

Athens State University Student SHRM Chapter News

Volume 1, Issue 2

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Special points of interest:

- TVC-SHRM Scholarship
- TVC-SHRM Sponsorship of Capital Visit
- Student SHRM Chapter Sponsors HR Workshops
- Current Events in HR
- Southeast Student SHRM Conference
- Job Shadowing

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TVC SHRM To Sponsor Athens State University HR Major-SHRM Member on Capital Visit to Advocate on HR Issues

TVC-SHRM will sponsor a member of the ASU Student SHRM Chapter to attend the "SHRM Fall Hill Visit" with the SHRM Alabama State Council on September 17-18, 2013. The sponsored Athens State University SHRM Student Member will be flown to Washington DC and meet for a planning meeting with Alabama State SHRM Council Members and then meet with Alabama Members of Congress.

HR issue advocacy is categorized by the topic areas to include: Health Care Reform, Workplace Flexibility, Employment Verification, Tax Reform and Deficit Reduction, Employer-Provided Education Assistance, Weapons in the Workplace, Background Investigations, Labor-Management Relations, and the Skills Gap. SHRM's Government Affairs team promotes the development of policy of these issues and State SHRM Councils work collaboratively in this effort.

Issues to be Discussed by Category:

- 1) Health Care Reform-
- 2) Workplace Flexibility-
- 3) Employment Verification-
- 4) Tax Reform and Deficit Reduction-
- 5) Employer-Provided Education Assistance
- 6) Weapons in the Workplace-
- 7) Background Investigations-
- 8) Labor-Management Relations-
- 9) Skills Gap-

Story continued on pages 7-9.



Join Us at the SGA April Fools Cookout!

The Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter will again be sponsoring a dessert bar and homemade chili at the SGA April Fools Cookout on Monday, April 1, 2013. Come join us for the fun, fellowship and food!



Athens State University Student SHRM Chapter Sponsors HR Workshops

Driven by powerful changes in the business environment, organizations of all types from start-ups to multinationals, not-for-profits to governmental, local to global, are demanding strategic leadership from human resource professionals (HR). Knowledge deeply ingrained in the people that make up an organization has become the most important source of competitive advantage and innovation. New technologies, rising standards for ethics and compliance, and increasing concerns

about governance all add to the complexity of managing human resources.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) initiatives are focused on student programs to advance quality management education. HR professionals and organizations will continue to increasingly value this experience and credentials that can be earned.

HR Students should take advantage of educational initiatives that support

these goals. To that end, the ASU SHRM Student Chapter continues to sponsor relevant HR workshops and encourage your attendance. You do not have to be a SHRM student member to attend. While designed specifically to meet the needs of ASU students, attendance at these events are open to both students and the public.

Below is a list of recent workshops conducted. Another series will be scheduled beginning in the fall 2103.

Building a Resume Book: Networking with SHRM Professional Chapters



Saralyn Mitchell,
Director, Career Counseling Services and Cooperative Education

Ms. Saralyn Mitchell conducted a workshop on Thursday, February 28th relative to the role of the Career Center and how to establish a special Resume Book for our College of Business and Human Resource Management students which will be made available to local professional SHRM Chapters. This information provided trained students on the

career services relationship and how to set a resume up in the system. This was a wonderful opportunity for Athens State HR students to learn how to get resume exposure to numerous HR managers at the same through SHRM's Professional Chapter Network.

“Results Resume” Workshop

The Athens State University Student SHRM Chapter teamed up with the university's Career Center to co-sponsor the first web based online Career Event titled “Results Resumes” on March 5th, 2013. Horizon Point Consulting delivered the online event through a “Joinme” internet application and phone line. The virtual workshop provided an opportunity for Athens State Students to improve their resumes and post to the university's hosted resume website for employer review.

