



GENERAL MANAGERS NEWSLETTER (July 2015)

***“Bravery is being the only person who knows you’re afraid .”...Franklin P. Jones,
American reporter, public relations executive and humorist.***

New Overtime Regulations: Are Your White Collar Employees Still Exempt?

On June 30, 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced its long-awaited proposed rule that would revise the regulations concerning the white collar exemption contained in section 13(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). According to the announcement, the proposed rule would “extend overtime protections to nearly 5 million white collar workers within the first year of its implementation.”

Among the sweeping changes included in the proposal is a call for an increase in the minimum salary for the executive, administrative, and professional exemptions from \$455 per week—\$23,660 annually—to a salary not less than \$921 per week—which annualizes to \$47,892. The DOL proposes to increase the minimum salary level to the 40th percentile of weekly earnings for full-time salaried workers. Similarly, the Department of Labor is proposing to increase the minimum salary for highly compensated employees to an annual compensation of \$122,148.

The benchmark for the annual compensation level applied to highly compensated employees is based upon the 90th percentile of weekly earnings for full-time salaried workers. The DOL stated that one of its primary goals is to update the overtime exemptions by increasing the salary level which is “the best single test” of exempt status. According to the agency’s announcement the “...failure to update the overtime regulations...” has created “...an exception to overtime eligibility originally meant for highly-compensated executive, administrative, and professional employees now applying to workers earning as little as \$23,660 a year.”

With respect to the duties’ test, the Department of Labor did not make any substantive proposals. Rather, it is requesting comments on whether the duty tests adequately determine whether an employee qualifies as exempt or non-exempt and whether the current tests permit exempt employees to perform a disproportionate amount of non-exempt work.

The revisions are scheduled to be published in the Federal Register shortly, and the proposal has a comment period that ends 60 days after publication.

CAHA HR Committee Service Projects; Get Your Hotel Involved

For the second or third year in a row now, the CAHA HR Committee has set a schedule of joint industry-wide public service projects for us to do together. While individual hotels will certainly continue to conduct their own individual service projects, this gives everybody the opportunity to work together on some very meaningful needs in the community. This year’s calendar (fiscal year) includes:

- **December 18, 2015:** Making children's blankets for Levine's Children's Hospital;
- **February 8-12, 2016:** Volunteering at the Crisis Assistance Ministry's Free Store; and
- **April 27, 2016:** Volunteering at our CPCC Scholarship golf tournament.

But the first one up is **October 12-16, 2015:** volunteering at Hospitality House. A couple of projects are needed: preparing lunch or dinner; preparing "goodie bags" for guests that arrived with nothing; and deep cleaning some of the rooms. A sign-up sheet is at the end of this newsletter and has complete details about each of these projects, and shows the times and dates for each one, and how to sign-up with Hospitality House.

Brochure on Street Car Route and Stops Available

Ashley Elliott with CATS was at our last membership meeting and gave us a great update on the new streetcar. She also had brochures on the current route and stops. These are small, folded maps, and are available from her for your front desk for hotel guests. Contact Ashley at aelliott@ci.charlotte.nc.us or 704-336-6999.

CAHA Website Soaring!

During the month of June, the CAHA website had over 1,700 visits; over 200 in one day. Are you using it as your source of information for everything like: street closings, rules, regulations, and ordinances?

NC Senate Approves First State Regulations of Uber

After little debate and a 45-2 preliminary vote, a bill that would regulate ride-sharing companies such as Uber and Lyft sparked more intense Senate debate. Unlike taxi companies, which by state law require local approval and must pay fees to operate, transportation networking companies were not covered by existing state law. SB 541 closes that gap by requiring such companies to have insurance for their drivers, requires their drivers to undergo background checks, and provides that airports can regulate where the drivers can drop off and pick up customers. The companies would also pay an annual state fee of \$5,000.

Several senators said they feared that the state fee would deter startup companies that might offer competition to those already established. Others noted that ride-sharing outfits would have a one-stop shop for their licenses, while cabbies would still have to face fees and regulations in each local community. The bill won final Senate passage by a vote of 41-5, and goes to the House.

