

World and Nation

Occupational safety agency forced to shut down 7 offices

NEW YORK (AP) — The federal agency that studies occupational health and safety is closing seven of its 10 regional offices, prompting protests Monday from labor unions and two Democratic congressmen.

"This is just one more step in the open, blatant attack of the Reagan administration on organized labor," Rep. Major Owens of New York said of the decision to close offices of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

NIOSH, an arm of the federal Centers for Disease Control, conducts research into hazards in the workplace, acting on requests from unions, individual workers and management.

Unlike the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, it does not take action against employers, although it sometimes refers cases to OSHA.

NIOSH spokesman Don Berreth confirmed Monday that the agency would close regional offices in New

York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Kansas City, Mo., Dallas, San Francisco and Seattle, effective Oct. 1.

The closures will leave NIOSH with regional offices in Boston, Denver and Atlanta, plus its headquarters in Cincinnati. Berreth insisted that the agency's staff size would remain the same. He said all 32 workers affected by the closings have been offered jobs in the remaining four offices.

"You're only talking about a handful of people, and you can supervise them better and respond better, we think, from fewer locations," Berreth said. "The intention of this was not to reduce staff."

Berreth said the move "would save a little money, but probably not any major amount." NIOSH had a 1986 budget of \$67 million.

NIOSH workers said they were told of the decision about six weeks ago, but the move was never announced publicly.

"I'm not sure if it was in the Fed-

eral Register," Berreth said. "But it certainly hasn't been a secret."

At a small demonstration Monday outside the federal building in Manhattan, NIOSH workers joined Owens, Rep. Ted Weiss and several union officials in protesting the closure of the New York office.

"This decision simply makes no sense," said Weiss, also of New York. "Of the thousands of federal workers, why close an office with only three people who are working to protect the safety and health of workers in the entire New York region?"

Weiss charged that the decision flies "directly in the face" of a congressional mandate not to cut personnel in the area of occupational safety and health.

While NIOSH said there were no plans to reduce the staff, Weiss said he believed the Office of Management and Budget has ordered such cuts.

Search for climbers delayed

BELLINGHAM, Wash. (AP) — Workers searching for two mountain climbers caught in an avalanche on Mount Baker were chased from the slopes Monday as warm temperatures threatened to unleash new snow slides.

Two other climbers in the party were rescued Sunday, hours after the daybreak avalanche.

Whether the search would be resumed was questionable because of unfavorable weather conditions.

A helicopter removed 13 rescue workers, three avalanche rescue dogs and two reporters from a 300-square-foot search area on the volcanic peak's Roman Wall area.

Missing were Steve Raschick, 21, of Enumclaw, and a guide, Ian Kraabel, son of Seattle City Councilman Paul Kraabel.

The Roman Wall, rising from about 8,500 feet to the 10,778-foot summit, is the last major feature on a popular climbing route along Coleman Glacier from 5,200 feet to 7,000 feet and Deming Glacier from 7,000 feet to the base of the wall, Jenkins said.

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World Briefs

Bolivian drug raids get mixed reaction

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The use of U.S. Army troops to battle Bolivian cocaine traffickers has generated mixed opinions, from fears of future American involvement in other Latin American nations to support for efforts to destroy the drug's source.

Bolivia's cocaine exports are estimated at \$2 billion with an estimated \$600 million returning to Bolivia. By contrast, legal Bolivian exports for this year are estimated at \$400 million.

In Mexico, the move prompted the government to say it never will permit U.S. troops on Mexican soil.

Nevertheless, Mexico remains one of the leading sources of marijuana and heroin to the United States and is a major transit point for South American cocaine destined for the United States, authorities said.

Union workers ratify AT&T contract

WASHINGTON (AP) — Members of the Communications Workers of America ratified a new contract with American Telephone & Telegraph Co. by a 3-1 margin, the union said Monday.

All unit local bargaining agreements were also ratified, although some by a slimmer margin, the union said.

The new three-year agreements, covering 155,000 workers, were reached on June 26, ending a nationwide strike that had started June 1.

Dow Jones rallies with help of oil issues

NEW YORK (AP) — Oil issues turned in a strong showing, helping the stock market rally from a sharp drop in early trading Monday to finish mixed.