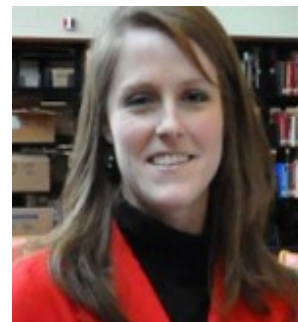
HRM Majors were given the opportunity to post to a unique HRM Major only resume book made available to area SHRM Professional Chapters. One of the most important characteristics of a resume is that it should be Results (not task) oriented. Students learned in this session how to present the reader with statements of accomplishment instead of life histories and/ or restated job descriptions.

Getting Certification in Human Resources: What Every Student Planning a Career in HR Should Know

On January 15th, 2013 the Athens State University Student SHRM Chapter sponsored a workshop that equipped HR students with the information and steps they need to know to effectively pursue and secure a rewarding career in human resources through human resource credentialing made available through the Society for

Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI). As an HR student (or a student with an HR minor or current HR work related experience) you will qualify to sit for either the Assurance of Learning Assessment (AOL) or the Professional in Human Resources (PHR). Being certified

makes a strategic difference in your marketability for a career in HR and differentiating yourself from other job seekers. Many employers now only hire HR certified job seekers. Mary Ila Ward was the guest presenter for this important review and discussion.



Mary Ila Ward,
Principal, Horizon Consulting Group

FMLA Pathways and Pitfalls: What Every HR Practitioner Needs to Know

The ASU SHRM Student Chapter was pleased to present a workshop on "FMLA Pathways and Pitfalls: What Every HR Practitioner Needs to Know" on March 11, 2013 for all students and HRM majors and SHRM members. Jeff Powers, SPHR, Senior Manager Human Resources & General Affairs for Toray Carbon Fibers America, Inc. was the guest presenter.

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides job protected leave and benefits coverage entitlements to employees who meet FMLA eligibility requirements. The Family and Medical Leave Act was amended by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008 (2008 NDAA) and the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2010 (2010 NDAA) to provide

two important leave entitlements that benefit military families: 1) Qualifying Exigency Leave, and 2) Military Caregiver Leave.

This workshop covered the provisions of the FMLA (as amended), who is covered, and how HR professionals can best administer and effectively manage this benefit. Specific workplace examples will be reviewed.



SHRM Helps You Grow, Engage, Connect: How Students Can Leverage this Resource & Network of Professionals for Professional Development and Job Search

On February 7th, 2013, the Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter held a workshop to present the instrumentality of membership and benefits of the professional human resource organization of the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM). The guest speaker was Pam Werstler. Pam Werstler, SPHR is the Director of Human Resources for National Packaging Co., Inc. in Decatur, Alabama,

where she has been employed since 2000. She has served on the Board of Directors for the Tennessee Valley Chapter of SHRM since 2002, serving as President for four years and currently serves as Director of Legislative Affairs. She has served on the Alabama SHRM State Council since 2003 and is the State Council Director and Co-Legislative Director for 2012-2013. She also is a member of the City of Deca-

tur Personnel Board, the Morgan County Personnel Board, a member of the Decatur Morgan County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Chairperson of the Alabama Association of Employers, Past Chair of the Decatur Personnel Officers, and past Board member of Decatur Women's Chamber. Her passion is legislative affairs and she is a Captain for SHRM's Alabama Advocacy Team.



Pam Werstler,
Director of Human Resources, National Packaging

HRMagazine

Current Events in HR: Article Discussions on Regulations Affecting HR: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

On February 7th, 2013 the Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter held an article discussion on government regulations and their effect on the employment landscape over the near future. The aim was to be ahead of the curve on knowing what's ahead. It also provided students an advantage in employment interviews for tests of content knowledge.

Feature Article #1: Grossman, R. J. (2013). Compliance burdens are a fact of life. HRMagazine, 58 (2)
Feature Article #2: Segal, J.A.

