

## REGISTER TO ATTEND BY: NOON FRIDAY, MAR. 17TH

Members that receive e-mail notification of upcoming meetings and workshops can now register by replying to the notice. When replying, put "Registration" in the subject line. The body of the message needs to include the name of the person registering. If more than one person from an organization is attending the meeting, the e-mail can include multiple registrant names. Be sure to indicate if someone is a guest.

For those members that do not receive e-mail notification of upcoming meetings, you can also register via e-mail by sending a message to: [lhrma0048@yahoo.com](mailto:lhrma0048@yahoo.com).

Members can still register for meetings by calling LHRMA's automated voice mail system at 434-6554.

The same registration deadlines, late and no-show fees still apply if you register by e-mail or voice mail. The deadline to register for this meeting or to cancel your registration is by **noon on Friday, March 17, 2006. Let us know if you plan to attend.**

**Remember... cancellations need to be called in to the voice mail system at 434-6554 or by email at [lhrma0048@yahoo.com](mailto:lhrma0048@yahoo.com) by noon on Friday, March 17, 2006. Remember...**...if you registered but do not attend the meeting, you will be charged an extra \$5.00 in addition to the cost of the meeting! Accommodating for late registrations cause a big problem for the restaurant in terms of providing enough food and seating space for late registrants. **Please try your hardest to register by the noon deadline.**

## MARCH 22 LUNCHEON MEETING:

<b>Special Date :</b>	Wednesday, March 22, 2006
<b>Special Meeting :</b>	Joint Meeting with ASTD
<b>Special Topic :</b>	Change Management- Succeeding in Spite of the Facts
<b>Very Special Speaker :</b>	Cy Wakeman
<b>When:</b>	Wednesday, March 22, 2006
<b>Where:</b>	Holiday Inn-Downtown 141 N. 9th Street
<b>Registration:</b>	11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
<b>Meal &amp; Program:</b>	11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
<b>Cost:</b>	\$20.00 <i>(Note: Special Price for this program)</i>
<b>Meal:</b>	Grilled Chicken with Pesto Cream Sauce, Vegetable, Salad and Brownies
<b>Sponsor :</b>	Thanks to our Meeting Sponsor, Professional Financial Advisors

## ABOUT OUR PROGRAM:

Belief has great power in organizations. No matter if leaders and employees believe something to be possible or impossible, either way they are right. A long-ignored key in successful change efforts, building confidence becomes even more important than building competence. Based upon this principle, Cy Wakeman will lead the HR and Training Professionals through a process whereby they come to realize that true business or lifestyle change arises only when one rejects traditional planning and goal setting models. Participants will come to believe that problems are never solved with the same mindsets with which they were created. Great leaders understand that they must work instead on changing how they see their situation, for only by changing one's thinking, can they truly change their circumstances. Great change efforts are led first and managed second!



## ABOUT OUR SPEAKER:

Cy Wakeman is a dynamic, well respected consultant and national keynote speaker. She has a unique background which combines eight years consulting in the high tech computer industry with seven years in healthcare administration. Cy holds Bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Social Work. She has a Master's in Healthcare Administration with an emphasis in Organizational Development. She has consulted for companies such as Gateway, Mars Confectionery, Lockheed Martin, Farm Bureau and Woodmen of the World.

## President's Message

Cindy Mefford, President



Our February lunch meeting with the Compensation Panel Discussion went very well with over 100 members in attendance. The feedback from the evaluations was very positive with one attendee stating this was "one of the best sessions ever attended"! I know I learned at least one new bit of information about compensation! Thank you to our panel members - Kent Mattson, Tammie Burns and Doug McDaniel. And thank you to Georgia Glass for being the moderator. Our informal, networking type meetings still seem to be the most popular. The compensation topic from the luncheon also tied in with the afternoon WorldatWork workshop on "Compensation Basics for HR Generalists". Tom Whalen, Principal with the Silverstone Group in Omaha presented. This was a great workshop for brand new HR generalists or a refresher for those of us getting ready to revamp our compensation packages. Thank you to Kent Mattson for coordinating the workshop.

