

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Wysong at 8:30 a.m. on February 5, 2009, in Room 545-N of the Capitol.

All members where present accept:
Senator Jay Emler excused

Committee staff present:

Mr. Margaret Cianciarulo, Committee Assistant
Mr. Ken Wilke, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Mr. Julian Efird, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Mr. Reed Holwegner, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Mr. Adrian Polansky, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture
Mr. Jim Garner, Secretary , Kansas Department of Labor

Others attending:

Please see attached list.

Presentation on Agriculture in our State's Economy

Upon calling the meeting to order, Chairman Wysong called on Mr. Adrian Polansky, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture, who presented testimony covering the historic significance of agriculture, where they have been, and thought of the future including:

- Facts and figures regarding Kansas' ranking in U.S. Agriculture in 2007 such as Kansas ranking sixth nationally in farm product exports, which were valued at more than \$3.8 billion.
- The Kansas Bioproducts economy and production such as 600 permanent jobs already created in the Kansas ethanol plants, with 12 plants having capacity to produce 520 MGY.
- Biofuels benefit to customers for example, Kansans saving between 22 and 43 cents per gallon on gasoline as a result of ethanol blends.
- The future of genetics for example by 2012, Monsanto's first drought tolerant corn should reach farmers expecting to provide a 10 percent yield increase.
- Food prices in perspective, agricultural price volatility, and regarding the Kansas Ag lender, they are not involved in the sub-prime lending crises .
- USDA forecasts for 2009, factory affecting producers and the future of Kansas agriculture.

A copy of his presentation is ([Attachment1](#)) attached hereto and incorporated into the Minutes as referenced.

The Chair thanked Secretary Polansky and asked for questions or comments from the Committee which came from Senators Kelsey, Reitz, and Wysong including what is your sense on commodity prices for the next six months? Regarding Ventria, asked to expand on it and what new products are they looking at? Regarding drought-resistant corn, will they be able to use the entire plant (stalk, husk and kernel)?

Overview of the Kansas Department of Labor by Mr. Jim Garner, Secretary

The Chair then recognized Mr. Jim Garner, Secretary , Kansas Department of Labor who offered an overview of the department stating he had put together a compilation of important numbers and charts concerning the programs administered by KDOL. Highlights of his testimony included:

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Commerce Committee at 8:30 a.m. on February 5, 2009, in Room 545-N of the Capitol.

Page 2

- the December unemployment rate was 4.9 percent, up from 4.0 percent last year,

- in CY 2008:

- 1) Kansans filed more than 178,000 initial claims for unemployment, a 24 percent increase from 2007
- 2) claims between September and December of 2008 increased more than 65 percent when compared to the same time last year
- 3) they paid \$321 million in unemployment benefits to out-of-work Kansans

- the same type of statistics were listed in his testimony regarding:

- 1) Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2009
- 2) Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund
- 3) Unemployment Tax Reductions, which is one of the most significant new laws in the 2007 session and **SB83** provides major tax relief to employers and reformed the antiquated waiting week for those receiving UI benefits.

- Call Center Operations updates especially in light of the increase in lay offs and demands for unemployment benefits and the two new federal extensions of UI benefits. (Ex. Extended hours, overtime, 30 additional employees.)

- recent accomplishments of the Unemployment Insurance Modernization Project including debit cards, electronic filing of wage reports and tax payments, document imaging and customer service projects.

- Labor Market Information Services such as the new KLIC Online Service and the 2008 Kansas Economic Report

- and lastly, he covered Workers Compensation regarding the 2008 Oregon Study, the Advisory Council and the FY2008 statistical report from KDOL's Division of Workers Compensation.

A copy of his testimony is ([Attachment 2](#)) attached and incorporated into the Minutes as referenced.. A list of his attachments is shown on the last page of his testimony, page 7 and can be found in Chairman Wysong's office.