(2013). Common Pitfalls: The Devil in the Details. HRMagazine, 58(2)

Participant explored viable answers to the following questions from their review of these aforementioned articles:

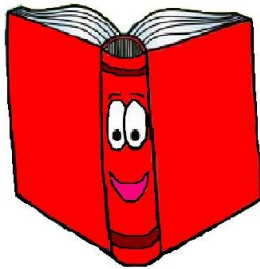
1. According to the article, the delta between the benefits and costs of federal regulation for businesses is between \$88-\$593 billion in the aggregate for regulatory actions from October 1, 2000 to September 30, 2010. What are the

challenges for businesses and HR based on these substantive and increasing costs of regulation?

2. Based on the current administrative agenda under "What to Expect," what will be the strategic actions HR professionals and managers will have to take?

3. Pick at least two of the "Common Pitfalls" and identify what actions you would recommend to an employer for compliance and to reduce risks of litigation.

Athens State University SHRM Chapter Sponsors Benefit Fundraiser for Pages for Children



The Athens State University Student SHRM Chapter is working to provide much needed funding for Pages for Children, a non-profit organization that distributes books, cards, and art supplies to seriously ill and hospitalized children in Tennessee and Alabama. To that end, the student SHRM chapter is selling Belk Charity Sale certificates for \$5.00. These certificates allow the holder a 20%-70% discount off all Belk purchases storewide, including

savings on rarely discounted brands.

The Spring Charity Sale is Saturday, April 27, 2013. The first 100 customers will get a free gift card at the door. The only vendor exclusion will be Brighton. Brands normally excluded from sales but will be included during this event is Polo, Brahmin, Dooney, Coach, Michael Kors, Calvin Klein, Designer shoes, Ladies Apparel and More!

If you are interested in purchasing a Charity Event Discount ticket for \$5.00, please contact Dr. Kim LaFavor at (256)216-5359 or kim.lafavor@athens.edu. All proceeds collected by the Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter will be given to Pages for Children to fulfill their non-profit mission for hospitalized children.

Athens State University SHRM Partnering with Area High School to Promote HR Careers



Sparkman High School partnered with the Athens State University Student SHRM Student Chapter to educate high school students about careers in Human Resources. Two workshops were held in March that reviewed with high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors about

how to use the Department of Labor O*NET Career Center and examining the job responsibilities, characteristics of students interested in HRM, and career opportunities in Human Resource Careers. Presentations were co-led by Athens State University HRM Department Chair

Dr. Kim LaFavor and Ms. Saralyn Mitchell, Director of Student Services. Athens State students Chris Whitman, Rebecca Dubach, and Bailey Smith were on hand to provide their testimonials about their choice of HRM as a college major and decision made for a career in HR.

SHRM Members Attend Southeast SHRM Student Conference and Complete in HR Case Competition

Dr. LaFavor, Athens State University SHRM Student Advisor and HRM Department Chair accompanied three Athens State University SHRM Members, Jacklyn Cooper, Rebecca Dubach, and Bailey Smith to attend the Southeast SHRM Student Conference and Case Competition on March 8-9, 2013 in Alexandria, Virginia. During this two day event, the students were able to learn about HR challenges and solu-

tions from national experts to include Curtis Midkiff, Director of Social Engagement-SHRM, Miguel-Joey Aviles, Speaker/Writer/Coach, Joey V. Price, CEO, Jumpstart HR, and Sonia Aranza, Keynote Speaker, Aranza Communications.

The Athens State University SHRM students also participated along with 15 other teams in the SHRM Case Competition. Students were given a

complex HR Case to review and act as consultants to present solutions to the HR related issues. Certified HR Professionals judged the presentations and offered student feedback on the quality of their presentations to include professionalism, demonstration of HR knowledge, and creative HR solutions to the presented business problem.



Preview Day April 6th-SHRM Student Chapter at Showcase 11am-12noon

Athens State University will have their Spring Preview Day on Saturday, April 6 from 9:00 until 12:00 noon. The opening session will be in the Carter Physical Education Center (Gym) at 9:00 a.m. The show case will begin at 11:00 a.m. in the gym as well.

