

## General Assembly Returns, Governor Proposes Budget

By John Nikoloff, Partner, ERG Partners

The House and Senate have begun their 2019-2020 session, naming leaders, committee chairs and members, and already moving legislation.

On February 5, Governor Wolf released his 2019-2020 state budget proposal, proposing a \$34.1 billion General Fund budget. This is a \$927 million increase over the current year. But the Governor has moved about \$1 billion in General Fund spending out of the General Fund in his proposal. He did not ask for new broad-based taxes, but in an off-budget proposal he called again for a natural gas severance tax to provide support for many programs otherwise covered in the state budget.

[Read More>>](#)

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## Update and Invitation – SMC Proposed 2019 State Legislative Agenda

By Eileen Anderson, Director, Government Relations

A unique feature of SMC Government Advocacy is that our agenda is built from the ground up and starts with you. All interested members have the opportunity to help shape policy via the Government Relations committee. Over the past several months the committee and two working groups 1) [Tax & Health Care/Labor/Transportation](#) and 2) [Energy & Environment and Regulations](#) have had several conference calls to discuss small business issues. The two groups then make recommendations to the Government Relations committee with the goal to finalize the agenda by early March. Once approved by the MBA Board of Directors, position papers are written in preparation for the May 14th Harrisburg Grassroots Lobbying Trip.

There is still time to send in your concerns because this is a fluid process and positions may shift.

Contact [eileenanderson@smc.org](mailto:eileenanderson@smc.org)

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## Opportunity Zones Explained

Several weeks ago SMC's Working Group on Tax discussed state legislation pertaining to Opportunity Zones (OZs). The zones concept was not clearly understood by the group and they questioned if the OZs pertained to small businesses. The answer is "yes." They are not just for big investors with millions of dollars. The OZs are also for the small business owner who sells an asset or equipment and can invest the capital gains from the sale. It's all fairly confusing so the Working Group decided that the first step was to educate members. [Read More>>](#)

## HR Brief | March

### Workplace Wellness is About More Than Just Physical Health

Cultivating a culture of wellness at organizations is a common trend for employers across the country. In fact, according to the Employer Health Benefits 2018 Annual Survey, 82 percent of large firms and 53 percent of small firms offer some sort of wellness program. [Read More>>](#)

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## Compliance Bulletin

### EEO-1 Filing Deadline is Extended to May 31, 2019

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has extended the deadline for employers to submit EEO-1 Reports for 2018. The reports are now due by May 31, 2019.

The EEO-1 Report is an annual survey required under Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act (Title VII). Under the law, employers with 100 or more employees and certain federal contractors must use the [EEO-1 Online Filing System](#) to submit employment data by March 31 every year. The EEOC extended the 2019 deadline because the federal government shutdown has delayed the online system's opening for 2018 reports. The EEOC expects the system to become available for 2018 submissions in early March 2019. [Read More>>](#)

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## News Brief

### 2018 Was a Record year for HIPAA Enforcement Actions

In 2018, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) settled 10 cases and was granted summary judgment in a case in Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) enforcement. The enforcement actions resulted in an all-time record year for OCR, with enforcement penalties collected totaling \$28.7 million—a 22 percent increase from the last record year. [Read More>>](#)

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## Live Well, Work Well

### Don't Let Spring Allergies Bring You Down

More than 50 million Americans suffer from allergies every year. In particular, springtime allergies are an annual nuisance for many people. As plants begin to bloom and neighbors start to cut their grass more frequently, allergy sufferers nationwide start sniffing and sneezing. What's more, mold growth blooms both indoors and outdoors, making it almost impossible to escape allergy triggers.

[Read More>>](#)

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# Insurance News



## Benefits Bulletin

### IRS Begins Pay or Play Enforcement

In late 2018, the IRS began issuing enforcement letters related to employers' compliance with the employer shared responsibility rules under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) for the 2016 calendar year. These letters, known as Letter 226-J, inform employers of their potential liability for an employer shared responsibility penalty, if any, for 2016. [Read More>>](#)

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## Compliance Overview

### Health Plan Rules for Employees with Medicare

As more and more older Americans stay in the workforce, employers may have questions about how employees' Medicare entitlement impacts their group health plan coverage. Employers sponsoring group health plans that cover individuals enrolled in Medicare should understand: [Read More>>](#)

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## News Brief

### The State of the Union Address and the Employee Benefits Market

On Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019, President Donald Trump delivered the 2019 State of the Union Address (SOTU). The SOTU is an annual message delivered by the president to a joint session of Congress at the beginning of each year. At this year's SOTU, President Trump discussed issues that have the potential to impact the employee benefits industry, including pre-existing conditions, lower prescription drug prices and nationwide paid family leave. [Read More>>](#)

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## Growing Up with Vaccines: What Should Parents Know?

### Why Vaccinate?

On-time vaccination throughout childhood is essential because it helps provide immunity before children are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases. Vaccines are tested to ensure that they are safe and effective for children to receive at the recommended ages. [Read More>>](#)

# Connections News

## **Innovation Pittsburgh - A Legislative Mixer**

*DoubleTree by Hilton, 910 Sheraton Drive, Mars, PA 16046*

**March 8, 2019, 5:00-7:30 pm**

It's your opportunity to speak directly with lawmakers including:

- U.S. Congressman Conor Lamb, newly drawn Dist. # 17
- Rep. Mike Turzai, Speaker of the House, PA House of Representatives
- Other lawmakers from the PA House and Senate are also invited.

