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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE DECEMBER 10, 2013

TOYS USED IN SAFETY TESTS TO FIND NEW HOMES FOR THE HOLIDAYS Ohio Department of Commerce Employees Make Toys Ready for Kids

Employees from the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of Industrial Compliance and others donated their lunch hour and their sewing skills today to carefully repair more than 470 stuffed toys which will be donated to children this holiday season.

"Anytime you can make a child's holiday season brighter is satisfying," said Commerce Director Andre T. Porter. "It is a privilege to serve Ohioans and we enjoy giving back by 'rescuing' these stuffed toys for this giving tradition."

The Division's Bedding and Upholstered Furniture laboratory inspects filler material inside representative samples of stuffed toys and other products to ensure they are safe and accurately labeled. Manufacturers send hundreds of items to the lab in Reynoldsburg each year where they are cut open by technicians to examine their contents. The technicians perform chemical and microscopic tests on hundreds of different types of fillers used in toys produced by manufacturers from around the world.

After inspection, manufacturers usually don't want the toys back. So, they are repaired by state employees who sew the incisions closed making them good as new. This is the 28th year of the event, named the "Norman DeHaas Annual Holiday Sewing Project" in memory of long-time Bedding Section supervisor Norman DeHaas, who was an advocate of the project and active in local charities.

The stuffed toys will be donated to local charitable organizations to benefit children who might otherwise go without gifts this holiday season.

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