Event Schedule:

8:30 a.m. - Registration- Ballroom/Sandridge Student Center
 9:00 a.m. - Welcome- Ballroom/Sandridge Student Center

President Robert Glenn
 Nikki Schrimsher

9:30 a.m.- Campus Tour

Tour #1 – College of Arts and Science majors

Tour #2 – College of Education majors

Tour #3 – College of Business majors

10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.- College Information Sessions

College of Education- McCain Hall /Basement Classroom

College of Business Classroom Building /104

College of Arts and Science Waters 202

11:00 a.m.- Information Showcase- Ballroom/Sandridge Student Center



TVC SHRM Scholarship To Be Awarded to Athens State University HR Major

The Board for the Tennessee Valley Chapter of the Professional Chapter for the Society for Human Resource Management has voted to extend a \$500 scholarship to an Athens State University SHRM Student Member for the 2013-2014 school year.

Details about the scholarship and eligibility requirements to be announced soon. The TVC SHRM Chapter is the Professional

Sponsoring Chapter for the Athens State University SHRM Student Chapter and provides support for student academic study in HR and professional development to prepare for successful careers in HRM.



SHRM Members Get HR Job Shadowing Opportunity with Hospice of the Valley

On March 27th and 28th, 2013, four SHRM members and HR Majors participated in an HR Job Shadow event with Hospice of the Valley in Decatur, Alabama. Participating members included Jacklyn Cooper, Bailey Smith, Rebecca Dubach, and recent honors graduate and SHRM President, Tiffany Weaver.

Cathy Shallal, HR Director for Hospice of the Valley

hosted these students to give them a basic understanding of her role and responsibilities in human resources. The recruitment and selection process was given particular emphasis.

Hospice of the Valley has been community-based since 1985. Their compassionate, skilled team members consist of caregivers, nurses, aides, social workers, chaplains and

volunteers. Their continuum of care services offer unique levels of care to provide comfort and support to help patients and families enjoy life together and live life to the fullest. They remain proud to serve the communities of Cullman, Franklin, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marshall and Morgan counties.

SHRM Website Resources:

Society for Human Resource Management website
<http://www.shrm.org/Pages/default.aspx>

HR Certification Institute website
<http://www.hrci.org/>

SHRM Foundation website
<http://www.shrm.org/about/foundation/pages/default.aspx>

SHRM Student Awards & Scholarships website
<http://www.shrm.org/about/awards/pages/default.aspx>

SHRM Student Career Center website
<http://www.shrm.org/communities/studentprograms/pages/careers.aspx>

TVC-SHRM Professional Chapter website
<http://tvc.shrm.org/>

National SHRM Conference website
<http://annual.shrm.org/>

Benefits of SHRM Membership website
<http://www.shrm.org/about/memberkit/pages/default.aspx>



Join us at the 2013 Annual Conference in CHICAGO!

2013 Annual Student & Faculty Conference

Saturday, June 15, 2013 (all-day) and Sunday, June 16, 2013 (half-day in the morning)

2013 SHRM Annual Conference & Exposition

Sunday, June 16 - Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Student Rate: \$295 (Saturday - Wednesday)

Student/Faculty conference registration includes BOTH Student/Faculty Confer-

ence AND SHRM Annual Conference & Exposition, including all keynote and general sessions, Tuesday night concert with Kelly Clarkson, concurrent educational sessions and admission to the exposition.



#1 Health Care Reform- (Continued from page 1)

Background: Signed into law on March 23, 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) brought about major reforms in health care coverage in the United States. While several elements of the law already have gone into effect, employers can expect additional elements to be phased in each year through 2018. While efforts to repeal the PPACA have proved unsuccessful, Congress has advanced measures to modify the law. For example, the Small Business Paperwork Mandate Elimination Act (H.R. 4) repealed the PPACA's requirement that employers file a Form 1099 to report any business purchase of goods or services above \$600. On Feb. 1, 2012, the House also passed a bill to repeal the CLASS Act, a section of the PPACA to provide a long-term-care social insurance program.