The Chair thanked Secretary Garner and asked for questions and comments from the Committee which came from Senators Lynn and Wysong including:

- Referring to the Status of the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund handout, page one (for years 2001, 2002, 2003 and 04) and then it changes over to page two, it looks like the fund lags the actual downturn by maybe a year, is that possible?

- We are starting to hear a lot of quality job programs elsewhere (ex. Missouri and Colorado) where employees are permitted to keep a percentage of their employee withholding taxes to bring in jobs to the state wouldn't this have an impact on the trust fund?

- Thank you for what you have done, for handling the phone call situation at the Call Center (due to the high volume of calls for unemployment causing longer wait time or not able to get through.)

Adjournment

As there was no further business, Chairman Wysong adjourned the meeting. The time was 9:27 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10, 2009.

The Kansas Agricultural Economy

Adrian Polansky
Kansas Secretary of Agriculture



2/5/2009

Senate Commerce Committee

Kansas' Rank in U.S. Agriculture in 2007

Product	Production or Number	U.S. Rank
Wheat Flour Milled	34,614,000 cwt.	1
Wheat Flour Milling Capacity	147,130 cwt.	1
Sorghum Grain Produced	212,000,000 bu.	1
Cattle Slaughtered	7,725,900 head	1
All Wheat Produced	283,800,000 bu.	2
Sorghum Silage Produced	1,120,000 tons	2
Cropland	29,542,022 acres	2

Source: 2008 Kansas Farm Facts



Senate Commerce Committee

Notes: February 5, 2009

Attachment 1

Kansas Agriculture

- In 2007, Kansas ranked 6th nationally in farm product exports, which were valued at more than \$3.8 billion
- Cash receipts for farm marketing valued at more than \$11.7 billion
- Cash receipts from the sale of cattle set a new record high of \$6.32 billion
- Value of wheat, corn, sorghum and soybean production exceeded \$5.5 billion



3

Kansas Agricultural Economy

- Kansas Inc. reports the total impact of agriculture on the Kansas economy depends on how it is defined:
 - If the term agribusiness is used, encompassing the entire range of related food and fiber industries using input supply, agricultural production, commodity processing, food manufacturing and food distribution, the impact of agriculture on the Kansas economy gains in importance to as much as **20 percent** of the state's total annual economy



4

12

Kansas Bioproducts Economy

- Approximately 600 permanent jobs already have been created in Kansas ethanol plants
- ICM of Colwich builds and supports ethanol plants around the world
- EdenSpace, a biotechnology company in Junction City, employs mostly scientists
- Ventria Bioscience operates a plant in Junction City to process its pharmaceutical rice

5



Kansas Biofuel Production

- Ethanol
 - 12 plants with capacity to produce 520 MGY
 - Three plants are under construction that will increase our production capacity by 241 MGY
- Biodiesel
 - One plant with a 5 MGY capacity
 - Three plants are under construction that will increase our production capacity by 79 MGY

6



1-3

Kansas State University Ethanol Study

- Demand for trucking by Kansas ethanol plants

Truckloads of Grain		Truckloads of Ethanol		Truckloads of WDGs		Totals	
Daily	Annually	Daily	Annually	Daily	Annually	Daily	Annually
485	177,033	70	25,694	331	120,772	886	323,500

- Statewide impact ethanol has on the trucking industry

Total Payments to Trucking Sector	
Truck loads of grain, ethanol and WDGs	323,500
Trucks required (FTE = 2,000 hours)	475
Total trucking sector payments	\$52,956,778



Kansas State University Ethanol Study

- The White Energy ethanol plant has these impacts on the Russell community
 - It creates approximately 235 jobs and adds an additional \$18.27 million worth of value added output
 - It employs around 70 full-time workers and makes it a point to buy as many inputs locally as possible
 - For every job created in the ethanol plant, 6.72 jobs are created in Russell County



