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**State Presents Governor's 2014 Downstate Occupational Safety and Health Award Posthumously to Former IDOT Safety Training Manager**  
*Russ W. Ridder's Accomplishments in Workplace Safety Honored and Remembered at 23rd annual "DIOSH" Day*

SPRINGFIELD—Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) Director Joseph Costigan presented a Governor's Award for Excellence Occupational Health and Safety Award posthumously to Russ W. Ridder, former IDOT Safety Training Manager who passed away in 2011 and was recently nominated for the award. The Governor's Award recognizes the contributions and efforts of individuals who have made a significant impact on occupational safety and health in downstate Illinois. Dir. Costigan presented the award to Ridder's widow, Nanci, at the 23rd Annual Downstate Illinois Occupational Safety & Health (DIOSH) Day event on Wednesday, March 5.

"I am proud to present the Governor's Award of Excellence in Occupational Health and Safety posthumously to Russ W. Ridder, who left behind a 25-year legacy of workplace safety at IDOT," said Dir. Costigan. "Russ Ridder was one of those 'unsung heroes' who worked diligently each day for the safety of more than 5,000 employees at the Illinois Department of Transportation. Ridder dedicated his life to helping IDOT workers stay safe on the job and make it home at the end of a workday."

The Department's Safety Inspection & Education Division enforces occupational safety and health standards for the Illinois' public sector, provides consultation services to smaller businesses and is a member of the DIOSH Day Committee which highlights the importance of workplace safety. The committee requests nominations every year for those individuals whose proactive efforts have created a culture of safety for a company's employees.

Ridder designed and developed numerous safety training courses for IDOT, including Welding Safety, Materials Handling /Ergonomics, Excavation Safety, Fall Protection and Scaffold Safety. He gave workplace safety presentations at more than 50 OSHA 10-hour course seminars statewide. Ridder helped update the Employee Safety Code and all workplace safety-related policies and procedures, and frequently served as a resource for other agencies to help resolve health and safety issues. He was also responsible for post-accident investigations and on point for citation abatement and remediation issues with IDOL.

IDOT staff noted that Ridder found ways to make learning about safety an enjoyable experience for all employees including senior staff members, highway maintenance workers, students and instructors. They also said Ridder's philosophy was -- safety is a dynamic work in progress -- it is never ended or completed. It is a commitment of the mind, personal resources, and financial resources to help protect all workers.

