



# LABOR Works...

US VIRGIN ISLANDS  
**DEPARTMENT  
of LABOR**



December 1, 2007—Vol. I

Let LABOR Work For You

## Commissioner's Message

### Seasons Greetings!

It has been a great year for the Department of Labor and as we push forward into a new year of challenges I am counting on you to keep the energy level and our expectations high. I would like to take this time to thank each and every one of you for all your hard work and bid you and your families God's blessings and peace throughout the season and into the New Year.

Our work here at Labor is so important and as the world moves into a global market, we are the foot soldiers that must prepare the Virgin Islands Workforce for imminent competition. In the coming months we will begin the transformation to a demand driven system and positive change will sweep over the department. I am encouraging you to hop on board with this sweeping change and embrace the power of our new mission to make Workforce Development an economic engine for the prosperity of our residents.

Our management team has been working feverishly to align systems and resources both internally and externally to support this initiative and it is our hope that our work will be "Transformative". We must realize that businesses are

moving to where the talent is and our mission has to move with this trend. You have to lead this call to recruit and develop the raw talent that is in demand. You have to create the system that will produce a talented workforce, one that is dynamic, adaptable and technically literate.

I know that we can do it and with training, open minds and supportive management we will be successful. I am asking for your support as we take on this endeavor and pledge to honor it with the utmost commitment to success.

I thank you in advance for your support and urge you to remember that perseverance and patience will lead the way to the light, as it's always darkest before the dawn.

### What's Inside:

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## DOL HOST YOUTH CAREER EXPLOSION



In commemoration of Labor Awareness Month 2007, the Department of Labor hosted the first Youth Career Explosion on St. Croix at the Canegata Ballpark. Hundreds of

teenagers and young adults attended this event that showcased job opportunities on St. Croix. The fair was targeted to young people ages 16 to 25.

The Department teamed up with the U.S. Army, Navy, Job Corp and invited more than 30 employers to participate. Among the employers were the **National Park Service, BIZVI, University of the Virgin Islands, Buccaneer Hotel, Divi Carina Bay Resort and Casino and Mary Kay.**

Professionals were on hand to assist with resumes and job interview techniques on landing that winning job. Many that attended got firsthand knowledge on what employers expected and the requirements needed to remain competitive in today's workforce.

Not only did these eager young people receive valuable information on job opportunities and career options, they were also entertained with live music by *Stroka Band, DJ IQ, and the Rising Stars Steel Orchestra.* Participants received *free iPods, T-Shirts, and other prizes.*

...Story cont'd on page 2



## DOL Partners with SRMC's School of Practical Nursing



The Department of Labor has partnered with the Schneider Regional Medical Center's School of Practical Nursing to address the critical shortage of nurses our territory faces. The School of Practical Nursing started its program in January 2005 in response to the SRMC's dire need for nurses and to address the need to lower or eliminate the exorbitant cost of having traveling nurses administer health care. The Department of Labor embarked on forging a partnership with one the Territory's healthcare facilities by certifying the School of Practical Nursing as an eligible training provider. It was also an opportunity to provide the local workforce with trained, competent Licensed Practical Nurses.

According to the *U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook*, "Employment of LPNs is expected to **grow about as fast as average** for all occupations through 2014 in response to the long-term care needs of an increasing elderly population and the general growth of health care services."

The School of Practical Nursing program consist of 15 months of intensive class work and practical training in patient care. The School is staffed with 11 clinical and theory instructors that provide rigorous college level instruction in nursing care.

One of the unique features of this program is that it is also a "bridge program" that allow students who have passed the NCLEX exam to continue their studies to receive a Bachelor of Science-Nursing degree at the University of the

Virgin Islands, Inter-American University in Puerto Rico, and the Helen Fuld College of Nursing in New York. Additionally, the Helen Fuld College of Nursing has agreed to waive admission requirements for students of the SRMC School of Practical Nursing that have graduated and passed the NCLEX. Furthermore, these students will be eligible to receive an Associate in Science – Nursing degree in one year.

Since its inception, the Department of Labor has funded 13 students who have graduated from the program and are working in various health professions today. Currently, 12 DOL customers are now enrolled in the nursing program

For further information, please contact the Department of Labor at **340-776-3700**. You can also visit our website at [www.vidol.gov](http://www.vidol.gov).

## Youth Career Explosion 2007



As reported in the September 16-17, 2007 *St. Croix Avis*, "The Department of Labor—Division of Employment and Training is literally reaching out to the needy youth in the territory through its first Youth Career Explosion... the Youth Net Team worked in conjunction with the U.S. Navy, Job Corps and ...U.S. Army to gather employers from St. Croix and bring jobs in arm's reach of young adults ages 16 to 25."

Also reported in the September 15, 2007 *VI Source*, "Hundreds of teenagers and young adults turned out for the VIDOL's first Youth Career Explosion...the youth job and employment fair was aimed at showcasing job opportunities on St. Croix...more than 30 employers, ranging from local hoteliers to... consulting firms and federal agencies participated. Professionals were also available to assist

with resumes and provide information on job interviewing skill."