1-4

Biofuels Benefit Consumers

- As a result of ethanol blends in gasoline, Kansans saved between 22 and 43 cents per gallon on gasoline
 - Saving for a typical family would be \$150 to \$300 per year
 - DOE estimates that the United State would use an additional 7.2 billion gallons of gasoline without ethanol
 - Ethanol adds around 20 percent, or just under 80 cents, per bushel of corn at current prices

9



Genetics Are a Key to the Future

- Impact of 300 bushel corn yields
 - Total corn production in 2030 is anticipated to be 24.6 billion bushels
 - With no increase in harvested corn acres from 2007 (85 million acres) and growth in other uses of corn, 12 billion bushels would be available to make ethanol
- Drought-Resistant Corn
 - By 2012, Monsanto's first drought-tolerant corn should reach farmers. It is expected to provide a 10 percent yield increase in states with little rainfall, such as Kansas

10



1-5

Food and Fuel Debate

- Food price inflation is driven by several factors
 - High energy cost
 - Booming demand
 - Weakening U.S. dollar
 - Financial speculation
 - Weather

- KSU economist Mike Woolverton said that of the 4.3 percent increase in food prices last year, 1.8 percent was due to ethanol production

11



Food Prices in Perspective

- Supermarket prices compared with national average producer prices

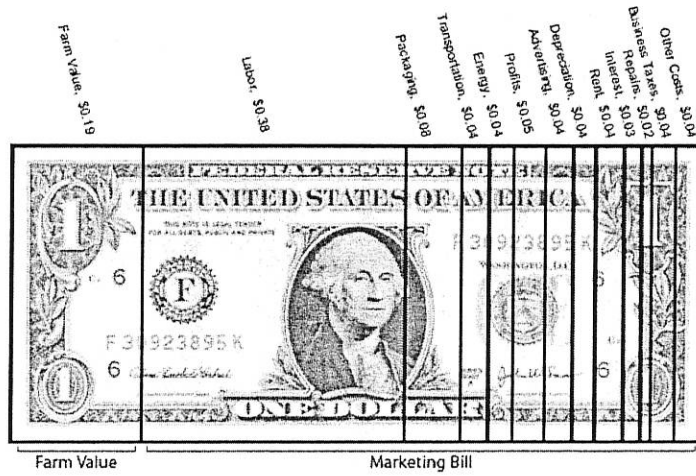
Product	Retail Price	Farmer's Share
Bread, Wonder (1lb loaf)	\$2.99	\$0.13
Wheaties (15 oz)	\$4.49	\$0.10
Soda (2 liter)	\$1.49	\$0.07
Ham, Boneless (per pound)	\$4.29	\$0.42

12



1-6

Food Dollar



World Agricultural Economy

- USDA forecasts 2009 U.S. agricultural exports at \$98.5 billion
 - \$17 billion decline from \$115.5 billion reported for 2008
 - The combination of weaker global demand, falling prices and an appreciating dollar create a very unfavorable outlook for U.S. exports

1-7

Kansas Agricultural Lender

- Kansas' largest agricultural lender, Farm Credit, has six associations with more than \$3 billion in volume and more than 15,000 customers
 - Not involved in the sub-prime lending crisis
 - 2008 was a good year for most Kansas producers
 - Telling customers to use caution and make good management choices

15



Agricultural Price Volatility

Commodity	Contract Month	July 2008	February 2009
Corn	March 2009	\$8.00 bu.	\$3.70 bu.
Wheat	March 2009	\$9.50 bu.	\$5.93 bu.
Soybeans	March 2009	\$16.50 bu.	\$9.59 bu.
Lean Hogs	April 2009	\$92.00 cwt.	\$61.68 cwt.
Feeder Cattle	April 2009	\$116.00 cwt.	\$95.33 cwt.

