



NOVEMBER 2018

Government Advocacy News

Election Day is Only Days Away

In the 9/2018 and 10/2018 SMC newsletters we covered U.S. Congressional candidates and PA House and PA Senate candidates. Now it's time to take a final look at candidates for governor, lieutenant governor and U.S. Senate. [This link](#) allows you to make comparisons and see where each candidate stands on the issues important to business. Then follow-up with Jon Delano's lively newsletter "[Delano's Den: Campaign 2018 Preview.](#)" Delano is a Political Analyst, and Professor at the H. John Heinz College of Public Policy & Management, Carnegie Mellon University. It's one man's opinion and a very informative overview.

SMC's "An Evening to Connect" and Business Issues Forum "What Keeps You Up at Night?"

By Eileen Anderson, Director, Government Relations

It was a great evening on September 27th at The Rivers Club and it marked the transition from SMC's Annual Legislative Reception to "An Evening to Connect." The event brought together a crowd of more than 150 and provided SMC members and guests an opportunity for business-to-business networking complete with good food and drink, lively conversation and the opportunity to speak with elected officials and candidates. [Read More>>](#)

See Who Attended "An Evening to Connect" and View Photos

SMC thanks the federal, state, county and city elected officials and candidates who took time from their busy schedules to attend SMC's "An Evening to Connect." [Read More>>](#)

To view the photo gallery, [click here](#).

PNC Fall Economic Outlook Survey: Small and Mid-size Business Owners Feel a Slight Chill in the Air

"PITTSBURGH, Oct. 2, 2018 – Historic optimism about the national economy from the spring (50 percent) chilled slightly this fall (40 percent), but remains well above fall 2017 (29 percent), according to the PNC Economic Outlook, a semiannual telephone survey of small and middle-market business owners and executives. Four out of 10 business leaders described their outlook for the national economy as optimistic, the second-highest rating in the 15-year survey."

[Read about key survey findings:](#) Rising Prices, Wages, Hiring and Retention, Tariffs, and the New Tax Law.

Human Resources News

HR Insights

Frequent Check-ins: Rethinking Performance Reviews

It's no secret that employees and employers alike have reservations about annual performance reviews. Some employees view them as a waste of time and many employers find it difficult to argue against that. According to management research firm CEB, 42 percent of employees consider annual reviews ineffective, mainly due to the feedback coming at the end of the year when it has almost no relevance. What's more, 95 percent of managers are dissatisfied with their company's performance review process, too, according to the same study. [Read More>>](#)

Offering Telecommuting as a Scheduling Option

As a way to reduce commuting costs, promote work-life balance and increase the pool of qualified job candidates, many employers are offering the option of telecommuting. Telecommuting allows employees to work from home or another alternate location and communicate with their employers electronically. This trend emerged in the 1990s among professionals who could perform their jobs off-site. With the increased focus on going green and being time and energy efficient, this option remains popular. [Read More>>](#)

Live Well, Work Well

Removing Meat from Your Diet Could Improve Your Health, Researchers Say

According to scientists at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, consuming high amounts of meat has negative health effects.

Their survey found that 55 percent of respondents were reducing their consumption of processed meat and 41 percent were cutting back on red meat consumption. [Read More>>](#)

HR Brief

Health Care Costs Still Rising, According to Annual Survey

Each year, the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research & Educational Trust conduct a survey to examine employer-sponsored health benefit trends such as annual deductibles, plan enrollment, and health and wellness programs. The 2018 edition of this survey has been released, and it discusses a lot, including how health care costs continue to rise. [Read More>>](#)

Insurance News

Benefits Buzz

Hardship Exemption Rules Eased for 2018 Individual Mandate

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has provided guidance making it easier to claim a hardship exemption from the individual mandate under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) for 2018.

Individuals may claim a hardship exemption on their 2018 federal income tax return without:

[Read More>>](#)

Flu Poster

NO MORE EXCUSES! There are many places to get your flu vaccine.

[Read More>>](#)

Compliance Overview

Open Enrollment 2019 - Benefit Notices

Employers that sponsor group health plans should provide certain benefit notices in connection with their plans' open enrollment periods. Some of these notices must be provided at open enrollment time, such as the summary of benefits and coverage (SBC). [Read More>>](#)

ACA Overview

2019 Compliance Checklist

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has made a number of significant changes to group health plans since the law was enacted in 2010. Many of these key reforms became effective in 2014 and 2015, including health plan design changes, increased wellness program incentives and the employer shared responsibility penalties. [Read More>>](#)

November Coffee Connections

All programs are from 8:00-9:30 am, continental breakfast included

WESTERN PA LOCATIONS - SMC Insurance Agency: How to make it through Open Enrollment
November 13, 14 & 15, 2018, [Register here.](#)

CENTRAL PA LOCATIONS - SMC Insurance Agency: How to make it through Open Enrollment
November 27 & 28, 2018, [Register here.](#)



Connections News

Reminder: Daylight Saving Time Ends

Sunday, November 4 at 2:00 am

It's time to turn your clocks back one hour for the time-honored tradition of Daylight Saving Time. Since the time changes at 2:00 am the second Sunday in November, it's a good practice to change your clocks back Saturday at bedtime. This is also a good time to check your batteries in your smoke alarms.

One-Day Food Safety Certification

SMC Business Councils Office, Cranberry, PA

November 12, 8:00 am-4:00 pm (exam follows)

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!](#)

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HR Essentials Advanced Series

SMC Business Councils Office, Cranberry, PA

November 27, 28 & 29 (two and a half day program)

SMC, in partnership with the Manufacturer and Business Association, is pleased to present the HR Essentials Advanced Series. Join us for this informative two and a half day training program.

Series topics include: FMLA & ADA, Job Descriptions & Reasonable Accommodations, Handbooks, Onboarding & Form I-9, and Understanding the Fair Labor Standards Act.

For information, [click here!](#)

Connections News

SMC Holiday Mixer - Pittsburgh

Rivers Casino Pittsburgh

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.

After the event, head downstairs and play the slots or your favorite game of chance. To get you started, you'll receive \$10 of Free Play at registration to use that night. For information, [click here!](#)

Certified Supervisory Skills Series

SMC Business Councils Office, Cranberry, PA

December 12 & 13, 2018, January 9, 10, 30 & 31, February 20 & 21 and March 6 & 7, 2019 | [Open for registrations!](#)

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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