



# Your Advantage

## NEWS AND INFORMATION TO HELP YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS SUCCEED

**JUNE 2011 ISSUE**

© 2011 Employer Advantage, Joplin, Missouri.  
All rights reserved.

  
**EMPLOYER  
ADVANTAGE**  
A Professional Employer Organization

1027 South Main Street, Suite 401  
Joplin, Missouri 64801

PH 417-782-3909 | TF 800-467-3909 | FX 417-782-3802

EM info@employeradvantage.com | WS www.employeradvantage.com



### Employer Advantage announces

**Karen Cummings** retired on April 29, 2011 after 9 years with Employer Advantage. Recently, Karen was in the Distribution Room, but many clients knew her best from when she worked the Front Desk and was the "voice of EA". We wish Karen the best in her retirement!

**Bridget Sanderson** was welcomed to the Payroll Department of Employer Advantage on April 25. Bridget brings several years of experience in Payroll and Benefits. She is glad to be in the Joplin area near family. Bridget will be primarily working in the Distribution Room.

**Paula Clark** obtained her Fundamental Payroll Certification (FPC) from the American Payroll Association (APA). Qualified candidates take the FPC examination to demonstrate competency and skills in the payroll body of knowledge. Once the designation of FPC is received, the payroll professional will continue to update his/her expertise with additional education.

**Minimum Wage Increase** - Florida increased its state minimum wage to \$7.31 effective June 1, 2011. New state minimum wage posters will be sent to EA clients in Florida.

**Employer Advantage offices will be closed** on Friday, July 1 and Monday, July 4, 2011 to celebrate the Independence Holiday. The regular fax lines and website will be available to clients.

## After the Storm

As all of you know, Joplin was hit by an EF-5 tornado on Sunday, May 22, 2011. The tornado devastated major parts of our town and forever changed the lives of the residents in this area. From now on Joplin years will be measured as BT or AT. (Before or After the Joplin tornado)

We are glad to report that we did not lose any of our Employer Advantage staff or their immediate families although several had very close calls. Some of us have harrowing stories of how we were caught in the storm and know how blessed we are. Many of us are now dealing the aftermath of repairing, cleaning and waiting for adjusters. Still other employees are finding opportunities to help out, whether it's doing someone's laundry, helping with clean up, or just listening to those who need to talk.

One thing that we didn't expect, but have really appreciated, is the outpouring of support and generosity from our clients and business partners. Many of you have called to check on us for which we are grateful. Others have volunteered to come to Joplin or collect donations to send to Joplin. Thank you all for your support of our community and know that it will make a difference in Joplin's rebuilding efforts.

We have numerous clients and employees in the Joplin area who were directly impacted by the tornado and we as a company have pledged to help them along their road to recovery. We will continue to send out communication to the local area on employee benefits, clean up resources and any other information that could be useful. We will also seek other opportunities to help as Joplin clears away the debris and the rebuilding begins. It will undoubtedly be a long process which will go on for years.

I hope that you don't mind that we update you from time to time on our recovery. The next few months will bring about practical lessons in preparation and recovery from a natural disaster. It will also teach us firsthand about the resiliency of people, their needs, and how companies can help during times like these.

Sincerely,

N. Lee Allphin

# USERRA Fact Sheet

## Employer Size

Regardless of size, USERRA covers almost every civilian employers including: the Federal Government, State and local governments and private employers. It does not apply to: Religious institutions, Indian tribes, foreign embassies or international organizations.

## Types of Employees

USERRA applies to all employees: full time, part time, temporary, probationary, executive, and even laid off employees.