Russ Roberts did a fabulous job with the SHRM Foundation basket raffle! We raised \$270 for the SHRM Foundation which was \$106 more than last year! Russ was able to obtain seven wonderful basket donations with romantic or wellness themes for the raffle. Thank you to all that donated a basket or bought raffle tickets. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. The basket donors and the winners are listed in a separate article in this issue.

The 2006 membership directories are currently at the printers and we will be mailing them to you as soon as they are completed, hopefully in March. Please remember to send any address changes to [kelly@clarion-group.net](mailto:kelly@clarion-group.net) so you will receive your directory and

other mailings as quickly as possible. I would like to remind everyone that LHRMA has a policy against using the information in the directory to send solicitations to members. This is a matter of importance to us since it is important to you. If you have any questions about appropriate use of the directory, please do not hesitate to ask any member of the Board.

It is once again time for our annual meeting which we co-host with the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD). This year's meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Downtown. Our speaker, Cy Wakeman will be presenting "Change Management, Succeeding in Spite of the Facts!" Cy will address the concept of change and one's personal response to change. Participants will be able to identify whether they have played an instrumental, irrelevant, or detrimental part in the history of their organizations to date. Wow! This sounds like a 'must see' presentation! Please note the meeting will be held **Wed. March 22nd** and the cost is **\$20**. Don't miss this opportunity to hear an outstanding speaker at a bargain rate!

I look forward to seeing everyone on March 22nd!

*Cindy Mefford*

Cindy Mefford  
President



### HR Tip Conducting Credit Checks

While credit information has been used for consumer transactions for many years, it is now being used by many employers for making decisions on hiring and discharging employees. When employers conduct credit background checks on applicants and current employees using a third party, such as a consumer investigative agency, they must comply with provisions of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) as well as provisions under laws of those states that regulate the use of credit checks.

### HRESOURCEARTICLES

WE WELCOME YOUR ARTICLES.

IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT IS NEWSWORTHY FOR OUR NEWSLETTER PLEASE SUBMIT A REQUEST TO PUBLISH YOUR INFORMATION.

YOU CAN DO THIS BY SENDING IT E-MAIL TO THE SECRETARY/PUBLICITY CHAIR, CATHY MADDOX AT: [CMADDOX@HAMPTON1.COM](mailto:CMADDOX@HAMPTON1.COM)

### LHRMA MEMBER CHANGES

Check and verify your name and address on this month's LHResource for accuracy. Please contact Kelly Riley, PHR our LHRMA Administrative Assistant, for any of your personal job and address changes. Please either email your changes to Kelly at [kelly@clarion-group.net](mailto:kelly@clarion-group.net), by telephone at 402.781-2054 or by mail to Kelly Riley, PHR, 1338 South 202nd St., Eagle, NE 68347.



## I LOVE MY JOB -- IT'S THE WORK I HATE!

By: *Mike Reynolds & Bill Hutto*

**A** lament we frequently hear during EAP sessions is: *"I still like my job. I have a great boss. I get along well with the people at work. The pay is pretty good, but work is just not fun anymore!"*

The people who tell us they feel this way are not necessarily experiencing "burn-out." That's a condition more likely to result from prolonged job stress. Often, these people seem to be on the other end of the stress spectrum. Often, they have been in the same occupation, job, or company for 10-15 years and their daily work life has become very routine.

Although it is a downer to experience such a "mid-career slump," take comfort in knowing that it is a frequent common experience. There comes a time for almost everyone when our work no longer provides the interest, incentive, and motivation that it did in the first few years.

