness testing sessions for employees.

Skils'kin, Spokane

www.skils-kin.org

Skils'kin, a nonprofit that provides support and services to people with disabilities and other disadvantages, held monthly trainings and drills throughout 2009 as part of its focus on workplace safety. In addition, it conducts two internal safety inspections per year, and uses an employee recognition program to engage workers. Evidence of the effectiveness of all this work came during an actual emergency that occurred when both the safety office and human resources director were out of the building. An employee spotted smoke and staff members initiated an evacuation, before an alarm sounded. The building was evacuated in approximately three minutes – including those individuals with disabilities, some of whom are non-ambulatory and non-verbal. In addition to workplace safety, Skils'kin staff members assist individuals with disabilities with their daily living needs. The assistance includes a safety program with home inspections twice per year.

St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute, Spokane

www.st-lukes.org

St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute, a division of Inland Northwest Health Services, hired a full-time ergonomics specialist in 2002 to provide training to every employee as part of an effort to prevent and reduce workplace injuries. Since then, the specialist has performed more than 500 workplace ergonomic assessments and the hospital has reduced both the number of injuries and time loss rate for injured workers. In addition, the hospital invested more than \$80,000 in safe patient handling equipment based on the recommendations of the employee safety committee. The efforts have not only paid off with fewer injuries, but employees also report greater job satisfaction in surveys and other feedback measures.

JOB TRAINING & ADVANCEMENT PROGRAMS

Fewer than 25 employees

Andelcare, Bellevue – Continuous Commitment

www.andelcare.com

Andelcare, an at-home non-medical care provider for senior citizens, is the exclusive local provider of the Certified Companion Aide program, a distinction that allows it to lead the industry in training. The program, part of The Senior's Choice Network, includes study of 19 essential subjects, including communication, personal care, mental health and illness, disability issues and nutritional needs of the elderly. Andelcare — the Czech word "Andel" means angel or guardian — also offers monthly seminars where staff members can enjoy a snack while learning new skills and techniques. In addition, the company encourages employees who want to advance their skills to the college level by providing flexible work schedules that fit around exams, classes and school breaks. Many of the company's caregivers proceed to nursing school, and many of its "graduates" now work in hospitals and doctor's offices.

26-100 employees

Haskins Steel Co., Inc., Spokane

www.haskinssteelinc.com

In 2007, Haskins Steel Co. entered into an agreement with Spokane Community College as part of an effort to give employees new skills in order to advance within the company. The company paid for all the hours employees spent in class, and interest was so strong that it remodeled a building into a 5,000-square-foot training center. In addition, Haskins kept to its plan to expand the size of its warehouse lunch room, and locker room and remodel the warehouse bathrooms even though work began just as the economy as beginning to nosedive. The work, in addition to the training center remodel,

was approximately \$700,000. But even though it was expensive, it was a good investment. It spiked morale, officials said, at a time when everyone was filled with anxiety.

101-250 employees

Check Masters, Lynnwood

www.check-masters.com

Employee development has always been a central focus of Check Masters, a family-owned company that is celebrating 20 years in business. Founder Kevin McCarthy believes that generosity and exceptional treatment of employees models how he expects employees to treat the company's customers. With only a few exceptions, the employees who make up the company's management and executive teams started in entry-level positions and were developed and promoted into their current positions. Employee development begins with a three-day orientation for new hires and continues with seminars, time spent at the corporate office and monthly meetings. Over the last few years, books have been provided to managers — and often to new employees — so employees can learn together. The company's executive team has a monthly consultant and coach work with to become more effective leaders, and district managers regularly work with store managers in one-on-one meetings.

More than 250 employees

Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Renton

www.erac.com

Enterprise Rent-A-Car has long enjoyed a reputation for providing employees with opportunities to succeed. In 2009, BusinessWeek magazine named it one of the "50 Best

Places to Launch a Career" for the fourth straight year based on compensation, rapid advancement and best training programs. In addition, Enterprise is one of the top recruiters of college graduates in the U.S. — it hired nearly 8,000 college graduates nationwide last year and expects to hire about 8,000 more this year, and plans to offer 1,000 internships in the coming year. As part of its commitment to its employees, every level in every department within Enterprise focuses on job training and advancement. Company founder Jack Taylor believed in focusing on the satisfaction of his customers and the success of his employees. "The rest will take care of itself." For more than 50 years, the approach has held true and consistently earned Enterprise recognition for world-class customer service and the way it advances its professionals.

Marine View Beverage, Inc., Sumner

Marine View Beverage has fostered a deep and abiding belief in promoting and advancing from within. One example of its commitment is the in-house training program it created to develop delivery drivers, sales representatives and management. For potential drivers, the training meant they received an additional \$2 per hour and saved the \$5,000 cost of commercial driving school. The work is paying off: More than two-thirds of the company's management staff comes from internal advancements. In addition, 75 percent of the company's delivery drivers come from training and advancement, and 80 percent of sales representatives. Even during these challenging economic times, Marine View has managed to grow its workforce by almost 25 percent and decrease annual employee turnover by 40 percent.