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments on challenges to the PPACA in March 2012. A decision in the case is expected by the end of June. The central issue in the case is whether Congress exceeded its constitutional authority in requiring people to buy health insurance or pay a penalty.

Issue: Health Care costs continue to rise. Compounding this cost increase, employer sponsored health care plans are encountering difficulties when implementing the PPACA. In addition, the PPACA has other shortcomings, including inadequate cost containment measures, namely medical liability reform, and other restrictions on employer-sponsored plans that limit employer plan design.

Outlook: With the Supreme Court's decision pending and election-year politics in full swing, it is unlikely Congress will consider meaningful changes to the PPACA in 2012. It is expected that health care reform will be a key focus of the presidential campaign irrespective of the outcome of the Supreme Court's ruling on the PPACA.

SHRM Position: SHRM remains committed to comprehensive reform that lowers health care costs and improves access to high-quality and affordable coverage, and believes such reform should:

- 1) Strengthen and improve the employer-based health care system.
- 2) Encourage greater use of prevention, promotion and wellness programs.
- 3) Solidify the Employee Retirement Income Security Act to provide a national, uniform framework for health care benefits.
- 4) Reduce health care costs by improving quality and transparency.
- 5) Ensure that tax policy contributes to lower costs and greater access.
- 6) Reform the medical liability laws as a component of cost containment.

#2 Workplace Flexibility-

Background: The increased diversity and complexity of the American workforce—combined with workplace transformations driven by advances in technology and global competition in a 24/7 economy—suggests the need for more “workplace flexibility.” As a result, HR professionals are deploying flexible workplace programs and policies to recruit and retain top talent, enhance employee engagement, reduce turnover costs and increase productivity.

Issue: The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1992 (FMLA) and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) are cornerstones of employment law. Employers, however, continue to encounter challenges in designing workplace flexibility policies that do not conflict with these and other federal and state laws. Potential conflicts with existing statutes may prevent employers from adopting flexible scheduling, telecommuting and Results Only Work Environment programs. In addition, many employers believe the FMLA and its implementing regulations are not responsive to the evolving needs and lifestyles of today's workforce.

In February 2012, the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to implement and expand the FMLA's military family leave provisions. The proposed rule would implement the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, which included revisions to the military caregiver portion of the FMLA, and extended exigency leave to eligible family members of the regular armed forces.

Outlook: Since the Republican takeover of the House of Representatives in 2011 advocates' efforts to advance expanded leave benefits have been stymied in Congress. However, the Obama administration has promoted the use of flexible workplace arrangements in the private sector through its National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility. Several states and localities have enacted or will consider paid leave mandates in 2012.

To help modernize the FLSA, Senators Kay Hagan (D-NC) and Johnny Isakson (RGA) have introduced the Computer Professionals Update Act (CPU Act, S. 1747) to amend the FLSA to expand the exemption from the act for certain computer-based Employees.

SHRM Position: SHRM believes that the United States must have a 21st century workplace flexibility policy that meets the needs of both employers and employees. Rather than a one-size-fits-all government mandate, the policy should be a new approach that reflects different work environments, representation, industries and organizational size.

In February 2011, SHRM formed a multi-year partnership with the Families and Work Institute, to educate employers about the business benefits of workplace flexibility and encourage the voluntary adoption of flexible workplace strategies.

#3 Employment Verification-

Background: Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, it is unlawful for an employer to knowingly hire or employ someone who is not authorized to work in the United States. Current law requires employers to examine documents presented by new hires to verify identity and work eligibility, and to attest to that examination on Form I-9.

As of 2009, federal contractors must use the eligibility verification system known as E-Verify for employees hired during a contract and employees assigned to that contract. Other employers may participate voluntarily in E-Verify. The program is scheduled to expire in September 2012.

Issue: E-Verify, which relies on Social Security and Department of Homeland Security databases, is a subjective process that lacks proper security features. It uses paper documentation that is susceptible to identity theft, forgery and alteration, and that cannot be verified for authenticity.

