



What's Inside:

Deputy Director Named	2
General Counsel Named	3
WCA's Seasonal Giving	4

MEETING NOTICE:

The Advisory Council on Workers' Compensation and Occupational Disease Disablement plans to meet at 1:30 p.m. April 22, at 2410 Centre SE, Albuquerque, NM.

REMINDER TO INSURERS: AER SUBMISSIONS DUE

Annual Expenditure Reports (AER) for 2019 data are due by February 15, 2020. Reports can be filed at <https://w3.wca.state.nm.us/aer/LogOn.aspx>. New users can register for an account. Call Ruili Yan at (505) 841-6038 or email her with questions at Ruili.Yan@state.nm.us.

NM Workers' Compensation Administration Assists Program Launch

By Aileen O'Catherine

"Taking care of people is Job No. 1 in state government. I mean business about transforming this state; a crucial part of that mission is improving how we provide state government resources to New Mexicans -- and demonstrating we can do better."
--Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham

The New Mexico Workers' Compensation Administration (WCA) shared its expertise and mediation offices with the Labor Relations Division of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) on January 24, 2020. The arrangement came about when the Labor Relations Division (LRD) decided to create a pilot project aimed at lightening their courtroom case load for

wage and labor disputes. LRD hopes to encourage parties to come to an agreement through a mediated settlement, and reduce the number of cases that go through the cumbersome and time-consuming process of district court. The LRD enforces payment of wages, minimum wage, and overtime labor laws, and also enforces the payment of prevailing wages to workers under the Public Works Minimum Wage Act. On January 24, the LRD dispute resolution pilot program launched at WCA facilities.

Former WCA employee Angelica Tafoya is now with LRD. In her capacity at the WCA, she helped coordinate the agency's annual

Continued on page 5



Members of the Department of Workforce Solutions Labor Relations Crew worked out of NM WCA mediation offices on January 24

Leigh Martinez Promoted to Executive Deputy Director of Support Services

By Aileen O’Catherine

Leigh Martinez has been promoted to Executive Deputy Director for the WCA. Martinez began with the agency in 1996 as a financial auditor in the Self-Insurance/Audit Bureau. She was then promoted to the Economic Research and Policy Bureau, where she was a senior economist.

“We’re extremely fortunate to have Leigh Martinez in this position,” said WCA Director Loretta Lopez. “She has a deep understanding of workers’ compensation, and her many years of experience will be an asset to the agency.”

Martinez will oversee bureaus that include facilities, finance, information systems, field programs, safety, ombudsman services and employer compliance. Martinez hopes her institutional knowledge will be a help in providing support for the agency’s

workers and managers.

“I felt like I had something to offer, and had a good skill set for the position,” Martinez said about the move.

She hopes to keep an open mind in her role, and to provide support for workers and managers. “I hope to share my knowledge of the workers’ compensation system, and pass it along to others,” she said.

Martinez enjoys the many aspects of workers’ compensation, having served with the agency for many years. While she didn’t plan to stay at the WCA for a large part of her career, she’s glad she did. “There’s always something new to learn,” she said. “Every day I come in expecting to learn.”

Prior to working at the WCA, Martinez worked at Sandia Casino, working her way up to financial manager in her seven years there.



Executive Deputy Director for Support Services, Leigh Martinez

Martinez earned her bachelor’s degree in business administration at the University of New Mexico, with a concentration in accounting. She is married and has two sons, one in high school, and one attending the University of New Mexico.

NM Workers’ Comp. Adm. Quarterly Bulletin

Loretta Lopez, Director
Diana Sandoval-Tapia, Public Information Officer
Aileen O’Catherine, Public Relations Specialist

The Bulletin is electronically published in January, April, July and October by the Public Information Office of the New Mexico Workers’ Compensation Administration. The Bulletin is available free of charge. Send changes of e-mail address and requests to receive the Bulletin to Diana Sandoval-Tapia in the Public Information Office, New Mexico Workers’ Compensation Administration, diana.sandoval@state.nm.us. Suggestions for articles are welcome. Call Diana Sandoval-Tapia at (505) 841-6052. Recent issues of the Quarterly Bulletin can be viewed on the Internet at <https://workerscomp.nm.gov/NMWCA-Publications>.