So, what to do when we find ourselves feeling this way? First, don't make any major career changing decisions, and understand that the experience is a very normal stage in your work life. It may eventually lead you to make some serious changes, but take the time to make such changes carefully and deliberately. Here are a few additional recommendations:

- ♣ Rule out a medical reason for how you feel. Physiological changes as we age can cause us to lose stamina or even create an imbalance that results in depression. Schedule a complete physical and tell your doctor about your feelings.
- ♣ Sometimes we give away that little bit of energy we have left at the end of the day to our kids, spouse, friends, or parents. While these are important for balancing work and family also make sure you are reserving the time for yourself to regenerate your energy by getting adequate sleep and having some personal time to let go, relax.
- ♣ Consider changes in what you do or how you do it. This does not necessarily mean changing jobs. How about taking on new responsibilities or a new project that will challenge you to learn new processes and interact with different people. Redesign your job to make better use of current technology, to provide more timely service, to improve the bottom line, etc.
- ♣ Look for other ways to bring variety and challenge back into your life. Now may be a good time to get serious about a sport, hobby or a neglected musical interest. The subject you enjoyed in school and have intended to study again may be available at night at a local college or on-line. How about the great American novel you have outlined in your head, but haven't yet put to paper?
- ♣ A long overdue extended vacation may be just the ticket to get you out of the work slump. At least you are likely to be challenged by the backlog you'll face when you return.

If you have tried to work your way out of a slump but you are not making the progress you want, consider checking in with your EAP for a professional and objective assessment of your situation. We do help many individuals through the "mid-career" transition and will try to help you find solutions that are just right for you. If Directions EAP is your provider you can make an appointment by calling (402) 481-5998.

### HELP ACHIEVE THE SUPERIOR MERIT AWARD

You can help achieve the LHRMA Chapter Superior Merit Award by notifying Elly Hardekopf, Workforce Readiness Chair, with any dates that you provide service to local schools or adults in regards to: career days, mock interviews, speaking on the HR profession, provide internships to students to gain HR knowledge, etc.. The following information would be needed: name, date of event, location/school name, hours spent or duration of program. Email your information to [elly.hardekopf@molex.com](mailto:elly.hardekopf@molex.com) throughout the year. We are getting close to the end of the year, and all volunteer efforts need to be recorded in order to qualify for the award.

### JOBS, JOBS & MORE JOBS!

**DO YOU HAVE ONE TO ADVERTISE  
OR ARE YOU LOOKING FOR ONE?**

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:

**[www.lincolnhhr.org](http://www.lincolnhhr.org)**

IF YOU ARE AN EMPLOYER WHO HAS A LHRMA MEMBER EMPLOYEE, THEN YOU CAN POST YOUR HUMAN RESOURCE JOB OPENING ON OUR WEBSITE BY CONTACTING KELLY RILEY AT: [KELLY@CLARION-GROUP.NET](mailto:KELLY@CLARION-GROUP.NET) OR CALL **402.781.2054**

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A HUMAN RESOURCE JOB THEN YOU CAN CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:

**[www.lincolnhhr.org](http://www.lincolnhhr.org)**

### BOARD MEETING RECAP:

- Due to the meeting being later in March, the board meeting will be March 23rd.
- Mailing labels vs. group email blasts was discussed.
- Social will be held February 21, 4:00 pm at Lazlo's, 56th and Old Cheney. Come if you can.



# Are Nebraska Employers Required to Pay Unused Vacation When an Employee Quits?

by MARK A. FAHLESON, ESQ. • *Rembolt Ludtke LLP*

Most Nebraska employers are familiar with the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act (“Act”). The Act has three primary provisions: (1) an employer must provide thirty (30) days advance written notice before altering its regular pay day; (2) no deductions may be made from an employee’s wages unless required by law, required by court order, or authorized by the employee in writing; and (3) unpaid “wages” owed by a private-sector employer to an employee upon separation must be paid on the next regular pay day or within two (2) weeks of the date of termination, whichever comes first.

One nagging question that many Nebraska employers have struggled to answer is: Do I have to pay accrued unused vacation to employees upon their resignation or termination if my policies provide otherwise. Nebraska courts had danced around this issue for years without answering it head on. Now one has, although it may not be the final answer.

In *Roseland v. Strategic Staff Management, Inc.*, 14 Neb.App. 434 (Jan. 24, 2006) the plaintiffs were four management-level employees who previously worked for Strategic, a Nebraska employee leasing company. In 1998 all four plaintiffs voluntarily resigned from their employment with Strategic and each had accrued unused vacation ranging from one (1) to three (3) weeks. Despite demands from the plaintiffs for payment for their accrued unused vacation, Strategic refused to pay them. In denying their claim, Strategic relied upon the written policy in its employee handbook that provided as follows:

- In the event that available vacation is not used by the end

of the benefit year, it will not be carried over. Upon termination, employees will not be paid for unused vacation time.

