

April 30, 2010

[Viewpoint: Memorial ceremony calls on reducing workplace dangers](#)

By Patrick Hill Anderson resident

Many thanks to Tobi Jones and family who held a wonderful Workers Memorial Day ceremony downtown on April 28, a day traditionally when organized labor and its allies honor the millions of men and women who have needlessly suffered or died because of workplace hazards and to demand that the government and business act to lessen the hazards.

After all the years, the number of victims remains unconscionably high.

The Department of Labor tracks that every year, more than 6,000 Americans are killed on the job. More than 6 million are injured, at least half of them seriously. Another 60,000 die from their injuries or from cancer, lung and heart ailments and other occupational diseases caused by exposure to toxic substances.

Can you imagine, that means an average of at least 16 workers killed and nearly 5,500 injured every day, add 135 or more deaths daily from job-related illness. The toll is too high: Consider \$3 billion in health care expenses and lost wages and production costs to employers and workers and the grief to loved ones, friends and fellow workers can't be measured

Trying to reduce workplace dangers, always a difficult task, became even more difficult when the administrations, the state governments and business purposely or recklessly don't consider the implications of actions on their fellow men and women. Whether it's an ideological attack on safety programs, deny workers the right to organize on their own behalf for a safer and fairer workplace, or slashing budgets in a financial crunch, the implications can be another name to mourn.

Let us work toward the day that as we gather together on April 28 in some future year that we can mourn our dead and the fight for the health and safety of the living is on our hearts and minds and lips every day.

*Patrick Hill is a member of the Madison County Solidarity Labor Council.*