Networking, presentations and panel discussion, Hors d'oeuvres and cash bar

Tickets are on sale! \$30. SMC Members can attend at the member rate!, [Register here.](#)

Questions? Contact Kristina Hall [KHall@PghNorthChamber.com](mailto:KHall@PghNorthChamber.com)

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## **Motivate Your Employees**

*SMC Business Councils Office, Cranberry, PA*

**March 12, 2019, 8:00 am-Noon**

This half-day program reveals the most productive motivation concepts in real-life situations and explains the various motivational forces and their effect on people. Participants will gain confidence in their ability to motivate by exploring the “whys” and “hows” of motivation. [Read More>>](#)

To register, call Terry Nunez at 814-833-3200 or [tnunez@mbausa.org](mailto:tnunez@mbausa.org) or visit [www.mbausa.org](http://www.mbausa.org)

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## **Workplace Civility**

*SMC Business Councils Office, Cranberry, PA*

**March 12, 2019, 12:30-4:30 pm**

Don't miss this highly engaging, half-day program that focuses on the importance of building a workplace environment where people feel respected, considered and relevant both inside and outside the organization. Whether communication takes place in person, by phone or email, participants will learn how civil behavior can create a strong foundation of engagement where effectiveness and productivity soar! [Read More>>](#)

To register, call Terry Nunez at 814-833-3200 or [tnunez@mbausa.org](mailto:tnunez@mbausa.org) or visit [www.mbausa.org](http://www.mbausa.org).

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# Connections News

MARCH 2019



## Member Benefit Briefings | Maximize your Member Benefits

*Five locations for your convenience*

**March 14, 19, 21, 27 & 28** | Sessions: 9-10 am, 11 am-Noon, 1-2 pm & 3-4 pm

The recent merger of our two organizations brings with it valuable member benefits to bolster your bottom line, improve productivity through a well-trained workforce and ease the burden of compliance. Plan to attend one of our four separate sessions to learn about your member services and products which will be discussed during our time together.

March 14, 2019, SMC Office, Cranberry Twp., PA

March 19, 2019, Hampton Inn Pittsburgh/Greentree, PA

March 21, 2019, Courtyard by Marriott Greensburg, PA

March 27, 2019, SMC Office, Mechanicsburg, PA

March 28, 2019, Residence Inn by Marriott, Monroeville/Wilkins, PA

[Click here](#) to register, or call Terry Nunez at 814-833-3200 or [tnunez@mbausa.org](mailto:tnunez@mbausa.org).

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## The Great Energy Gathering VI

*The Hilton Garden Inn, Southpointe, 1000 Corporate Drive, Cannonsburg*

**March 20, 2019, 6:00-9:00 pm**, Presented by Pittsburgh Business Exchange

You're invited to attend one of Western PA's largest annual MEGA MIXERS and most unique gathering of 21 Regional Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce powerhouse organizations! The evening will include hors d'oeuvres, cash bar, exhibitor tables and business networking with hundreds of Western PA business owners, entrepreneurs, corporate executives and other professionals - with an Energy Theme!

SMC Members can attend at the member rate! [Register here](#).

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## One-Day Food Safety Certification

*SMC Business Councils Office, Cranberry, PA*

**April 29, 2019, 8:00 am-4:00 pm (exam follows)**

*CERTIFICATION EXAM IS PROCTORED THE SAME DAY AS YOUR TRAINING*

**REQUIRED:** Food safety certification and food handler training is a critical step to maintaining a safe and sanitary food operation. It protects the health of your customers and employees and reduces the risk of lawsuits and high insurance premiums. Plus, our training teaches participants key leadership skills that will set your food safety team apart from the competition. For information, [click here!](#)



# Connections News



## 2019 Harrisburg Grassroots Lobbying Trip

**May 14, 2019, 7:00 am-8:45 pm**

Now more than ever small businesses must be heard in the Capitol. Join SMC members and guests and visit Capitol Offices to educate lawmakers about the top concerns of small business. Travelers will enjoy lunch with guest speakers, dinner, and networking with colleagues. Watch for more details.

Contact Eileen Anderson, Director, Government Relations, 412-342-1606, [eileenanderson@smc.org](mailto:eileenanderson@smc.org)

## HR For Non HR Professionals

*SMC Business Councils Office, Cranberry, PA*

**May 22, 2019, 8:00 am-4:00 pm**

An essential training program for employees who are responsible for recruiting and managing staff. Participants will gain not only a clear understanding of legal guidelines, but also learn the essential tools and techniques that serve as the foundation of developing and maintaining a highly productive workforce.

To register, call Terry Nunez at 814-833-3200 or [tnunez@mbausa.org](mailto:tnunez@mbausa.org) or visit [www.mbausa.org](http://www.mbausa.org)

## HR Essentials Level 1

*SMC Business Councils Office, Cranberry, PA*

**June 18, July 9 & August 6, 2019, 8:00 am-5:00 pm**

June 18, 2019, 8:00 am-12:00 Noon | Interviewing & Hiring, 1:00-5:00 pm | Terminations

July 9, 2019, 8:00 am-12:00 Noon | Harassment & Discrimination, 1:00-5:00 pm | Employment Law

August 6, 2019, 8:00 am-12:00 Noon | Retention & Benefits, 1:00-5:00 pm | Basics of Unemployment Compensation & Workers' Comp

To register, call Terry Nunez at 814-833-3200 or [tnunez@mbausa.org](mailto:tnunez@mbausa.org) or visit [www.mbausa.org](http://www.mbausa.org)

## SMC Pirate Night

*PNC Park, Pittsburgh, PA*

**June 19, 2019, 7:05 pm Game Time | Interleague game**

Join SMC members and guests in PNC Park to watch the [Pittsburgh Pirates take on the Detroit Tigers](#) in an exciting interleague ball game. Guests will enjoy a picnic buffet, beverages and action-packed baseball on PNC's Rooftop deck. Make plans with your family, customers and friends now to attend a fun-filled event in the ballpark this spring. Seating is limited! Watch for details!