*(emphasis in original handbook). A revision made around the time of the plaintiffs’ resignations strengthened the policy to read:*

- Accrued but unused vacation will not be carried over from year to year. **Upon resignation or termination, employees will not be paid for vacation time available.**

*(emphasis in original handbook).*

In April 2000 the plaintiffs filed a lawsuit seeking judgment against Strategic in the amount of \$8,788.29 under the Act. In addition, they sought attorneys’ fees (which are recoverable under the Act) and statutory punitive damages to be placed in the state’s common schools fund.

The trial court concluded that Strategic’s “policy of refusing to pay an employee for unused vacation time directly conflicts with state law and is, therefore, void.” Thus, the district court awarded the Plaintiffs \$8,788.29 in unused accrued vacation, as well as attorneys’ fees.

On appeal, the Nebraska Court of Appeals reversed the trial court’s decision in a split two-to-one decision. The majority opinion relied heavily on the Act’s definition of “wages” as “compensation for labor or services rendered by an employee, including fringe benefits, when previously agreed to and conditions stipulated have been met by the employee . . .” NEB.REV.STAT. §48-1229(4). Although “wages” clearly include fringe benefits such as vacation, an employee’s entitlement to such requires that such

vacation was “previously agreed to and conditions stipulated have been met by the employee.” The majority opinion inferred from a previous Nebraska Supreme Court decision that the issue of entitlement payment for unused vacation can be decided based upon the language of the employee handbook. In *Roseland*, Strategic’s employee handbook specifically provided that employees would not be paid for vacation time upon the employee’s resignation or termination of employment. As a result, the Nebraska Court of Appeals held that “[b]ased upon the clear language of Strategic’s employee handbook, the [plaintiffs] are not entitled to payment for unused vacation time upon resignation or termination of employment.”

**Lesson:** Whether the Nebraska Court of Appeals’ decision in *Roseland* represents the last word on this issue is unknown as the plaintiffs have asked the Nebraska Supreme Court to review the decision. Regardless, all Nebraska employers would be well advised to review their written policies and actual practices with respect to payment for unused accrued vacation to ensure they accurately reflect the employer’s intentions.

*Fablesen is a partner with the Lincoln-based law firm of Rembolt Ludtke LLP and may be reached at (402) 475-5100 or mfablesen@remboltludtke.com. This article is provided for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice. Those requiring legal advice are encouraged to consult with their attorney.*

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## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the newly certified LHRMA members. The following people attained their HR certification in Winter 2005:

- Jill Miller, PHR
- Joe Huffman, SPHR
- Marci Sturek, PHR
- Meredith Willnerd, PHR
- Todd Hoppe, PHR
- Sherrie Bacon, PHR

Please take time to congratulate those who passed. The certification exam is a fairly difficult exam because it covers a wide variety of human resource issues. The pass rates for the exams are generally 65% for those taking the PHR (Professional in Human Resources) and 55% for those taking the SPHR (Senior Professional in Human Resources).

Human Resource Certification is the symbol of professional achievement.

Beyond experience and education, the PHR or SPHR designation signifies that you have mastered the HR body of knowledge. Certification provides:

- National recognition of your professional achievement.
- An aid for career advancement.
- A reminder to peers and coworkers of your professional achievement through the use of your certification designation on business correspondence and by displaying the certificate.

Certification exams are administered via computer during two testing windows each year - May 1 through June 30 and December 1 through January 30. There is a Lincoln location to take the computerized exam. To request a certification handbook or find out more about the exam, [visit www.hrci.org](http://www.hrci.org).

## LHRMA HAPPENS!

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE HOME FRONT.

### Mark Your Calendars



#### FUTURE PROGRAMS

**April:** Benefits

**May:** Legislative

**June:** Diversity

**July:** Talent Management

Mark your calendars now for the 2006 SHRM Nebraska State Conference, September 21 and 22 at the Qwest Center in Omaha. The theme this year is "Navigating the HR Waters", so plan on "cruising" to Omaha for outstanding sessions! Watch your mail for more information.

