

## Commissioner Costello Seeks Grain Elevator Use of Safety Pays Program

Oklahoma City - Labor Commissioner Mark Costello continues his *Safety Pays* Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) outreach to grain elevator operators in Oklahoma by visiting operators in five north central Oklahoma communities. The stepped up effort by Costello follows the Kremlin grain elevator accident in which two 17-year-old boys lost legs in a grain auger. The accident is under investigation by the federal government.

“Grain elevator operators can prevent accidents in their industry by seeking the Department of Labor’s no-cost safety consulting services,” states Costello. In September, Costello sent letters to grain elevator operators statewide to encourage their participation in the voluntary non-punitive *Safety Pays* consultation program.

“The accident in Kremlin was avoidable and is evidence of the need for this industry to examine the no-cost safety consultation service offered by the Oklahoma Department of Labor. The challenge I have as Labor Commissioner is that when folks in agriculture are told I am here from OSHA, and I am going to help you. Like many others, they are initially suspicious of the offer. It takes time to explain we are not federal OSHA, we do not fine employers. I explain that *Safety Pays* consultation provides no-cost, confidential, voluntary, non-punitive and guaranteed safety and health services,” stated Costello.

Last week Costello traveled to the Oklahoma panhandle to make the appeal in person with grain elevator operators in Seiling, Fort Supply, and Beaver.

Today, Costello is taking his safety message to north central Oklahoma communities of Nash, Medford, Blackwell, Kildare and Ponca City.

Next week Costello will travel to southwest Oklahoma to appeal to grain elevator operators to accept the Oklahoma Department of Labor’s Safety Pays voluntary consultation services.

“A historic example of the Safety Pays program dates to 1997 when Oklahoma City based Dana Corporation reported a 100% decrease in lost work days and a 86% cut in workers’ compensation premiums after completing the safety and health consultation program. I believe acceptance of the Safety Pays consultation will be a win-win proposal for grain operators in Oklahoma and their employees,” concluded Costello.