

GRANTS TO PROMOTE WOMEN IN NONTRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS

From US Dept. of Labor

■(WASHINGTON) Women seeking to enter and move up in apprenticeship and non-traditional occupations will benefit directly from \$610,000 in technical assistance grants announced Tuesday by Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich.

"The department's twin objectives in this effort are to improve opportunities for good jobs for women while building a skilled American workforce for employers to succeed in today's global market place," Reich said.

The funds come through the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) Act. Under the initiative, four community based organizations are receiving grants both to provide on-site technical assistance to employers and labor unions to help develop strategies to increase the employment of women in apprenticeship and nontraditional occupations; and to develop an ongoing off-site technical assistance

through computer-based telecommunication service and network, including a 1-800 dial-up system.

The grantees are: (1) Chicago Women in Trades, Chicago; (2) Wider Opportunities for Women, Washington, DC; (3) Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles, Long Beach, Calif.; and (4) YWCA's Women in Trades, Memphis Tenn.

Women's Bureau director-designate Ida L. Castro praised the program as one that "will enable women to earn good pay and better benefits — giving women more flexibility in managing today's work and family balancing act."

REDUCTION IN SIDS DEATHS HELPS BRING LOW INFANT MORTALITY

From US Dept. of Health & Human Services

■(WASHINGTON) Saying that more than 50 percent of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) mortality may be preventable if babies are placed to sleep on their sides or backs, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala on Wednesday announced that deaths due to SIDS fell 30 percent between 1992 and 1995. She said the reduction in SIDS deaths has contributed significantly to an historic low infant mortality rate in the United States.

Secretary Shalala credited the public-private 'Back to Sleep' campaign with bringing about the improvement in SIDS mortality, and she said all parents need to hear the message: "Babies should be placed to sleep on their sides or on their backs, but not on their stomachs."

Shalala announced that SIDS deaths declined from 4,891 in 1992 to 3,279 in 1995, according to preliminary HHS data. This includes a 12 percent drop in 1994 and an 18.5 percent drop in 1995, the largest annual declines ever observed in the U.S. and the only large declines observed in two consecutive years. Further, SIDS has dropped from 2nd to 3rd leading cause of infant mortality, behind both low birth weight and congenital anomalies.

The SIDS decline also accounted for about one-third of the total drop in infant mortality for the country in 1995. Infant mortality declined 6 percent in that year, to an all-time low rate for the U.S. of 7.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, according to data released by HHS last week.

ANOTHER CITY ADDED TO THE CLEAN CITIES PROGRAM

From US Dept. of Energy

■(WASHINGTON) Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary last week welcomed the Hampton Roads area as the 49th member of the Clean Cities program. The Hampton Roads Clean Cities coalition which includes such cities as Norfolk, Hampton, Newport News, and Virginia Beach among its 29 area stakeholders, becomes the first Virginia-based coalition to join the voluntary Clean Cities Program.

Clean Cities is designed to promote the use of alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles (AFV), alleviate air pollution in major U.S. cities, reduce dependence on imported oil, and stimulate local economic activity. Introduced in September 1993, Clean Cities creates locally based public/private sector partnerships to advance the use of alternative fuels through local investment and infrastructure development. The program brings together utilities, fuel providers, vehicle manufacturers and fleet operators with public sector entities to establish sustainable alternative fuel markets.

Stakeholders in the Hampton Roads coalition are currently operating nearly 150 alternative fuel vehicles and expect to operate nearly 2,000 by December 2000. The most widely used fuel is compressed natural gas (CNG) though stakeholders also operate vehicles powered by propane and electricity. Refueling is available at approximately four publicly accessible CNG stations, 10 privately accessible CNG stations and four privately accessible electric recharging facilities.

Other DOE Clean Cities include Central Oklahoma; Atlanta; Denver; Philadelphia; Wilmington, DE; Las Vegas; Washington, DC; Boston; Austin; Florida Gold Coast; Chicago; Albuquerque; Wisconsin (SE area); Colorado Springs; Long Beach; Lancaster, CA; Salt Lake City; White Plains; Baltimore; Louisville; Rogue Valley; West Virginia; Sacramento, Oakland; San Joaquin Valley; San Francisco; South Bay (San Jose); Western New York; Portland, OR; St. Louis; Norwalk; Waterbury; Norwich; New London; Peoria; SW Kansas; Central New York; Dallas-Fort Worth; Honolulu; Missoula, MT; New Haven; Central Arkansas; Paso del Norte; Pittsburgh; Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG); Los Angeles; Coachella Valley, CA; and Weld/Larimer/Rocky Mountain National Park.

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zations representing a broad cross section of business, community, public utility and governmental interests. The project is a key component of the Clinton Administration's broader effort to combine federal resources and scientific expertise with private concerns to develop and commercialize biomass power systems. Successful collaboration in this area will reduce acid rain and U.S. reliance on imported fossil fuels, while stimulating economic development in the nation's rural communities.

The partners have received authorization from USDA for a 4,000-acre demonstration project supporting the development of energy crops as the Conservation Reserve Program is phased out. If successful, the project will help farmers and landowners to harvest new and sustainable income as a lasting alternative to traditional federal farm subsidies. In addition, the increased use of home-grown renewable energy will keep more energy dollars in Iowa, having the net effect of even greater economic benefits.

It is anticipated that a number of other important environmental benefits will also result from the cooperative research project, including the protection and improvement of the local watershed and surrounding wildlife habitats, a reduction in the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and potential opportunities in fuel cell power generation.