### New LHRMA Members

**Tamara Schantell, Prof. Recruiter**  
Aureus Finance and Accounting  
tschantell@aureusgroup.com

**Amy Hallock, Human Resources**  
Sampson Construction  
amyh@sampson-construction.com

**Sandra Parr, HR Generalist**  
Foundation for Educational Services  
sandyp@fes.org

**Molly Lyons,**  
**Direct Hire Consultant**  
Manpower  
Molly.lyons@na.manpower.com

**Ken Babcock,**  
**Supervisor of Employee Relations**  
Lincoln Public Schools  
kbabcock@lps.org

**Stephen Langdon,**  
**Human Resource Specialist**  
Lincoln Action Program  
slangdon@lincoln-action.org

**Sarah Ekeler,**  
**Human Resource Assistant**  
Lincoln Action Program  
sekeler@lincoln-action.org

## BASKET FUNDRAISER A SUCCESS

Those who attended the February 14, LHRMA lunch and program were treated to a fun raffle featuring seven festive baskets. The baskets, donated by local HR professionals and their employers, contained items including, but not limited to: gardening supplies, relaxation CDs, a large sports duffel, pedometer, wine, aromatherapy candles, pasta and sauce, books, chocolates, lotions, Valentine gifts and wellness supplies. The fund raising effort brought in a total of \$270 to be contributed on behalf of LHRMA members to the Society for the Human Resource Management (SHRM) Foundation. Local SHRM Foundation Representative Russ Roberts expressed gratitude for the help of LHRMA members J.R. Johnson (Gallup) and Veda Armstrong (Family Service) in conducting the raffle. The Lincoln Human Resource Management Association (LHRMA) Board and members truly appreciate the support of the companies and associations listed below who contributed the excellent baskets with prizes. Our thanks go to: **Lincoln Plating**, "Wellness," won by Amy Eddie; **Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital**, "Wine Lovers," won by Ruth Jones; **St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center**, "Gardening," won by Mary Hinds; **Continuum Employee Assistance, Training**

**and Consulting**, "Soothe Your Stress," won by Colleen Eickmeier; members of the **LHRMA Board**, "Romantic Dinner," won by Polly Putney; **Directions EAP**, "Valentine's Day," won by Jill Stutzman, and **Nebraska Book Company**, "Sweetheart," won by Geri Cotter.

Saint Elizabeth Company Care

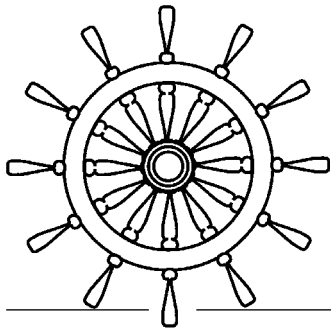
## Your Work Injury Experts

Taking Business Health To A Higher Level

Saint Elizabeth Health Systems

- Lincoln's only board certified Occupational Medicine Physician
- Prompt injury treatment
- Rapid return to work

1000 West O Street Lincoln, NE 68528 402.475.6656



# DIVERSITY HUB

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## DISABILITY FRIENDLY STRATEGIES FOR THE WORKPLACE

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**E**mployers who include disability issues in corporate diversity policies enrich and enhance workplace benefits in the new economy. Such benefits include diverse leadership, innovation, increase in overall morale and the ability to cast a wider recruiting net. Outlined below are strategies to successfully incorporate persons with disabilities into the workplace.

### **Make a corporate commitment to include persons with disabilities among your stakeholders**

Is the CEO committed to a disability friendly workplace? Is there a written document to all staff that affirms this commitment? Do corporate policies, procedures and practices specifically mention disability? Do persons with disabilities serve on the board? Are employees and customers with disabilities seen in the annual report? Are workers with disabilities employed at all skill levels in the workforce, including senior management positions? Are your products or services marketed to customers with disabilities? CEO commitment means senior leadership will embrace disability policies and that the organization will “talk the talk and walk the walk.”