Employers & the Supreme Court Gay Marriage Ruling

As you know, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry, and that same-sex marriages must now be recognized nationwide. While implementation of state laws and policies regarding the Court's ruling

will take time, employers should be aware of how the ruling may affect them. The forthcoming compliance challenges include a wide range of topics including, but certainly not limited to, leave policies, FMLA, spousal health insurance and other benefits, and tax implications.

As an example, in a matter of weeks after the ruling, a Wal-Mart employee sued the retailer saying its prior policy of denying health insurance benefits to the spouses of gay employees violated gender discrimination laws, even though the company's policy and denial was pre-Supreme Court ruling. The lawsuit is seeking nationwide class-action status so that other Wal-Mart employees can simply join this suit without having to file their own actions with the EEOC.

NRF Lowers Its Annual Economic Forecast

The National Retail Federation (NRF) has lowered its retail sales forecast for 2015 because of unexpected slow growth recorded during the first half of the year, similar to the industry's experience in 2014. A weaker than expected June retail sales report leaves more questions than answers. Sales in June, excluding autos, gasoline and restaurants, decreased 0.2 % seasonally adjusted month-to-month, but increased a solid 3.1 % unadjusted year-over-year. The U.S. Department of Commerce announced that retail sales in June decreased 0.3 % seasonally adjusted from the previous month but increased 1.4 % unadjusted year-over-year.

NRF originally forecasted in February that retail sales would grow 4.1 % in 2015 over 2014, but the revision lowers the forecast to 3.5 %. NRF has now calculated that sales grew 2.9 % during the first half of 2015 and are expected to grow at a more positive pace of 3.7 % over the next five months.

The NRF is also predicting a drop in the average family's back-to-school spending. They expect families will spend about 5.8 % less on back-to-school shopping this year than in 2014, according to a consumer survey by the NRF. That diverges from other researchers' projections for a boost in purchases.

The forecast is foreboding news for retailers, which see the back-to-school season as an indicator for the all-important holiday shopping rush. Retailers last year struggled through the slowest back-to-school sales growth since 2009, and this year has been off to a challenging start for the industry.

The NRF's forecast for reduced spending stands in contrast with that of the International Council of Shopping Centers, which expects 67 % of parents to spend more on back-to-school shopping this year. That's the largest gain since the group began tracking the figure in 2012. And about 86 % of parents surveyed by Rubicon Project plan to spend the same or more this year.

A dip in spending would follow last year's disappointing season. Back-to-school sales in 2014 rose 3.1 %, trailing the expected 3.2 % increase, according to research firm Customer Growth Partners LLC.

LinkedIn: The Newest Asset for Finding Talent

According to LinkedIn, 20% of its users are looking for a job and another 20% are satisfied where they are. The remaining 60% fall into what they call the "passive job seeker" category. Whether these figures are accurate or not, there's no doubt that passive job seekers offer a much larger hiring pool than you may currently have through traditional sources.

With LinkedIn, you can search keywords related to the role you want to fill based on location, industry and other factors. Identify a prospect and LinkedIn lets you send them a message. The process is very simple.

The best candidates almost always have jobs, so it's up to recruiters to reach out to them. The old "post and pray" hiring model just isn't that effective anymore.

Passive job seekers are often willing to talk to you about an opportunity, even if they weren't expecting you to contact them. It may feel a bit like "poaching," but it's quickly becoming the norm in the quest for talent.

Using LinkedIn's "Talent Solutions" tools, recruiters can perform searches across the LinkedIn network, contact who they like and visualize their progress with reporting features. This feature is now one of LinkedIn's biggest revenue sources.

OSHA Requires Employers to Provide Access to Restrooms to Transgender Employees

The National Center for Transgender Equality requested OSHA to develop a guide to protect restroom access for transgender employees. In response, OSHA now requires all employers under its jurisdiction to accommodate employees based on which gender that employee identifies with. The new guidelines aim to protect the individual safety of transgender employees. According to the new guidelines, "Restricting employees to using only restrooms that are not consistent with their gender identity, or segregating them from other workers by requiring them to use gender-neutral or other specific restrooms, singles those employees out and may make them fear for their physical safety. Bathroom restrictions can result in employees avoiding using restrooms entirely while at work, which can lead to potentially serious physical injury or illness."

