



Government Advocacy News

National Small Business Association (NSBA) Policy Congress, November 14-15, Washington, D.C.

By Eileen Anderson, Director, Government Relations, SMC

A diverse group of small businesses from across the country gathered in Washington, D.C. to discuss and prioritize key legislative issues for NSBA lobbying action for the next two-year session of Congress. It was an excellent opportunity to hear views of business peers from Texas, to Florida to Maine and identify common ground. Individuals from agencies, Congress, foundations, think tanks and the media were invited to speak to the group and share their expertise on policy and issues.

[Read More>>](#)

Rail-Volution came to Pittsburgh, but how will its ideas transfer to our region?

By Colleen O'Laughlin, Government Relations Assistant, SMC

Transportation is an issue that is gaining traction with communities and businesses across the country. Everyone is affected by transportation, whether it's the commute to work or attracting people and businesses to a region, the notion of moving people and goods from Point A to Point B in the quickest, safest way is paramount on the minds of community and business leaders. [Read More>>](#)

Post-Election Changes Coming to Harrisburg

By John A. Nikoloff, Partner, ERG Partners

In their last two days of the 2017-2018 session, House and Senate members elected their caucus leadership. Retirements and election results have dictated many changes in leadership, and many more changes in committee chairs for the 2019-2020 session. The Senate, where Democrats picked up five seats, will have a 28-21 GOP majority, elected Sen. Joe Scarnati (R, Jefferson) as Interim President Pro Tempore. State Sen. Guy Reschenthaler's seat will be filled by a special election as he takes his oath of office in Congress. [Read More>>](#)

INNOVATION 4.0

Impact of Proactive Maintenance

By Kevin Jones, CEO, Ectobox, Inc. and Dan Phillips, Technical Director of Lifecycle Services, Regal Beloit America

Manufacturing companies are looking for new ways to compete and thrive in their increasingly competitive markets. Proactive maintenance of equipment can increase production throughput by improving asset utilization, which can reduce maintenance costs and increase revenue. However, proactive maintenance should be combined with IIoT (Industrial Internet of Things) to achieve significant impact on a manufacturing business. [Read More>>](#)

Human Resources News

OSHA Issues Final Rule on Crane Operator Certification Requirements

OSHA issued a [final rule](#) that clarifies certification requirements for crane operators. Under the final rule, employers are required to train, certify/license, and evaluate operators to safely perform crane activities. Operators can be certified based on either the crane's type and capacity, or type only, ensuring that more accredited testing organizations are eligible to meet OSHA's certification program requirements. Most requirements in the final rule will become effective on Dec. 9, 2018. The evaluation and documentation requirements will become effective on Feb. 7, 2019. For more information, see the [news release](#).

Live Well, Work Well

Don't Let Cooler Temperatures Derail Your Workout Plan

If you find it harder to keep up with your workout program as the temperatures drop, you're not alone. Every year, many Americans find it increasingly difficult to remain committed to their plan as the holidays, shorter days and less-than-ideal weather create obstacles.

Whether you're a gym-goer or outdoor exerciser, there are simple ways you can overcome the winter obstacles and stay on track with your workout plan. [Read More>>](#)

HR Brief

What Are You Doing to Prevent the Flu?

Last year was the first flu season to be classified as high severity across all age groups, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This shows that no one can afford to ignore flu prevention. With that in mind, what are you doing to fight the flu?

Flu by the Numbers

According to a recent survey from Harris Insights & Analytics, 66 percent of people still go to work when they have the flu. Knowing this, it's safe to assume some of your co-workers and employees will be coming to work while ill. You need a flu prevention strategy in place to reduce the damage.

[Read More>>](#)

Gender Pay Equity Scorecard

Federal law prohibits virtually all employers from compensating employees differently based on gender. Use this scorecard to evaluate your organization's risk of violating gender pay equity requirements. [Click here for the Scorecard](#).

Insurance News

Benefits Buzz

Options for HRAs Would Be Expanded Under Proposed Rule

On Oct. 23, 2018, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and the Treasury (Departments) issued a proposed rule that would expand the usability of health reimbursement arrangements (HRAs). Effective in 2020, the proposed rule would:

- Allow HRAs to be used to reimburse the cost of individual market premiums on a taxpreferred basis, subject to certain conditions; and
- Allow employers that offer traditional group coverage to provide an HRA of up to \$1,800 per year (as adjusted) to reimburse certain qualified medical expenses. [Read More>>](#)

Compliance Bulletin

IRS Announces Employee Benefit Plan Limits for 2019

Many employee benefits are subject to annual dollar limits that are periodically increased for inflation. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recently announced cost-of-living adjustments to the annual dollar limits for various welfare and retirement plan limits for 2019. Although some of the limits will remain the same, many of the limits will increase for 2019.

The annual limits for the following commonly offered employee benefits will increase for 2019:

[Read More>>](#)

ACA Compliance Bulletin

Final Regulations Expand Exemptions from the Contraceptive Mandate

On Nov. 7, 2018, the Departments of Labor (DOL), Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Treasury (Departments) finalized two rules expanding certain exemptions from the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) contraceptive coverage mandate.

The first final rule expands the exemption for employers that object to providing contraceptive coverage based on their sincerely held religious beliefs.

[Read More>>](#)



Connections News

SMC Holiday Mixer

Rivers Casino Pittsburgh - Open bar - Great food - \$10 Casino Free Play

December 6, 5:30-7:30 pm

SMC members look forward to kicking off the holiday season at our annual Holiday Mixer. This event offers the opportunity to spread a little holiday cheer in a relaxed atmosphere where you can catch up with old friends, colleagues and peers as well as develop new acquaintances.

Groups of five or more: \$25 pp. Expires 12/1. Call today for reservations!

Help assist those in need. SMC will be accepting monetary donations for the Women's Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh at the registration table or you may bring items listed on the [Current Needs List](#). For information, [click here!](#)

Certified Supervisory Skills Series

SMC Business Councils Office, Cranberry, PA

January 9 & 10, 30 & 31, February 20 & 21, March 6 & 7 and April 3 & 4

We are very excited to offer to our members an all-inclusive Supervisory Skills Certificate Training Series through our partnership with the Manufacturer & Business Association (MBA) headquartered in Erie, PA.

In this five-course series, instructors will teach participants the skills needed to properly motivate and direct teams to meet company goals, objectives and compliance, emphasizing management techniques essential to the success of both the supervisor and the company. Each course is offered in two-day increments, providing a flexible and timely training solution for you and your staff. For a detailed course description and registration information, [click here!](#)

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*SMC Business Councils
would like to thank you for a
great 2018, and wish you a
wonderful holiday season and a
happy, prosperous New Year!*