### **Educate all staff on disability**

Does new staff orientation include disability awareness training? Are training materials available in alternate formats such as large print, Braille, and captioning? Do employees with disabilities serve as mentors for new hires who do not have disabilities? Providing disability education dispels myths and enables all staff to make sound disability employment decisions.

### **Provide ongoing information on disability**

Are staff familiar with legislation pertaining to disability? Does staff receive disability information that could be helpful at work, at home or at school? Is disability information provided routinely in the company newsletter or on an intranet site? Are disability resources in the community contacted to help injured workers return to the workplace as soon as possible?

Continued education enables employees

to utilize pertinent disability information to resolve everyday family and worklife situations.

### **Form a disability support group**

Do employees with disabilities meet to discuss disability employment issues? Does this group have authority to make recommendations to management? Is all staff aware of this group and the contributions it makes to corporate success? Disability perspectives enable all employees to contribute their full work potential to corporate success.

### **Provide accessible facilities and services**

Are buildings, parking areas, work spaces, and communication systems accessible to persons with disabilities? Accessible facilities and services are more useful for everybody.

### **Accommodate applicants and workers with disabilities**

Is there a central source and budget for accommodations? Are applicants and employees informed that accommodations are available if needed? With permission, are employee success stories that demonstrate improved productivity based on accommodation shared with other employees? Does staff routinely stay abreast of new developments in universal and assistive technology? An open policy on accommodations allows candidates and workers with disabilities to demonstrate what they can do.

### **Project a disability friendly image to attract candidates and customers with disabilities**

Do college recruiters target students with disabilities when making campus calls? Do recruiters search for resumes on disability-related Web sites? Are publications directed to persons with disabilities targeted for company advertising? Are recruiters and other personnel responsible for establishing working relationships with community agencies serving applicants with disabilities? Building relationships with community agencies increases referrals of candidates with disabilities.

### **Hire applicants with disabilities**

Do recruiters regularly attend employment

fairs for candidates with disabilities or target students at colleges with known populations of students with disabilities such as Gallaudet University and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf? A diverse workforce includes employees with disabilities.

### **Train and advance workers with disabilities**

Do employees with disabilities routinely participate in employer-sponsored training opportunities? If not, has this issue been brought before the Disability Support Group for recommendations? Are procedures in place to promote qualified employees with disabilities to management and supervisory positions? Employers who “talk the talk and walk the walk” of disability employment promote qualified workers to upper management positions.

### **Encourage staff to volunteer in the community**

Is staff encouraged to build relationships with disability community service organizations during work hours? Does staff make regular visits to high schools to inform administrators, teachers and students (including students with disabilities) about scheduled open houses and job trends in your industry? Are human resource staff instructing students with disabilities about how to set up a scannable resume or serving as mentors to graduating post-secondary students with disabilities to help them with their job search? Employers who want to make a difference in the disability employment arena are eager to influence tomorrow's disabled workers and help job candidates with disabilities with their search.

*This information was prepared in cooperation with the Business Leadership Network (BLN), an employer-led endeavor of the Office of Disability Employment Policy supported by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This program promotes best disability employment practices to enhance employment opportunities for job candidates who happen to have disabilities. For more information about the BLN and other programs of the Office of Disability Employment Policy check out our Web site < [www.dol.gov/odep/](http://www.dol.gov/odep/) > or call 202-693-7880.*



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

# The 2006 Legislative Session Convenes

By Carmen Wiles, President-Elect and Government Relations Chair

Now that the legislative session is underway and bills are being prioritized by Senators, the legislative committee has met a couple of times to decide which bills they will follow and possibly take some kind of grassroots action. The LHRMA members serving on this year's committee are:

- Jane Goertzen, Crete Carrier Corp.
- Shawna Hilbert, Lee Enterprises
- Angela Hogan, Midlands Financial Benefits
- Darci Spence, Nebraska Book
- Sheryl Wright, CM, Teledyne
- Lou Ann Manske, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
- Elizabeth Meyer, Celebrity Staffing
- Densie Skrobecki, Dept. of Correctional Services
- Jerry Lee Jensen, NE Dept. of Environmental Quality
- Roxie Romero, Schaefers TV & Appliance
- Jackie Amos, Nebraska LabLinc

