



The inaugural Safety Fest of the Great Northwest event was held November 29 through December 2, 2005. The program was open at no charge to all contractors and workers in the Intermountain Northwest. Attendees came from Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, and Utah and program costs were supported by donations and a one-day safety vendor show. The opening ceremony featured the Honorable Governor Dirk Kempthorne and OSHA Regional Administrator Richard Terrell. A total of 416 seats were filled for the 24 classes offered. OSHA 10-hour training was completed by 167 participants, including 36 who completed the classes in Spanish. Government entities sending employees included State of Idaho Prisons, Idaho State Insurance Fund, Idaho Transportation Department, and City of Boise. There was significant craft and union participation including local pipe fitters and plumbers unions.

The event grew in 2006 to 39 classes with a total of 852 participants coming from nine states and representing 92 private companies and 18 government and non-profit groups. That year the opening session featured Asst. Secretary of Labor, Edwin Foulke, Jr., and Richard Terrell, the OSHA Regional Administrator. Over the years, there was a tremendous growth of the annual event as it continued to serve the worker training needs of the region.

The success of the program comes down to four basic foundations:

- (1) Free quality training for workers from small and medium-sized companies, government agencies, and community organizations.
- (2) The support of the Founding Partners and the commercial vendors who provide in-kind contributions and support, plus financial support that covers event and material costs.
- (3) Volunteer instructors, conference planners and event workers provided by the Founding Partners and other organizations and institutions.
- (4) The dedicated and passionate leadership of Brad Giles, Rick Callor, Bill Bankhead, and Don Eshelby, who had the vision to create and sustain the event from the beginning. As Rick Callor said, "Our focus is on providing quality, targeted training to businesses that have the desire, but

lack the resources, to enhance and improve the safety of their workforce. Because we believe that safety is paramount, we are proud to collaboratively work with our Safety Fest partners and other entities in our industry and our community to offer this valuable resource."

The 2015 10-year event summary reported that over 14,000 participants had attended training sessions and approximately 60 companies, institutions, agencies and unions had partnered with Safety Fest to provide these programs. Attendees came from nine western states to participate in the event and each year the event organizers collected class evaluations that indicated that attendees wanted more classes to be offered at the event.

Each year Safety Fest adds new class programs and events to maintain interest and diversity. Most years have featured a two-day Vendors' Fair to showcase new safety products and services. One year included a Health Fair with various free wellness screenings and smoking cessation classes. In 2014 a Management Track included a series of classes to prepare foreman and supervisors for career growth opportunities. Many of the classes were hands-on sessions, providing skill-based training; while other classes fulfilled numerous safety certification requirements. Most years included various classes in Spanish, and the Spanish Consulate based in Boise participated as a Partner to promote and support this program. The 2015 Safety Fest featured a Lunch with OSHA that allowed participants to meet local OSHA employees in a casual atmosphere.

14 years of Safety Fest of the Great Northwest has provided participants and supporters a true sense of community, even though the community covered nine states and multiple industries and agencies. In the end, everyone wants their jobs to be safe and employers, government agencies, and community organizations are willing to invest this time to support their employees and Safety Fest. As Brad Giles said in 2015, "We believe that ongoing safety education is critical to enhancing and expanding safety best practices in our offices, worksites, and our communities." In the end this is what everyone takes home and to their worksites, and they return to Safety Fest the following year for more.