Judge Riley Earns Certification from the American Arbitration Association

On November 15, 2019, Workers’ Compensation Judge Shanon S. Riley completed and received her certification from the American Arbitration Association for her participation in the Association’s 32-hour intensive Skills for Facilitating Negotiated Agreements course. Through the Workers’ Compensation Administration, each workers’ compensation judge actively engages in alternative resolution

of matters involving industrial accidents. Facilitating mediations and conducting settlement conferences is a vital component of a New Mexico Workers’ Compensation judge’s duties. The knowledge and skills offered through the American Arbitration Association course further extend Judge Riley’s abilities to successfully resolve matters filed with the Workers’ Compensation Administration.

What is the Advisory Council?

The Advisory Council on Workers’ Compensation and Occupational Disease Disablement is a task force created by statute, comprised of six members, three representing workers and three representing employers. The primary role of the Council is to advise the governor and legislature on the status of the workers’ compensation system in New Mexico. The Advisory Council is required to meet at least twice annually. Scheduled meetings of the Council are announced on the WCA website, <https://www.workerscomp.nm.gov/Advisory-Council>.

Angelica Anaya Allen Named WCA General Counsel

By Aileen O’Catherine

Angelica Anaya Allen stepped into her role as the WCA’s new General Counsel on December 30, 2019. “I am so pleased Angelica agreed to join the WCA,” said Director Loretta Lopez. “The work we do is vitally important, and Angelica brings an incredible commitment to the people of New Mexico that can only make the system stronger.”

In her time with the agency, Allen has focused on the legalities of workers’ compensation, and on getting to know the people involved. “I’m looking forward to getting to know everyone here, and how they fit into the system of the really important work of helping injured workers,” Allen said of her appointment. “I’ve already begun to see how well people are working to carry out that mission.”

Allen was born and raised in Albuquerque and lives in the home where she grew up. She credits her parents, who were both teachers, with instilling her with the love of public service that has been a mainstay of her career. Allen graduated from Brown University and went on to obtain her juris doctor degree from Harvard University. She set her mind on becoming a lawyer when she was a child. “I never really considered anything else,” she said of her profession.

Allen most recently worked at the New Mexico Attorney General’s Division of Consumer and Environmental Protection, where she handled civil litigation that enforced consumer protection laws in state and federal courts. She also supervised staff of the Homeownership Protection Program.

Much of Allen’s legal career has been spent helping the underserved. As the legal director of the United

South Broadway Corporation’s Fair Lending Center, she was dedicated to improving legal representation focused on home preservation for citizens statewide. At the Fair Lending Center she developed a free legal assistance program for homeowners who were facing foreclosure, with the aim of helping homeowners help themselves. Although the idea of doing workshops for pro se (self-represented) litigants was not a new idea, creating a format that was accessible to people dealing with foreclosure was. She developed forms and brochures that are still in use around the state. “We have gotten out of the foreclosure crisis now, but we helped thousands of homeowners keep their homes,” Allen said. “I sometimes still run into people I helped keep their home.”

As executive director of the Senior Citizens’ Law Office, Allen expanded funding and service from one to four New Mexico counties, and collaborated with service providers such as municipalities, private attorneys and the New Mexico Agency on Aging.

Allen also served as General Counsel of New Mexico Legal Aid, overseeing the statewide nonprofit and its seven offices. While there, she obtained federal funding to create a statewide domestic violence project. As Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of Albuquerque, she successfully oversaw its transition from a single county legal services program that served the state’s largest urban area to the corporate entity of the newly formed New Mexico Legal Aid. Allen has also had her own private practice.