## Types of Service

"Service in the uniformed services", whether voluntary or involuntary, includes:

- Active duty (Including Reserve and Guard members who have been called up)
- Active duty for training
- Initial active duty for training
- Inactive duty training
- Full-time National Guard duty.
- Absence from work for an examination to determine a person's fitness for any of the above types of duty.
- Funeral honors duty performed by National Guard or reserve members
- Public Health Service
- National Disaster Medical System Service

## Eligibility Criteria (Must meet five)

- The job must be a civilian job.
- The employee must have informed the employer that he/she was leaving the job for service in the uniformed services.
- The period of service must not have exceeded five years. (Certain exceptions apply that may extend the 5 year period)
- The service member must have been released from service under "honorable conditions."
- The service member must have reported back to the civilian employer in a timely manner or have submitted a timely application for reemployment.

## Entitlements

The employee is entitled to:

- Same rate of pay upon reinstatement
- Health insurance reinstatement and continuation
- Rest and travel time before and after service
- Job training after returning to work
- No discharge except for cause for up to one year if the leave was more than 180 days. For leaves between 31 days and 180 days the employer may not discharge, except for cause for up to 180 days.

For more information on USERRA, please contact your Human Resources Specialist.

---

## American Workers Facing More Stress

A recent study by the American Psychological Association (APA) found that American workers are reporting high levels of stress at work. Reasons included: long hours, unrealistic workloads, and lack of opportunity to grow at work. Some workers also reported that they don't feel as though their companies recognize their efforts either through pay or non-monetary ways.

The study was conducted by Harris Interactive during late January and early February of this year and encompassed 1,546 employed American adults. Among the findings:

- Almost 50% of those surveyed said that salary was one of the things that led to stress,
- 43% of those polled mentioned lack of growth opportunities and a heavy workload as a source of their stress,
- 40% of the workers polled said their respective companies had unrealistic job expectations,
- 39% felt that long work hours cut into their work-life balance.

Less than 50% of the respondents said that they receive recognition for their work efforts and barely half (52%) reported feeling valued by their company. So it isn't surprising that a third of workers feel less than motivated at work and also plan to change jobs in the coming year.

Companies with stressed workers can take steps to help lower the stress. While there may be some cost to these solutions, the long term productivity rise usually makes up for the cost.

- Help employees exercise. It's simple, exercise reduces stress. If you can't put a gym in at work, consider offering memberships to local gyms.
- Offer massages to employees at work. Many local massage therapists are willing to bring a massage chair or table and set up in a quiet conference room to work on your employees.
- Show your employees you appreciate them. While there are many suggestions about appreciation programs from balloons to ballrooms, each employer should find out what makes his/her employees feel appreciated and implement those activities.

By helping employees to reduce their stress at work, employers can have a healthier, happier and more productive workforce.

## Fall Protection Compliance in Residential Construction

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently issued a directive rescinding the Interim Fall Protection Compliance Guidelines for Residential Construction. The Clinton-era directive was intended to be temporary to gather more information concerning about the feasibility of fall protection in the residential construction industry.

This new directive was issued in an effort to combat the continuing trend of workers' deaths from falls from residential roofs. The number of residential construction falls that result in death average around 40 each year.

All residential construction employers must comply with the new directive by June 16, 2011.

- Residential construction employers generally must ensure that employees working six feet or more above lower levels use guardrails, safety nets, or personal fall arrest systems.
- Other fall protection measures may be allowed, such as warning lines and safety monitoring systems during the performance of roofing work on low-sloped roofs.

OSHA will allow the use of a fall restraint system instead of the personal fall arrest system. However the fall restraint system must have a full body harness or body belt and the attached lanyard must not allow a worker to physically reach the edge of the roof.

OSHA has defined "residential construction" as:

- The end use of a structure being built must be a home
- The structure must be constructed using traditional wood frame construction materials and methods.

If you are an employer that has residential construction projects, you may want to contact your Loss Prevention Specialist for more information on the OSHA directive.



The Employer Advantage Team raised \$515 for the MS Walk on May 7, 2011. From Left to Right: Missy Barnard, Kendra's Aunt and Honorary EA employee, Kathryn Watkins, Administrative Services, Kendra Griffin, Payroll, Debbie Cash, Accounting.