Future CAHA Events

CAHA General Membership Meetings: *August 20 (tentative); September 17; October 15; November 19; December 17 (Third Thursday of each month, 3 pm, subject to change.)*

CAHA HR Committee Meetings: *September 10; November 12 (Second Thursday of even-numbered months, 9 AM, subject to change)*

CAHA Security Committee Meetings: *September 15; November 12 (Third Wednesday of even-numbered months, 10 AM, subject to change):*

Support Our Supplier Members:

Afterdisaster; Alliance Bus; Charlotte Arrangements; Charlotte Paint/Pro-Tec Finishes; Computer Rents; Environmental Diversified Services; Ipswich Shellfish Group; MSS Solutions; Regency DKI; Show Pros Event Staffing Services; Tarheel Linen Service; The Charlotte Destination Group; U.S. Foodservice; Visit Charlotte; and Where Charlotte Magazine

(Disclaimer: The information contained herein comes from many reliable sources. Every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy, but neither CAHA nor SALCO Consulting can assume any liability for omissions or inaccuracies. We are not attorneys and cannot give legal advice. You are urged to seek appropriate legal or professional council on all legal, accounting, tax or employment issues.)

HOSPITALITY HOUSE/CAHA PROJECT SIGN UP
OCTOBER 12 – 16, 2015

Please contact Derek Marcos, Operations Manager at dmarcos@hhocharlotte.org to sign up for a project listed below. You may want to have an alternate project picked in the event another hotel has already signed up for the project you desire. Thank you so much!

Date	Project	Max number of Vol	Time
October 12	Lunch	8	11:00am – 1:00pm
October 12	Deep Clean Projects	10	1:00pm – 3:00pm
October 13	Lunch	8	11:00am – 1:00pm
October 13	Goodie Bags	10	1:00pm – 3:00pm
October 13	Dinner	8	3:00pm – 5:00pm
October 14	Lunch	8	11:00am – 1:00pm
October 14	Dinner	10	3:00pm – 5:00pm
October 15	Lunch	8	11:00am – 1:00pm
October 15	Goodie Bags	10	1:00pm – 3:00pm
October 15	Dinner	8	3:00pm – 5:00pm
October 16	Lunch	8	11:00am – 1:00pm
October 16	Deep Clean Projects	10	1:00pm – 3:00pm
October 16	Dinner	8	3:00pm – 5:00pm

Project Details

Meals – Many of our guests are not thinking about themselves and what they will eat while caring for their loved one in the hospital. We often have guests with limited resources and so the meals we provide are even more valuable to them because of the financial toll they are facing. The donated meals for our families are so much appreciated by our guests.

Please bring the food items you wish to prepare. Plan for 25 people or more. Feel free to prepare the meal onsite or off site. If you prepare the meal onsite, please allow time for clean-up since we do not have a cleaning crew on site.

Goodie Bags – After a long day of visiting their loved one in the hospital, our guests sometimes need a reminder that someone is thinking about them during their difficult time. Goodie bags are the perfect way to lift their spirits. Often these bags contain snacks and items that guests could use while away from home (words of encouragement, bottled water, etc.).

Please provide items for 25+ goodie bags. Some popular items include: bottled water/ drinks, snack foods, candy/chocolate, mini crossword/Sudoku books, notepad, pen/pencil, etc. Goodie bags can be prepared off site and delivered or here at HHOC

Deep Cleaning – We have a list of “spring cleaning” projects that we always need help staying on top of. Also, our guest rooms are only cleaned at check out so we often need rooms deep cleaned.

Please bring cleaning supplies and help us tackle some needed cleaning projects.

Thank you in advance for being willing to participate in this week of service! Volunteers and donors allow us to serve the families at Hospitality House for a very low cost to the families.

Thank you!