Following graduation from law school, Allen worked several years as an attorney in both New Jersey and Connecticut, but she missed New



WCA General Counsel Angelica Anaya Allen

Mexico, so she returned as soon as an opportunity arose. She doesn’t miss the east coast rain, and as an outdoorswoman, finds New Mexico’s weather much better for biking and hiking. Allen skis and is a member of the National Ski Patrol and is an Alpine Patroller for Sandia Peak Ski Patrol. She plays in the Albuquerque Soccer League’s women’s program, and has coached youth soccer.

Allen has served as a mentor for young people interested in the law, as a coach for one year in the Franchini High School Mock Trial Program, and as a judge, for seven years. She has also mentored for the Bridge the Gap program with the State Bar of New Mexico.

Asked what stands out for her in her legal career, Allen said it has undoubtedly been the people she has worked with. “Having the dedication to keep working to help people, even though it’s very incremental, it’s just amazing how many people in public service, in legal services in particular, have dedicated their lives to that.”

Allen has three adult children, and while there are no grandchildren yet, she has two goats, William and Mary, who help combat the weeds on her one acre homestead.

NM WCA Participates in Seasonal Giving

By Aileen O’Catherine

The New Mexico Workers’ Compensation Administration (WCA) made its mark this holiday season by collecting food for a local food bank, and by participating in a holiday “Giving Tree.” Both projects were housed within the WCA’s Albuquerque office, with participation welcomed from both inside the agency, and from those who visit the agency to participate in hearings, mediations, or other events. In addition to donations from WCA staff, goods were donated by meeting attendees, WCA Facebook page readers, worker and employer attorneys, and others.

As part of Governor Lujan Grisham’s hunger initiative, Director Loretta Lopez asked for ideas from staff on ways to combat hunger. Early Return-to-Work coordinator Jessica Sanchez and mediator Kenneth Owens co-chaired the agency’s committee. They established a food drive for Roadrunner Food Bank (RRFB). The WCA Public Information Office put out the word, and the goods began to come in. Two large bins at the agency’s entrance soon filled to the brim, and more boxes were brought in and also filled. In a matter of weeks, a large amount of canned goods, cereals, and other food items were available for drop off at RRFB.



Mediator Kenneth Owens, co-chair of the WCA Food Drive for RoadRunner Food Bank, stands beside one of the food drive posters at the agency.

A few days before Thanksgiving, Lopez and Sanchez drove the items to RRFB, where volunteers weighed the donated items. Thanks to everyone’s generosity, a total of 395 pounds had been collected, enough food for 474 meals. The RRFB has a formula of 1.2 meals for every pound of food donated.

RRFB Development Director Andrea Nash gave WCA staff a tour of the large warehouse, which was loaded floor to ceiling with aisles of food stacked on pallets. Despite the full aisles of donated food, Nash said that was only about two weeks’ worth of food to be dispensed statewide. RRFB distributes the food to partner agencies such as food pantries and soup kitchens that order food through an online system similar to an online grocery store. The food bank’s fleet then delivers the ordered food to the partner agencies at a set time and date. Clients at food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, group homes, schools, low-income housing sites, senior centers and health care clinics are all recipients.

Then, beginning the week of Thanksgiving, the WCA partnered with the University of New Mexico’s FOCUS Program to set up a “Giving Tree” in the agency’s atrium the same day donated food went to RRFB’s warehouse. The tree was adorned with paper ornaments containing the name, age and clothing size of a child or sibling group. Givers purchased a book, pajamas and a warm coat for the child(ren) listed on the ornament.

The UNM FOCUS program provides integrated family medical home and early intervention services for families of young children under three years of age. Many of the families served by the program are in need of



WCA Food Drive Co-chair Jessica Sanchez, RRFB Development Director Andrea Nash, and Director Loretta Lopez at the RoadRunner Food Bank warehouse.

support. Through the generosity of the WCA staff and workers’ compensation community, 87 gifts were purchased and donated for the UNM FOCUS program. The WCA will continue to look for ways in which to help the community at large throughout the year ahead, not only in the Albuquerque area, but within the communities the agency serves.