Source: Ag Web. February 2, 2009. <http://www.agweb.com>

16



1-8

Factors Affecting Producers in 2009

- USDA's Economic Research Service stated that these issues will be facing producers in 2009
 - The relative importance of input price rises is affecting farm operator profit margins
 - Farmland value volatility
 - The overall debt structure and solvency of farm businesses
 - Access farm households have to credit
 - Off-farm income during a national recession

17



Future of Kansas Agriculture

- National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility to be built in Manhattan, Kansas
 - Will provide integrated research, response and diagnostic capabilities to protect human and animal health
 - \$451 million, 500,000-square foot facility
 - Expected to generate
 - 1,641 temporary construction jobs
 - \$138.2 million in labor income
 - 250 to 350 permanent jobs yield \$26.8 million in salaries
 - \$1.5 million in new state and local taxes

18



1-9

Future of Kansas Agriculture

- Commercial-scale ethanol production from cellulosic sources is on the horizon
- It will create a whole new set of bioproducts and green-collar jobs
- Today's petroleum products will be tomorrow's bioproducts
 - Solvents, acetic acid, water-soluble polymers, oleochemicals, oil seed lubricants/surfactants, lactic acid, propanediol and more than 800 chemicals

19



Future of Kansas Agriculture

- Kansas must encourage research and development in bioproducts
- We can be innovators in renewable energy, animal health and plant sciences, attracting investment, green-collar jobs and educational opportunities
- The future can be in our fields, universities and rural communities

20



1-10

Thank you.

Adrian Polansky
Kansas Secretary of Agriculture



2/5/2009

Senate Commerce Committee

**Testimony before the
Senate Commerce Committee
Jim Garner
Secretary of Labor
5 February 2009**

Chairman Wysong and Members of the Committee:

Welcome back and thank you for providing me the opportunity to present an update of activities within the Kansas Department of Labor during the last several months. The agency has many responsibilities. It administers the unemployment insurance program – processing claims for benefits and collecting unemployment taxes to fund the system. The agency operates the state’s workers compensation system. Our Industrial Safety and Health division offers free workplace safety consultations for private employers and oversees job safety involving public employees. We enforce the employment laws for Kansas – including Child Labor laws and the Wage Payment Act. The agency’s Labor Market Information Services is the research unit which compiles data on the workforce and industries in Kansas. The agency also oversees the Public Employers and Employees Relations Act and the Public Negotiations Act. Our customers are the 73,000 employers and the over 1.4 million workers in Kansas.

Important Statistics

I have put together a compilation of important numbers and charts concerning the programs administered by KDOL, which is included as an appendix to this testimony. I hope you find this data helpful and informative.

Given the difficult economic time our nation is in, I do wish to highlight and discuss some of the labor market information I have provided in the attachments to my testimony. The December unemployment rate was 4.9 percent, up from 4.0 percent last year. In CY2008, Kansans filed more than 178,000 initial claims for unemployment, a 24 percent increase from 2007. Claims between September and December of 2008 increased more than 65 percent when compared to the same time last year.

In 2008, we paid \$321 million in unemployment benefits to out-of-work Kansans. These payments are critical for laid off workers, but they also help businesses by providing a cash infusion for the state economy.

Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC 08)

In response to the worsening economic situation, Congress enacted an extension of unemployment benefits. In July 2008, President Bush signed the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (EUC 08). This new law provides

Senate Commerce Committee
Date: February 5, 2009

unemployed workers who meet certain eligibility qualifications an additional 13 weeks of UI benefits after exhausting their regular UI benefits. The benefits provided under this program are federally funded and do not affect the balance of the state's UI Trust Fund. Also, employers' state UI accounts are not charged for these extended benefits. On November 21, 2008, the President signed a second extension of EUC, providing an additional 7 weeks for Kansas claimants exhausting benefits. The two EUC programs together provide a total of 20 additional weeks of UI benefits to qualified claimants. There will likely be another extension passed by Congress soon. As of last week, KDOL has processed over 25,000 EUC applications, and issued payments under the program, totaling over \$50m in extended benefits.

Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund

There are many states dealing with a severe depletion and possible insolvency of their UI Trust Funds. I am pleased to report that the UI Trust Fund in Kansas is in very good condition. Each year I must certify the solvency of the UI Trust Fund to the Governor. Attached is a copy of my letter and report. Currently, the fund has a balance of \$528.2 million. I have also shared this information with the Employment Security Advisory Committee (ESAC). The ESAC is a council representing business, labor and the academic community and is charged with advising the Secretary of Labor on matters concerning the UI Trust Fund and any proposed changes to the Employment Security Laws. Attached is a roster of the current members of the Council.

Unemployment Tax Reductions Remain in Effect

One of the most significant new laws in the 2007 session, Senate Bill 83, provided major tax relief to employers and reformed the antiquated waiting week for those receiving UI benefits.

In 2007, Kansas employers realized \$83 million in savings due to the reduced UI tax rates. The reduced rates continued in effect in 2008 and employers kept \$97.1 million because of the reduced rates. These are real tax savings to most employers in Kansas.

Due to the continued health of the UI Trust Fund and the fact that it has maintained an acceptable measure of solvency, the reduced tax rates for positive balance employers will continue for another year. We estimate that employers will save about \$106 million in 2009.

Call Center Operations

Some of you have likely heard from your constituents about their experiences in filing for unemployment benefits. Due to the significant increase in lay offs and demands for unemployment benefits and the two new federal extensions of UI benefits, our call center has been overwhelmed with calls. Increased inquiries regarding both regular unemployment and extended unemployment programs have caused longer wait time to speak with a claims representative. Also, due to a high volume of calls, some individuals are not able to get through and have to call back more than once.

Although our federal unemployment budget is tight, we have embarked on an intense Action Plan to address this situation. We hired 10 new staff members that started taking unemployment claims in December and we have hired 20 more temporary staff that started training this week. Other action items include: the development of a special unit dedicated to processing extended benefit claims; making improvements to our website and phone systems to better serve claimants; and expanding hours of operations beginning on Monday, February 9th to 7 am to 7 pm M-F and 8am to 5pm Saturdays. Claimants can also now use our website to file claims on Saturdays – it will be operating Monday through Saturday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

I know that many of you have heard from constituents who have questions about unemployment. If you have questions that you would like to speak to me about, please feel free to contact my office directly at 785-296-7474.

Unemployment Insurance Modernization Project

We continue to make progress on the project to revamp the processes and technology that support our state unemployment insurance system. We are dealing with the challenges that come with a project of this magnitude but we continue to move forward.

Let me share some of the recent accomplishments of the project:

Debit Cards – On November 17, 2008, KDOL implemented paperless payments as a part of the UIM project. We now make all payments using debit cards and no longer print paper checks. This change means significant savings for our agency by eliminating warrant stock and reducing mailings. The transition from checks to debit cards has gone pretty smoothly. Of course, we have heard from a few individuals that simply do not like the concept of debit cards. We have also developed a flier with some basic debit card information that we have distributed to labor union halls and workforce centers. I have included a copy of the flier with my testimony.

Electronic Filing of Wage Reports and Tax Payments -- During the 2008 session, a new law was passed requiring certain employers to file their quarterly wage reports and pay their UI taxes electronically. This law change was recommended as part of and made possible due to the UI Modernization project. Beginning July 1, 2008, all employers and third party administrators with 250 or more employees were required to file their reports and taxes electronically. This has been a very quiet and smooth change. After July 1, 2009, all employers with 100 or more employees will be filing their reports and taxes electronically.

Document Imaging -- We receive thousands of paper documents each week that must be manually routed from office to office as we process UI claims and employer taxes. Last spring, we began scanning all historical UI benefits files and creating electronic images of some incoming documents as well. By having electronic images of our files, we can route documents electronically saving both money and time. We are now scanning about 20,000 images per day -- 100 percent of our incoming UI tax information and about 25

percent of the incoming benefit information. By the end of the fiscal year, 100 percent of all incoming documents will be scanned and electronically routed.

Customer Service Projects – We are in the process of making changes to our Web site to improve online claims and tax filing. Some of the changes planned for our Web site in the coming weeks include address updates for claimants, online registration of new tax accounts for employers and the ability to reset usernames and passwords.