Sterling Savings Bank, Spokane

www.sterlingsavingsbank.com

At Sterling Savings Bank, job training and advancement is part of an integrated plan that lays out a clear line of site for all levels and positions within the organization, from the

new hire training plan to career path development. Each program is offered in a variety of learning channels to meet the needs of the individual, including classrooms, electronic learning and self study delivery. Much of Sterling's current training and course content is now produced and maintained in-house by Sterling University. A key component of the university is the Learning Management System, which tracks all employee training plans, documents attendance for regulatory requirements and organizes training resources available to all employees. The company's Talent Management & Organizational Growth system provides leadership coaching, talent reviews, tuition reimbursement available to all employees and detailed assessments. Together with Sterling University, the system offers employees numerous opportunities to gain new skills and advance their careers, making Sterling a leader in learning and achievement recognition.

INNOVATIVE BENEFIT/COMPENSATION PROGRAMS

Fewer than 25 employees

American Distributing, Marysville

www.americandistributing.com

When a driver at American Distributing came to the company because his wife's work schedule changed, the company agreed to let him take Wednesday and Thursday off and work weekends to match her schedule. When another employee who retired a few years earlier underwent cancer treatment that exceeded the company's coverage at the time, American Distributing paid for all of the former employee's additional expenses. When employees have needed financial assistance, the company has helped in a variety of ways from assisting with home loans and mortgages, vehicle payments and hearing aids to home upgrade loans, appliance loans or even outright gifts of appliances or cash when needed to make ends meet. American Distributing even has a work-out area open to employees, friends and family -- complete with a ski tuning shop where the owner

spends many winter hours tuning his equipment and the equipment of his employees and their friends.

26-100 employees

Acme Concrete Paving, Inc., Spokane

www.acmeconcretepaving.com

When Acme began eight years ago, it offered a health and dental benefit plan to its non-field employees — who don't receive health and benefits through a labor union. The company not only pays 100 percent of employee health and dental benefits, but it also pays for dependents. As the cost of insurance rose, Acme chose a plan with a higher deductible than the one it began with, but directly reimburses employees the difference in the deductible. Not only are employees and dependents completely covered, but they are covered at the same benefit level as they were eight years ago. The company also encourages employees to use its sky box at the Spokane Arena and attend baseball games, concerts and special events at Avista Stadium. It holds a Christmas party with a sit-down dinner, and recently when the company completed a project in Las Vegas, all of the employees left in Spokane were flown to Las Vegas to join the crew there in participating in an amazing banquet.

Cairncross & Hempelmann, P.S., Seattle — Honorable mention

www.cairncross.com

Cairncross & Hempelmann demonstrates its belief that its employees are its most valuable asset by offering an array of benefits, including a health plan that includes reimbursement of \$1,500 per year for employee to help with out-of-pocket costs such as co-pays and deductibles. Other benefits include three weeks of paid parental leave for the birth or adoption of a child, and a long-standing sabbatical program for attorneys

and staff that allows them to take up to 10 weeks of paid time off. Discretionary bonuses are used to reward exceptional service and a gift is made to each employee at the end of the year to thank them for their loyalty. In addition, the firm helps employees get to work through fully-paid bus, ferry or train passes and employees who need to drive for work can apply a stipend toward parking. And it just rolled out a new wellness program that will encourage employees to engage in healthier eating habits and increase physical activity.

101-250 employees

Medical Imaging Northwest, Lakewood

www.minw.com

Health care is an ever-changing industry, which makes it especially important that employees of Medical Imaging Northwest have access to ongoing education, training and support. One way of doing that is Compressus/MEDxConnct, a major technology upgrade that was begun and complete in 2009. The project required support from the company's information technology department along with hands-on training for technologists and radiologists. In addition, staff members attend numerous yearly conferences as part of the effort to stay focused, sharp motivated and constantly ahead of the curve in health care.

More than 250 employees

Concur Technologies, Redmond

www.concur.com

Concur, the leading provider of on-demand employee spend management services, offers employees an impressive array of benefits, including a choice of two health plans. The company pays 100 percent of employee premiums in the base plan and a significant



Washington State's Chamber of Commerce

percentage of dependent premiums. The company also offers 22 days of personal time off per year for employees with up to seven years of service, and 27 days for employees with more than seven years. In addition, it provides numerous innovative benefits, including paid volunteer hours so employees can dedicate time to a non-profit organization of their choice, and a Monday morning breakfast spread complete with lattes, mochas and espresso.

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