The WCA Giving Tree benefits needy children in the UNM FOCUS program. Kristina Blakney-Couture (kneeling) of FOCUS decorates the tree with ornaments that contain the names of children. WCA employees Debbie Shearin (left), Loveatta Bamberg (back) and Doreen Hamlin (right) assist.

WCA Assists Program Launch (contd.)

Continued from page 1

Settlement Week, which involved preparing a docket of cases for possible mediated settlement. When she learned the LRD wanted a pilot program for mediated settlement, she suggested adapting the model used at the WCA. "I took the concept of Settlement Week, and used it for our wage and hour cases," Tafoya said of the program buildout. The mediations on January 24 were part of the pilot project. "We had six cases that day and three settled," Tafoya said. "It felt like a success."

LRD Bureau Chief Raymond Jojola, Tafoya's supervisor, helped oversee the pilot program's progress at the WCA. "We're very appreciative of the accommodation lent to us," said Jojola of the WCA opening its doors. "We needed a certain arrangement of the venue to allow for facilitation,

breakout rooms for caucusing, and so this was somewhat ideal." Jojola wants to expand on the pilot's success. "If we can get two more experiences under our belt, maybe we can take this on the road and take it across the state as an opportunity for people who can't travel," he said. In addition to adapting the WCA's settlement model, use of the WCA facilities was critical as well, since the LRD facilities are currently undergoing a remodel.

WCA staff assisted as needed in order for the LRD settlement process to run as smoothly as possible. "We were happy to help provide our resources," said WCA Director Loretta Lopez. "We understand the need to resolve claims, and want to make processes as accessible to New Mexicans as possible."

LRD staff brought the necessary

paperwork and equipment for the settlement mediations, and their staff were on hand to answer questions and ensure a smooth process. Despite not being in their own offices, the day went smoothly.

In the settlement process, licensed mediators or attorneys work with parties to reach an agreement. The LRD had several attorneys assisting that day, to include Cady Sartorius, an administrative law judge with the DWS Human Rights Division, and Tyson Hummell, who volunteered his time that day on behalf of the City of Albuquerque. Hummell is an assistant city attorney with the City of Albuquerque's Alternative Dispute Resolution program.

New Mexico Workers' Compensation Administration Offices:

MAIN OFFICE

Location & Main Mail Address:

2410 Centre Ave. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106-4190

Alternate Mailing Address:

PO Box 27198
Albuquerque, NM 87125-7198

Phone Numbers:

Phone: (505) 841-6000
In state toll-free phone:
1-800-255-7965
Fax Clerk of the Court:
(505) 841-6060
Director's Fax: (505) 841-6009

Regional Offices

Farmington:

2700 Farmington Ave., Bldg.
E, Ste.2
Farmington, NM 87401
Phone: (505) 599-9746
In state toll-free phone:
1-800-568-7310
Fax: (505) 599-9753

Hobbs:

James M. Murray Building
2120 North Alto, Unit 3
Hobbs, NM 88240
Phone: (575) 397-3425
In state toll-free phone:
1-800-934-2450

Las Cruces:

2407 W. Picacho, Ste. D
Las Cruces, NM 88007
Phone: (575) 524-6246
In state toll-free phone:
1-800-870-6826
Fax: (575) 524-6249

Las Vegas:

32 NM 65
Las Vegas, NM 87701
Phone: (505) 454-9251
In state toll-free phone:
1-800-281-7889
Fax: (505) 454-9248

Roswell:

Penn Plaza Building
400 N. Pennsylvania Ave., Ste. 425
Roswell, NM 88201
Phone: (575) 623-3781
In state toll-free phone:
1-866-311-8587
Fax: (575) 623-0078

Santa Fe:

Aspen Plaza
1596 Pacheco, St. #202
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 476-7381
Fax: (505) 476-7390

WCA Helpline-Hotline: (toll free in New Mexico)

1-866-WORKOMP 1-866-967-5667

WCA Website:

<https://workerscomp.nm.gov>