Outlook: Comprehensive immigration reform is impossible in the 112th Congress given the current political and economic environment despite President Obama's calls for it in the State of the Union. However, the House Judiciary Committee approved the Legal Workforce Act (H.R. 2885) in September 2011. H.R. 2885, introduced by House Judiciary Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) would make permanent E-Verify for all private employers. In addition, stepped up worksite enforcement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement continues with more employers under audit than in previous years. In addition, 17 states have enacted laws mandating the use of E-Verify in their states. More than 10 states are expected to consider similar proposals during state legislative sessions in 2012.

SHRM Position: SHRM supports the Legal Workforce Act because it strikes an appropriate balance between a mandatory, federal system and the employer's role in the employment verification process. The bill would pre-empt conflicting state employment verification laws, indemnify employers from liability when using the verification system, create an entirely electronic employment verification system that would eliminate the Form I-9, and establish a voluntary biometric pilot program in which an employee could “lock” his or her identity with a biometric marker.

#4 Tax Reform and Deficit Reduction-

Background: With the current Fiscal Year 2012 budget projected to run a \$1.1 trillion deficit and the U.S. national debt hovering around \$15.3 trillion, tax reform and efforts to lower the deficit are a priority for Congress and the Obama administration. Because of their tax-deferred status, employee benefits such as retirement plans and educational assistance may come under scrutiny by congressional deficit hawks.

Issue: Employer-provided retirement plans are a key component of our nation's retirement system and produce significant retirement benefits for America's working families. There are approximately 670,000 private-sector defined contribution plans covering 67 million participants and more than 48,000 private-sector defined benefit plans covering 19 million participants.

Outlook: Because of their tax-deferred status, employee benefits are considered the largest annual loss in revenue to the federal treasury as budgeted by the House and Senate. As a result, it is anticipated that public policy efforts to reform the tax code and bring down the federal deficit will involve an examination of employer sponsored fringe benefits, including retirement plans and health care plans. Currently, tax-qualified retirement plans hold \$16.6 trillion in assets, of which about \$13 trillion is attributable to employer-provided plans.

SHRM Position: SHRM believes that a comprehensive and flexible benefits package is an essential tool in recruiting and retaining talented employees. Every American employee should be given the opportunity to save for retirement. The government should facilitate and encourage voluntary employer-sponsored plans, as well as individual savings. SHRM also strongly supports the permanent extension of Section 127 (education assistance), to help build a skilled workforce and position the United States to compete globally.

#5 Employer-Provided Education Assistance-

Background: Section 127 of the Internal Revenue Code allows an employee to exclude from income up to \$5,250 a year in assistance provided by their employer for any type of educational course at the associate, undergraduate and graduate level. Employers are not required to provide assistance under Section 127 to their employees. Congress has extended Section 127 nine times since it was created in 1978, most recently in 2010. Section 127 will expire at the end of this year unless Congress acts to renew it or make it permanent.

Issue: Providing tax-free educational assistance is an important tool for employers. Section 127 helps to build and maintain an increasingly skilled workforce, and positions the United States to remain competitive in the global economy. Almost 20 percent of Section 127 recipients are pursuing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) degrees. More than 35 percent of all degrees pursued by Section 127 beneficiaries are master's degrees and, according to the National Postsecondary Student Aid study, more than 1 million employees use Section 127 benefits.

Outlook: During the past few years, there have been several failed attempts to make Section 127 benefits permanent. Attempts to extend or make permanent any tax reductions will be difficult in the current political environment because of concerns about the rising federal deficit. An extension of Section 127 would likely need to be part of a larger tax reform package. Until a larger package comes together, SHRM is in support of a stand-alone bill, to be introduced by Representatives Sam Johnson (R-TX) and Richard Neal (D-MA).

SHRM Position: SHRM chairs the Coalition to Preserve Education Assistance, a broad-based collection of groups representing business, labor and education groups. SHRM strongly supports the permanent extension of Section 127 for associate, undergraduate and graduate degrees. We believe that providing tax-free educational assistance is an important tool for employers to attract the best employees, build a skilled workforce and position the U.S. economy to compete globally.