This is a short session so most of the focus for the session has been on fiscal issues versus labor and employment issues. Right now there is no foreseen action that needs to be taken by the membership on any of the bills but the Legislative Committee will notify the membership if some kind of action is needed. Some of the bills they plan to follow and monitor are:

### **LB1237 & LB1238 Workers Compensation Reform & Workers Compensation – Medical Fee Schedule**

These bills were introduced by Sen. Cunningham. He said that he introduced these two bills to address workers' compensation fees in an effort to lower the fees employers pay. The goal is cost containment while giving the best medical care to our workers. There were testimonies on both sides of the issues at the hearing on 1/30/06. The Business and Labor Committee took no action on the bills. LHRMA will monitor these and provide an update to the membership at the March meeting.

### **LB 554 Change minimum wage and training wage provisions.**

This bill was introduced by Senators Beutler and Redfield. The summary of purpose and/or changes: proposes to increase the minimum wage under section 48-1203 as follows:

- a. \$5.15 per hour through Sept. 30, 2005;
- b. \$5.52 per hour commencing Oct. 1, 2005 through Sept. 30, 2006;
- c. \$5.89 per hour commencing Oct. 1, 2006 through Sept. 30, 2007;
- d. \$6.26 per hour commencing Oct. 1, 2007

For employees compensated by way of gratuities such as waitresses, waiters, hotel bellhops, porters, and shoeshine persons, the minimum wage shall be 50% of the above-state minimum wage

LB 554 proposes to increase the training wage under section 48-1203.01 as follows:

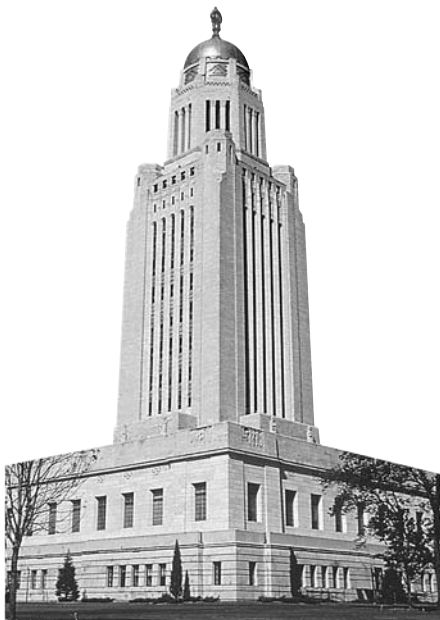
- a. \$4.25 per hour through Sept. 30, 2005;
- b. \$4.55 per hour commencing Oct. 1, 2005 through Sept. 30, 2006;
- c. \$4.85 per hour commencing Oct. 1, 2006 through Sept. 30, 2007;
- d. \$5.15 per hour commencing Oct. 1, 2007

Section 48-1203.01 is added to section 48-1206, so that if an employer is found to have violated the minimum training wage, the employer shall be guilty of a Class IV misdemeanor and shall be liable to the employee for the unpaid minimum training wage.

The amendment provides for two primary changes. First, it removes language that the minimum wage applies to employees who are seventeen years of age or older. Second, the amendment removes all language that would have adjusted the minimum wage or training wage pursuant to the Consumer Price Index commencing October 1, 2008. Under the amendment, the minimum wage of \$6.26 per hour, and the training wage of \$5.15 per hour, remain in effect until changed by later legislation.

Senator Beutler has made this a priority bill. Opponents of this bill are the NE Chamber of Commerce, NE Federation of Independent Businesses, NE Grocery Industry Association, and the NE Retail Federation/NE Restaurant

*Continued on Page 8.*



## 2006 WORLDATEWORK CERTIFICATION COURSES

World at Work is a professional association dedicated to knowledge leadership in compensation, benefits, and total rewards. Certification can be achieved for a Certified Compensation Professional (CCP), Certified Benefits Professional (CBP), and Global Remuneration Professional (GRP).

For more information on WorldatWork or the certification program visit [www.worldatwork.org](http://www.worldatwork.org).