The Dow Jones average of 30 industrials, down about 25 points at its midsession low, closed with a 6.33 gain at 1,769.97.

Volume on the New York Stock Exchange came to 129.99 million shares.

Energy stocks jumped ahead late in the day on signs that OPEC ministers were getting close to agreement on a plan to shore up world oil prices.

AIDS

Program tries to trace route of infected blood to donors

NEW YORK (AP) — A national program to contact people who may have received the AIDS virus in blood transfusions cannot reach all of them, so some transfusion recipients should consult a physician, a blood expert says.

"We know that we're not going to reach all the people who we would like to reach," said Dr. S. Gerald Sandler, associate vice president for medical operations of the American Red Cross.

Infected donors who stopped giving blood before screening began "won't show up as part of our study," so their blood can't be traced, Sandler said.

Researchers have no way to count those donors, said Dr. Joseph O'Malley, Red Cross medical associate. But like other blood experts, O'Malley said the risk of getting the virus through transfusions before screening began was very slight.

Sandler suggested that people who got transfusions in the early 1980s before screening began and who are worried about AIDS should discuss it with their physicians.

Dr. Joseph Bove, chairman of the American Association of Blood Banks committee on transfusion-transmitted diseases, said he agreed with Sandler's recommendation.

Transfusions are blamed for 437 of the nation's 23,115 cases of AIDS, and federal figures show transfusion-related cases have shown up in

residents of all but 11 states: Alaska, Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming.

The virus can lie dormant for years before symptoms of AIDS or a less severe condition, AIDS-related complex, appear. A positive blood test does not mean the person has AIDS, but "we make the assumption that if the test is positive the person is infectious," said Bove.

So in addition to health checkups and tests, such people will be counseled about how to avoid infecting others, he said. The virus can spread through intimate sexual contact, sharing of needles among intravenous drug abusers, and infection from mother to infant at or around the time of birth.

Sandler estimated that 1,000 to 2,000 transfusion recipients will have to be contacted about blood collected by the Red Cross system. Bove said the Red Cross collects about half the nation's blood supply so its numbers can be doubled for an estimate of the national picture.

The search is in different stages in different areas of the country. Among the areas with concentrations of AIDS cases, blood banks in New York City, Los Angeles and Miami are preparing to notify hospitals about which units of blood to track. A blood bank in San Francisco said that notification several weeks ago.

Robbers loot graves of Nazi massacre victims

MOSCOW (AP) — Robbers dug for two years in a mass grave where 12,000 victims of a Nazi massacre are buried, stripping the bodies of gold teeth and jewelry, according to an article by a leading poet.

Andrei Voznesensky wrote in the July issue of the youth magazine Yunist that the robberies apparently began in 1984 in the cemetery within sight of a major highway outside Simferopol, capital of the Crimea.

Some grave robbers were tried in 1985, but they got off lightly, and the cemetery still was being looted in April because authorities did not post guards, Voznesensky said.

Officials estimate that the people who were tried last year stole gold and jewelry worth 68,000 rubles, or \$100,000 at the official exchange rate, the poet said.

"Our militia is busy on the highway fining drivers a ruble or so, but our militia would never come here (to the burial site)," he wrote in the impassioned article accompanied by poetry. "They should at least have arranged for one guard. Only one for 12,000."

An editor's note following the article said a government commission was sent to investigate after Voznesensky "raised his voice against this outrageous blasphemy." Those found guilty of robbing the graves and fencing the loot were given "severe punishments," it said.

Publication of the article, unusual for its graphic description, appeared to be part of a hesitant recent trend toward more openness in the press.

Voznesensky said he heard of the 1985 trial and wrote a poem about the case, but he did not see the site until he was traveling with friends April 7 on the highway leading out of Simferopol.

His article said the driver, Vasily Lesnikh, was recalling the massacre in which Germans shot down 12,000 villagers from the area in 1941 and offered to show his companions the mass grave.

"We were walking along the highway and suddenly . . . amid the green grass, a black hole appeared before us," the poet wrote. "The soil was still wet. And then another hole, and another. We saw heaps of bones, decayed clothing, skulls blackened as if by smoke."

It was obvious that robbers had been working the previous night because a shovel and other tools had been left in one of the holes, Voznesensky said, and "this means they will come again."

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