#6 Weapons in the Workplace-

Background: A major trend in workplace violence is an increase in gun-related incidents. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the majority of homicides committed in U.S. workplaces are the result of shootings. Homicides involving guns are one of the top five leading causes of occupational deaths in the United States, and the leading cause of workplace deaths for women.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employer to provide a workplace "free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm." In a 2006 SHRM survey of HR professionals, 98 percent of respondents stated employers should be allowed to determine their own worksite policies regarding whether to allow weapons on workplace property.

Issue: SHRM believes that employers must retain the freedom and responsibility to assess the safety needs of their organizations and establish appropriate policies. This is paramount to the overall success, sustainability and safety of the workforce.

Outlook: To date, 16 states have enacted laws that restrict an employer's right to enforce a no-weapons policy on company property. Other states (particularly in the Midwest and South) are expected to consider similar legislation in future sessions.

SHRM Position: SHRM opposes any restrictions on the right of employers to determine their own worksite policies regarding weapons on company property (including parking lots). SHRM's position in no way involves the broader issues of gun control or gun ownership.

#7 Background Investigations-

Background: HR professionals ensure that new hires possess the talent, work ethic and character needed for the organization's success. Background investigations, including reference, credential or educational certifications, criminal history, credit checks and drug tests, can play a pivotal role in that process. Information gained can affect critical business concerns such as quality, workplace safety and customer satisfaction. The Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1970 (FCRA) governs the use of consumer reports and has explicit protections for consumers. Further, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII) bars employment decisions based on policies or tests, such as credit or criminal background checks that have a "disparate impact" on protected groups.

Issue: Congress, federal agencies and state legislatures have considered proposals to restrict or prohibit certain background investigations. Currently, seven states limit employers' use of credit information in employment: California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Oregon and Washington.

Outlook: Legislative efforts to ban or limit the use of credit and criminal checks in the employment process are unlikely in the 112th Congress, but the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission may publish guidance on the use of both credit and criminal background checks in the employment process. In addition, at least a dozen state legislatures may consider new restrictions on employers' use of background checks.

SHRM Position: SHRM is committed to equal employment opportunity in all employment practices for all individuals. Employment decisions should be made on the basis of qualifications—education, training, professional experience, demonstrated competence—not on factors with no bearing on the ability to perform job-related duties.

However, there is a compelling public interest in enabling our nation's employers to make the best hiring decisions. Employers' ability to conduct background checks for employment purposes helps keep the workplace free of physical, financial, economic and personal identity threats to employees and the general public. The FCRA already protects consumers by requiring companies to get written permission from job candidates before conducting a background check. In addition, employers are barred by Title VII from using background checks to screen out job applicants based on protected characteristics such as race, ethnicity or gender.

#8 Labor-Management Relations-

Background: The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (NLRA) states that a union can be certified as the exclusive collective bargaining agent for an organization's employees in one of two ways:

- 1) A secret-ballot election.
- 2) Under limited circumstances, a "card check" process, in which a majority of employees in a specific work unit sign a card authorizing a union to represent their collective interests. Unions view the card check process as an easier, more direct way to secure the approval of a majority of workers in a bargaining unit.

Issue: Union leaders have argued that current laws and regulations on union representation favor management and hinder employees' ability to organize a union.

Outlook: Labor's top legislative priority, the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), would amend the NLRA's organizing rules by allowing unions to bypass private ballot elections in favor of the card check process. But EFCA is no longer on the congressional agenda following the 2010 midterm elections. However, regulatory bodies such as the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and the Department of Labor (DOL) have become increasingly active on issues important to employee representation. Among these agencies' recent actions are:

- 1) Specialty Healthcare decision – The NLRB on Aug. 26, 2011, paved the way for labor organizations to form "micro-unions" by permitting them to target smaller bargaining units comprised of employees who support unionization.
- 2) "Quick election" rule – The NLRB published its election case procedures rule, otherwise known as the "quick election" or "ambush election" rule, on Dec. 22, 2011. The final rule is a narrower version of the petitions. The rule is due to take effect on April 30, 2012.
- 3) "Persuader" proposed rule – The DOL on June 21, 2011, issued a proposed rule that would significantly narrow the "advice exemption" under Section 203 of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act and expand employers' and consultants' reporting obligations.
- 4) NLRA notice-posting requirement – By April 30, 2012, almost all private employers will be required to post employees' NLRA rights in a conspicuous place, disseminate the notice by e-mail, and post the notice on an intranet site.

