

Tragic Mannequin Fatality Accident at Satsop Development Park

Local News

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SATSOP, Wash. - It was a tragic scene. A laborer at the end of his first day on the job was putting some pipes into a valve when something went terribly wrong. Now he was dead.

Thankfully, the elaborate scenario conducted at Satsop Development Park — complete with crane, backhoe, valves, pipes, trenches, a mannequin and even fake blood — was all in the name of training for accident investigators with Occupational Safety and Health, a division of the State Department of Labor and Industries.

“Those taking the training took pictures, made measurements and conducted interviews of several people acting as bystanders, the crane operator and others,” explained Mario Haynes, senior training development specialist from the Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

“This scenario really came out like the real thing, which is so valuable for training,” Haynes said. With 73 job-related deaths in Washington in 2009, he said the department is always seeking ways to keep those numbers down.

What was the cause of this accident? “The trench wasn’t shored up. It was the laborer’s first day on the job and he was in a hurry because they were trying to finish this last bit of this part of the work. There were also issues with the crane and the crane operator and the valves weren’t rigged correctly,” Haynes said.

The unique training was made possible because of a public-private partnership between Satsop Development Park, Brown-Minneapolis Tank, who is a tenant at the park and loaned the crane for the scenario, and the Regional Education and Training Center, (RETC), which offers workforce development and training opportunities, explained Ryan Davis, executive director of the RETC.

Because the Satsop Development Park was built to house a nuclear power plant — which was never finished, fueled or fired — its size and super-sized infrastructure lends it to being a place for unique training experiences in addition to typical classroom learning, Davis said.

Crane operator training, hazardous materials training, defense and rescue-oriented training, tunnel training and truck driver training are just a few of the courses offered at the Park, Davis said.

"We're glad that Satsop Development Park could accommodate us for this type of training activity. We'll definitely use the facility again," Haynes said.

The Regional Education and Training Center, located at the Satsop Development Park near Elma, is a non-profit organization established by a three-year, \$5 million Department of Labor WIRED grant. The Center seeks to advance regional workforce development by offering an array of training programs rapidly adaptable to the changing demands of industry. The RETC offers training to comply with OSHA safety standards, Advanced Equipment Operation, Online Technologies, Green Jobs and supports programs at local high schools throughout the region.