

**Media Advisory****Contact: Liz McNeill****Phone: 405-521-6102****Date: June 25, 2012****OKLAHOMA OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY TURN OUT FOR STAND DOWN**

OKLAHOMA CITY – The industry responded, well over 500 representatives from oil and natural gas exploration, production and contracting turned out for a half day event on Thursday at the Cox Convention Center. The goal of the event was to bring attention to the significant rise in the number of deaths in the industry.

A request was made for companies to initiate a stand down to be conducted between now and the end of July. “We are asking for companies to take 30 minutes or longer to conduct jobsite inspections and train employees on jobsite hazards and safety standards” said David Bates, Area Director for Occupational Safety and Health Administration. “With nine deaths in Oklahoma since October 1, 2011, as well as a drilling rig fire resulting in three hospitalizations, safety should become the highest priority.”

Industry safety group, MCEPS (Mid-Continent Exploration and Safety Network), along with Federal OSHA and the Oklahoma Department of Labor joined together for the voluntary stand down initiative proposed to the group.

Labor Commissioner Mark Costello will recognize those companies that participate in the stand down with a commendation. He informed the attendees that the Oklahoma Department of Labor offers a no-fee Safety Pays OSHA Consultation program. “It is non-punitive and we must be invited in, but we have the resources to help you identify hazards and to help you correct those hazards” Commissioner Costello stated. “We want your employees to go home the same way they came to work.”

Oklahoma has long been a leader in oil and gas and now the industry will lead the way in safety and health.

For more information regarding the stand down initiative, please visit [www.uta.edu/ded/mceps](http://www.uta.edu/ded/mceps)