SHRM Position: SHRM believes these NLRB and DOL actions are imbalanced approaches that would limit employer free speech during union organizing campaigns. The rules would prevent many employees from hearing the employer viewpoint on the impact of collective bargaining on the workplace. SHRM believes that a government-supervised secret-ballot election is the best process for employees to determine whether or not they want to be represented by a union. The rights of employees to consider representation by a union without threats, interrogation, promises of benefits or coercion by employers or unions must be protected.

#9 Skills Gap-

Background: As we move away from the depths of the recession, employers and HR professionals continue to confront persistent gaps between the skills of unemployed workers and the skills sought by employers to fill specific positions. Part of this skill shortage is due to the changing demographics of the workplace and the aging population of skilled workers. There is also research that shows graduating high school and college students lack the necessary basic technological skills and are unprepared for work in a knowledge economy. There are also fewer students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—skills that are necessary for the United States to be globally competitive. Recent SHRM research reveals that, in the current labor market, more than one-half (52 percent) of employers reported difficulty recruiting for specific jobs. Certain positions are identified as more difficult to fill than others, including high-skilled jobs such as engineers, doctors, nurses, and computer programmers, as well as middle skill jobs that require education and training beyond high school but less than a four-year degree. These positions include heating and air conditioning specialists, welders, environmental engineering technicians and dental hygienists.

At the same time, there are pools of workers that might serve as a source of skilled employees—military veterans and individuals with disabilities. According to 2010 Census data, the unemployment rate among the disabled was 15.3 percent. Within the veterans' community, it is 11.5 percent.

Issue: In many industries, high- and middle-skilled workers are in demand, but supply in particular geographic and industry-specific areas is very low. Consequently, employers are unable to fill key jobs. While there are ongoing policy initiatives to address both the middle- and high-skill shortage issue, other avenues will be necessary in the short-term for employers to meet their needs for skilled employees.

In addition, while veterans and the disabled community are a potential source of skilled labor, these groups might need assistance transitioning to the civilian workforce and employers will need help in locating, recruiting and hiring them.

Outlook: There is likely to be a continued focus on the employment of certain individual groups, including veterans and individuals with disabilities. Since passing the Veterans Opportunity to Work Act, which included tax credits for hiring veterans and other job readiness provisions, Congress may continue to seek ways to increase employment among returning military veterans.

SHRM Position: SHRM believes that the government and employers both play a role in providing training to employees to help them become more productive and become qualified for better, high- and middle-skilled jobs. SHRM believes that such training should be encouraged as sound investment through incentives rather than mandates.

**Athens State University
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Induction Ceremony Pictured above (left to right): Dr. Kim LaFevor, Chris Whitman, Matt Holland, Tiffany Weaver, Suzanne Simms, and Jeff Powers.

TVC-SHRM Professional Chapter Monthly Meetings

The TVC SHRM Professional Chapter is the Professional Chapter Sponsor of the ASU SHRM Student Chapter. This is a terrific venue to network with current HR professionals and develop lasting professional relationships. ASU Students/ASU SHRM Student Chapter Members are strongly encouraged to attend.

Cost: First time guests free (must contact Dr. LaFevor in advance at kim.lafevor@athens.edu), after second visit \$10 for lunch-meeting

Second Wednesday of Each Month

Holiday Inn-Decatur, Alabama

Come join us for lunch and informative sessions on relevant HR issues!

For information about TVC-SHRM:

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