The Human Resources Association of the Midlands (HRAM) is hosting the following WorldatWork certification courses in 2006:

### May 10-12, 2006

T2 - Accounting and Finance

### September 13-15, 2006

T3 - Quantitative Methods

### November 15-17, 2006

T6 - Mergers and Acquisitions

*LHRMA members can attend these courses at the HRAM member rate so when registering indicate that you are an LHRMA/HRAM member to receive the discounted registration fee of \$800 (compared to the normal rate of \$985 for a WorldatWork member or \$1,485 for a non-member). For registration information visit the LHRMA website at [www.lhrma.org](http://www.lhrma.org) or the HRAM website at [www.bram.org](http://www.bram.org) under Committees/Professional Development/Certification/WorldatWork Courses.*

### **ATTENDANCE DRAWING WINNER**

Who Says There's No Such Thing as a Free Lunch? Congratulations to Denise Skrobecki with the State of Nebraska Department of Corrections. Denise will receive free registration at the March, 2006 meeting!

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

*Continued From Page 7.*

Association. Proponents of the bill are NE State AFL-CIO, NE Applesseed Center, NE Women's Commission, NE Catholic Conference, NE State Council of Electrical Workers/ NE State Utility Workers Conference and the Omaha Building & Construction Trades Council. This bill has advanced to General File with the amendments proposed.

### **LB 984 – The Employee Freedom Act.**

This bill was introduced by Senator Howards. The bill prohibits employer mandated employee participation in certain religious or political matters. The hearing is scheduled for 2/23/06 and LHRMA will be following it. This bill appears to make perfect sense and it wouldn't cause us concern if it passed; however, the State Chamber's Labor Relations Council believes that Title 7 already provides the same protection. Our feeling is it won't be going anywhere.

### **LB 661 – The Advocacy Leave Act.**

This bill was first introduced by Senator Price. The intent of this act is to allow employees up to 24 hours of unpaid leave for the purpose of advocacy activities. The bill would allow someone from any part of the state to testify at a legislative hearing, participate in a local event, or accompany a parent, spouse, or child to an advocacy activity.

This bill provides leave from employment for advocacy activities that address the important needs of changing family structures. It is in the state's best interest to ensure that Nebraskans from all demographic groups have the ability to advocate for their own policy interests and that of their families while prospering at work. LHRMA will continue to follow this bill.

### **LB 843 – Reason for Termination.**

This bill was introduced by Senator Combs. It would require an employer to provide employees with the reason for termination and a meaningful opportunity to respond. A NE State Education Association lobbyist says that the bill would encourage basic fairness in the workplace and would represent good management policy. The National Federation of Independent Business said the bill would require too much of employers in some situations. It's an erosion of employment at will. This bill appears to be extremely vague and does not have LHRMA's support. The basic premise of the bill is good management practice but the language of the bill is too vague. The Business and Labor Committee took no immediate action on the bill. The NE SHRM Council feels that this bill is dead and will not go anywhere. LHRMA will still follow this one. The hearing was held on January 23 where there were testimonies from Brenda McLey of LHRMA and Human Resources Director for NE Book Company.

Right now these are the bills that we are following and will continue to provide the membership with blast emails if grassroots action is needed and monthly updates in the LHRMA Resource until the session ends in April.





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Carmen.wiles@nreca.org



**PROGRAM CHAIR**  
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mpankoke@johnhenryslumbing.com



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ehardekopf@molex.com



**GPN LIAISON - TOTAL REWARDS ADVOCATE**  
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467-7160

kmattson@ameritas.com



**SHRM FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE**  
Russ Roberts  
441-7949

fshrlncne@aol.com



**CERTIFICATION DIRECTOR**  
Ruth Jones  
479-9332

jones@danacole.com

# LHRMA RESOURCE

NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE PUBLICITY COMMITTEE OF THE LINCOLN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ASSOC.

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PLEASE CALL KELLY RILEY, PHR, AT 402-781-2054,  
WITH ANY CHANGE IN POSITION, COMPANY  
OR ADDRESS OR SEND HER AN E-MAIL AT:  
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