These are just a few highlights of the work we have completed in the last year. I will continue to update you as we make more improvements that will benefit our customers.

Labor Market Information Services

Our Labor Market Information Division operates pursuant to a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and in accordance with BLS guidelines to compile statistics on the labor market in Kansas – estimates on the labor force, employment levels, unemployment rates, wages paid, and projections of future occupation trends.

New KLIC Online Service - This fall KDOL added a new feature to our agency's web site – the Kansas Labor Information Center (KLIC). You can find this online at <https://klic.dol.ks.gov/>

This new service allows users of our labor market data to gather and compile this data in a manner and format that best meets their particular needs and purposes. It allows users to produce customized reports of key data on our Web site. Users, such as economic development specialists, educators, career counselors, researchers and policymakers, can create area profiles for particular counties, gather data on income and wages by area, occupation or industry and create reports on specific occupations. We intend to continue to build on this new resource. It is a way to make the data we collect more accessible and meaningful. It is a major improvement in our Labor Market Information services.

2008 Kansas Economic Report -- On Labor Day 2008, we produced the second annual *Kansas Economic Report*. I sent members of this committee an electronic link to it last September. You can find it at

<http://www.dol.ks.gov/LMIS/economicReport/economicReport2008.html>

This report provides valuable information about the key economic indicators that influenced Kansas' economy in 2007 including trends in employment, unemployment and several industry sectors over past years. Also included is information on fast growing occupations, the Gross Domestic Product, personal income, global business, the Consumer Price Index and population. I believe this report is a great new product prepared by KDOL and will serve as a meaningful resource to policymakers.

Other Publications -- We have produced our popular products, including the *2008 Job Vacancy Survey* and the *2008 Wage Survey* and the summer release of the *2004-2014 Occupational Outlook*. I have included brochures on these reports in your materials. The *Outlook* is a long range projections report prepared every two years and takes a base year of actual occupational data (in this report 2004) and projects future demands for various

occupations ten years out (to 2014). We use a nationally accepted methodology developed by the Projections Managing Partnership and approved by the USDOL. The report indicates that five of the top 10 growing occupations that require an associate's degree or some type of vocational certification are in health care-related fields. Three of the top 10 growing occupations requiring a bachelor's degree or higher education are in teaching. I have enclosed brochures concerning this report.

Workers Compensation

Members of the committee will soon receive a copy of the FY2008 statistical report from KDOL's Division of Workers Compensation. Some highlights from the report are that the agency received more than 72,000 injury reports, processed 15,556 applications for hearings, responded to 54,000 requests for workers compensation histories and recovered \$303,000 in restitution and penalties. Our Ombudsman section provided information to 23,000 partners.

The Workers Compensation market in Kansas remains very stable. According to the National Council of Compensating Insurers, Kansas remains a profitable place for insurers to operate. Injury frequency rates continue to be down; the average indemnity cost is lower in Kansas than the national average; and the average cost of permanent partial claims is less than the regional and national average. In contrast, Kansas remains quite low in the level of benefits to injured workers.

2008 Oregon Study – Every two years, the state of Oregon produces one of the best comparison reports on workers compensation premium costs amongst the various states. The most recent report was released in October 2008. On a scale of 1 to 51 (with 1 being the highest costs and 51 being the lowest), Kansas ranks 42nd in the nation on premium costs. Kansas' premium rate index is \$1.77 per \$100 of payroll, or 78 percent of the national median, which is valued at \$2.26 per \$100 of payroll. I have enclosed a copy of the report's summary.

Workers Compensation Advisory Council – The Council is created by statute and is charged with monitoring workers compensation issues in the state. They are asked to both review proposed legislation and make recommendations to the Legislature. During the interim, members of the Joint Committee on Economic Development asked the Council to make recommendations for legislation in light of the Supreme Court decision in Casco. The Council met on November 3, 2008 and appointed a subcommittee to meet and work on the issues as requested by the Joint Committee. The subcommittee met on November 20, 2008 and again on January 5, 2009. Following these meetings, there is still no agreement on any recommendations for changes to laws or policies.