A commitment has already been extended to host a similar event on St. Thomas in 2008. If there are any employers that would like to partner with the Department, please contact **Arah C. Lockhart**, Assistant Commissioner of Employment and Training at **340-776-3700** or via email at [aclockhart@vidol.gov](mailto:aclockhart@vidol.gov).



## What you should know about the Virgin Islands Unemployment Insurance Program

**The Social Security Act of 1935 (Public Law 74-271)** created the Federal-State Unemployment Compensation (UC) Program. The program has two main objectives: (1) to provide temporary and partial wage replacement to involuntarily unemployed workers who were recently employed; and (2) to help stabilize the economy during recessions. The U.S. Department of Labor oversees the system, but each State administers its own program. Because Federal law defines the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands as States for the purposes of UC, there are a total of 53 State programs.

On June 19, 1961, **Act No.767** added Chapter 12 to Title 24 of the Virgin Islands Code and named it the "Virgin Islands Unemployment Compensation Act". On June 25, 1963, **Act No. 1036** substituted the word "Insurance" for "Compensation" and the chapter became the-"**Virgin Islands Unemployment Insurance Act**".

The intention of our local law is and continues to be to meet both of the mandates established by the federal law as can be seen in detail at our website [www.vidol.gov](http://www.vidol.gov). The following excerpt taken from Title 24, section 301(a) of the act addresses the social responsibility mandated in the law. A portion of

the VI unemployment Insurance statute reads "*Economic insecurity due to unemployment is a threat to the health, morals, and welfare of the people of the Virgin Islands, and protection against this hazard requires appropriate action by the Legislature. The systematic accumulation of funds during periods of employment from which benefits may be paid for periods of unemployment would sustain the morale and conserve the skills and standards of living of those who enabling them to meet their essential expenses for a reasonable period until they are able to obtain suitable work...***Story cont'd on page 4**

## OSHA Safety Tips for the Holiday Season



- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate that the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.



## Legal Corner



Update your legal humor:

### DUMB LAWS:

In **Louisiana**, you may not tie an alligator to a fire hydrant.

In **Maine**, you may not step out of a plane in flight.

In **Massachusetts**, it is illegal to frighten a pigeon.

In **Nebraska**, Barbers are forbidden from eating onions between 7am and 7pm.

In **New York**, the penalty for jumping off a building is death.



**St. Thomas:**

54 A&B Kronprindsens Gade  
St. Thomas, VI 00802  
Phone: (340)-776-3700  
Fax: (340)-774-5908

**St. Croix:**

#2203 Church Street  
Christiansted, VI 00820-4612  
Phone: (340)-773-1994  
Fax: (340)-773-0094

Visit us on the Web:

[www.vidol.gov](http://www.vidol.gov)

**Newsletter Team:**

June Austin, Janelle Gumbs,  
Gary Halyard, Rhona Martinez,  
Cindy Richardson and Rupert Ross



*The entire VIDOL Family would like to wish you and yours a joyous Holiday Season and a prosperous New Year 2008!*

## LABOR Acknowledges 2007 Retirees

This year, we bid farewell and God Speed to five of VIDOL's family members who have decided to embark on a new journey in their lives, filled with bright hopes, sweet dreams and new beginnings—*Retirement*.

**Emese Carcavallo**, the former Senior Research Analyst, Bureau of Labor Statistics, retired after **23** years of government service all of those years with the Department of Labor

**Floretta Jeffers**, former Receptionist, VIDOL-STT, retired after 17 years of services with **16** of the years at the Department of Labor.

**Muriel Nicholas**, Custodial Worker II, VIDOL-STX, retired after 13 years of service with **ten**

## Unemployment Insurance cont'd

*become unemployed, by enabling them to meet their essential expenses for a reasonable period until they are able to obtain suitable work. Essential consumer purchasing power would thereby also be maintained, thus helping to sustain the confidence of the community and the general level of economic activity”.*

**Our Mission Statement:** *“With a commitment to the highest standard of customer service the Division of Unemployment Insurance (UI) administers income support to eligible workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own by systematically accumulating funds from employers during periods of employment from which benefits may be paid”.*

*We take this opportunity to wish all our employers and their employees joy and prosperity during this Holiday Season.*

**Jaime Velez, Director**

Division of Unemployment Insurance

*LABOR Trivia will Continue in our next issue...*



of the years at the Department of Labor.

**Janice President**, Adjudicator, Division of Unemployment Insurance-STT, retires on 12/31/07 after 29 years of government service with **28** of those years at the Department of Labor.

**Eleuteria Roberts**, former Assistant Commissioner of Employment & Training, retired after 40 years of government service with **33** of those years at the Department of Labor.

It gives us great pleasure to recognize, honor, and express our heartfelt appreciation for their many years of hard work and dedication in serving the

people of this territory and in helping us to move the mission of the department forward. Their contributions are woven into the fabric of the Virgin Islands Department of Labor.

They are *treasured* jewels of the VIDOL family that serve as an inspiration to all of us, and will long be remembered. They will be sorely missed. Nevertheless, as they embark on their well deserved retirement from public service, we wish them good health, peace, joy, love, prosperity and contentment in all of their endeavors.

—*The VIDOL Family*