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### **Governor Pushes to Enhance Safety Efforts**

CHEYENNE, Wyo. – Governor Matt Mead said today Wyoming must do more to make workplaces safer. All employers want to run a safe operation and the Governor believes there are ways to support Wyoming's businesses in their efforts to accomplish this. In conjunction with legislative support, Governor Mead's plan is to hire more Wyoming OSHA consultants, quickly employ a new Occupational Epidemiologist, and find other means to expand and improve existing safety programs.

“Over the last few years there has been a growing emphasis among Wyoming workers, Wyoming companies and state government to keep employees safe,” Governor Mead said. “My office and the Department of Workforce Services want to augment those efforts and that is what we are proposing today.”

This effort would create three new positions in the Wyoming OSHA program by moving vacant positions in other divisions of the Department of Workforce Services to Wyoming OSHA. This movement of vacant positions can be done without legislation. In addition, Governor Mead is working with the Legislature to craft a bill that would provide five more OSHA consultants, funded out of the Industrial Accident Fund. This fund allows for expenditures related to workplace safety programs.

New OSHA employees, whether three or eight, will be housed in Wyoming OSHA within the Department of Workforce Services. If the number is eight, Governor Mead and Director Evans are proposing seven employees for safety consultations and one additional compliance inspector.

“These additional people can respond to requests from companies and employees who want a safety consultation,” Governor Mead said. “There are 23,000 employers in Wyoming and only six people to do safety consultations or inspections. This proposal is an important step in supporting companies who want to improve safety procedures and a needed step to keep workers safe.”

Director of the Department of Workforce Services, Joan Evans, is making it a priority to hire a new Occupational Epidemiologist as soon as possible. “Having the State Occupational Epidemiologist on staff at the Department of Workforce Services means he or she will have a closer tie to Wyoming OSHA, the Workers’ Compensation division, and the data compiled by the Research and Planning division,” Director Evans said. “We are also working on a reorganization of Wyoming OSHA that will put this person in a leadership role, which allows us to carry out the recommendations of the last Occupational Epidemiologist and look for new opportunities with stakeholders.”

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