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Environment Department's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau Celebrates 30 Years

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau (OHSB) will celebrate the 30th anniversary of its State Plan Approval on December 13.

A 30th anniversary celebration will be held in the **auditorium of the Harold Runnels Building, 1190 St. Francis Drive, in Santa Fe, on Tuesday, December 13th, at 10:00 am.** Speakers will include NMED Secretary Ron Curry, and John B. Miles, Jr., the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration Region VI Administrator.

"Overseeing worker health and safety is one of the most important roles of the Environment Department," NMED Secretary Ron Curry said. "Through the Environment Department's unique relationship with the federal Department of Labor, we have had the opportunity to make a substantial positive impact on businesses, local governments and workers in all fields across the state."

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970 included provisions that allowed individual states to create their own state-managed programs to implement workplace safety and health requirements. New Mexico is one of 26 states and U.S. territories that chose to develop a state plan and the only state which administers the program through its Environment Department. Approval of the New Mexico State Plan was published in the Federal Register on December 10, 1975, officially creating New Mexico OSHA.

The purpose of OHSB is to assure every employee in the state safe and healthful working conditions. This is accomplished primarily through the bureau's Compliance, Consultation, and Compliance Assistance programs.

The Compliance Program enforces occupational health and safety standards by conducting more than 500 worksite inspections annually, primarily in "high-hazard" industries. The Consultation Program responds to requests from employers for assistance in developing, evaluating, and improving health and safety programs. OHSB's consultants also provide and coordinate formal training in specific areas of safety and health.

The bureau's Compliance Assistance Specialist works with individual companies and industry associations to develop cooperative programs and partnerships that enhance the overall effectiveness of existing health and safety programs. OHSB programs are funded by a combination of federal grants and matching state general funds.

For more information, contact Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.