Increased Use of Electronic Communications — This year, we have improved our efforts to provide as much electronic information as possible to workers compensation stakeholders. A few of our key projects include:

- *Proof of coverage online*: The web-based coverage verification service allows external users access to coverage information through the Kansas Department of

Labor Web site. We averaged 1,328 searches and 898 detailed inquiries per month for FY2008. Kansas was the third state to develop such a system. It is now utilized by more than 20 states.

- *Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)*: By the close of FY2008, more than 40 trading partners, sending on behalf of more than 200 insurance carriers and 20 self-insured employers, were using EDI to send injury reports. The average weekly volume of EDI first reports of injury constitutes 36 percent of the total number of accident reports filed (the total includes paper and EDI reports). This number ought to increase substantially this current fiscal year with two large reporters, the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) and the Kansas State Self-Insurance Fund, moving into the EDI program.
- *Research Requests*: We responded to more than 54,000 research requests during FY2008. The research involves computerized and hard copy files containing the histories of injured workers. We are currently building a secure, internet based, web site for the research unit to download to customers digital versions of the files as a more effective and timely option for handling these large numbers of requests.
- *Hearing notices*: Beginning January 1, 2008, we began sending e-mail notices of hearings. This has saved thousands of dollars in postage and paper expenses, as well as providing more timely hearing notifications. We receive email addresses from approximately 90 percent of employees, employers, insurance carriers, and attorneys. The applications unit strives to research and process all preliminary hearing applications within three days of receipt.

Workplace safety and health programs

KDOL is committed to making workplace safety a top priority for the State of Kansas. It is important for employers to have a variety of services available to them to prevent injuries and illnesses in the workplace.

This past year saw a significant accomplishment within our Division of Industrial Safety and Health. Kansas recognized the 100th worksite in the state as part of the SHARP program. The Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program is a partnership with OSHA designed to recognize businesses that have worked with KDOL to develop exemplary safety programs. These are the premier – best of the best – worksites for safety. Companies that achieve the SHARP designation are exempt from OSHA inspections for two years. Kansas now has the second most SHARP worksites in the nation.

In 2006, we introduced the Kansas State Safety Award Program. This program recognizes private employers across the state who are dedicated to providing safe work environments for their employees and who have reached major milestones in their safe operations (100,000 hours, 500,000 hours and 1 million work hours without a lost time injury). The awards are given based on the number of hours an employer has avoided a

workplace injury. You will find enclosed a list of the companies we recognized through this program in 2008.

We also conducted an outreach program this year targeting 310 high risk employers to receive information about our free safety consultation program. Approximately five percent of these identified employers have taken advantage of our services.

For the second year, KDOL partnered with the Kansas City Area Builders Association to sponsor their safety awards program. The Builders' Association delivers safety training to over 4,500 employees annually. KDOL, along with OSHA and the Missouri Department of Labor, assists them in judging the quality of the training programs

Conclusion

I hope this brief, yet thorough, account of some of the activities within the Kansas Department of Labor since the end of the last legislative session has been informative and helpful.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear and share this information with you and the members of the committee. If you have any questions, I would be glad to respond.

Attachments:

- Labor Market Information
 - Status of the UI Trust Fund
 - UI Number of Initial Claims
 - Amount of UI Benefit Payments
 - Final UI Benefit Payments
 - Weekly UI Claims by Industry
 - Mass Layoffs
 - Nonfarm Employment
 - Unemployment Rate
- Job Vacancy Survey brochure
- Wage Survey brochure
- 2004-2014 Occupational Outlook
- Trust Fund Certification Letter
- Employment Security Advisory Council Members
- Debit Card Flier
- KSafe recipients for 2008
- SHARP comparison by state
- SHARP recipients for 2008