

# Council Prospector

ISSUE 1 | 2015

*Nuggets From Alaska SHRM*



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RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



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## Looking Forward to a Great 2015!



## ASHRM & Alaska SHRM State Council Pass Resolutions Supporting Amendment of Alaska's Wage & Hour Act



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SOCIETY FOR  
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**Mission Statement**

*The mission of the Alaska State Council is to be a strategic partner with individuals, businesses, community organizations, SHRM and NHRMA in order to encourage the advancement and knowledge of dedicated human resources professionals by providing communication and professional development resources throughout Alaska.*



Alaska SHRM State Council **message**

Nancy Miller, SPHR Director, Alaska SHRM State Council

**Looking Forward to a Great 2015!**



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I am very honored and excited to begin my second year as the Alaska SHRM State Council Director. I am confident that with the dynamic Board of Directors that we have this year, we will do great things and make our members proud!

Last November, I had the pleasure to attend the SHRM Volunteer Leader Summit. Not only was I able to network with many wonderful HR colleagues from all around the country, our State Council had the honor of being among the finalists for the SHRM Pinnacle award. We received recognition for our program “From Soldier Boots to Office Shoes: Assisting our Veterans Transition Back to a Civilian Workforce”. This nomination outlined the State Council’s continued commitment to assist our veteran’s with their job seeking efforts. Although we did not take home an award, it was certainly an honor to be considered and receive the recognition from SHRM.

The State Council had the pleasure of partnering with the Anchorage Chapter to provide

a complimentary event for our members. We were excited to have our SHRM Pacific West Director, Dianna Gould, come up to our neck of the woods to answer questions on the new SHRM certifications. Based on the high attendance to this program, it shows that the new SHRM certifications are a hot topic. We expect to do a lot in this area in a way of educating and informing our members of the new certifications throughout the year.

2015 is already shaping up to be another year of outstanding webinar programs as well. Our Pinnacle award winning webinar series continues with a full schedule throughout 2015. It is a wonderful way for us to meet the needs of our Alaskan members by offering complimentary, first class presentations while earning preapproved SHRM and HRCI credits. Visit <http://alaska.shrm.org> for more information. ✨

Nancy Miller, SPHR, SHRM-SCP  
Director, Alaska SHRM State Council

# SHRM'S NEW CERTIFICATION INFORMATION EVENT HELD IN ANCHORAGE

**O**n February 20, 2015, the Anchorage Society of Human Resource Management (ASHRM) and the Alaska State Council partnered to provide information to over 70 HR Professionals that came together to learn about SHRM's new Professional Certification.

Dianna Gould, SHRM-SCP, CAE, Field Services Director for SHRM educated everyone on the benefits of receiving SHRM's new certification. The new certification will help HR professionals acquire the knowledge and behaviors required to be effective in their roles. There are two levels of certification the SHRM Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) or the SHRM Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP). There were many great questions asked during the event:

**Q: Do I have to retest if I already hold an HR generalist certification?**

A: No, beginning January 5, 2015, HR professionals with existing HR generalist certifications that are in good standing, will be eligible for SHRM certification- at no cost by completing the following by

December 31, 2015:

- Document that your current certification is in good standing
- Sign the SHRM Code of Ethics
- Complete a brief online tutorial on HR competencies

**Q: Will I need to recertify once I've earned my SHRM-CP or SHRM-SCP?**

A: Yes, credential holders must earn 60 Professional Development Credits (PDC's) within a 3 year recertification period.

**Q: Will ASHRM and the Alaska State Council still offer HRCI credits and SHRM PDC's.**

A: Yes, both chapters will continue offering both credits.

If you are currently a certified HR Professional or seeking certification visit [www.shrmercification.org](http://www.shrmercification.org) for more information. ✨



## Employee Practices and Liability Insurance (EPL)

*Denali Alaskan Insurance can help you manage all your business risks, including employment practices liabilities. Learn more now.*



### Avoid a lawsuit

As costs for litigation and damage awards climb, experts predict that employment liability will only become more complex. As a result, it is critical for business owners to understand their exposures and options for managing risks.

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### Protect Against Employment Liabilities

Employment Practices Liability (EPL) insurance is a policy used to cover your risks due to some of the most common employment-related lawsuits, including:

- *Wrongful termination* - The discharge of an employee for invalid reasons.
- *Discrimination* - The denial of equal treatment to employees who are members of a protected class.
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# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

All our programs are pre-approved for HRCI and SHRM credits.

## WEBINARS



April 17, 2015 Building a WOW! Recognition Culture

Speaker: **Mike Byam** is the author of The WOW! Workplace, and Managing Partner of Terryberry, an international firm that specializes in implementing, and managing employee recognition programs.

## CONFERENCES

June 28-July 1, 2015

SHRM Annual Conference & Tradeshow, Las Vegas, Nevada

<http://annual.shrm.org>



**Alaska State HR Conference, “HR us Roar”**

Pre-approved for 14 HRCI (9 Business) and 14 SHRM PDCs

<http://alaska.shrm.org/conference> - Reduced rate through 5/15/15

\$425 Members | \$525 Non-Members | \$ 150 SHRM Student Members





## CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW CERTIFIED PROFESSIONALS

The Anchorage Chapter congratulates the following HR Professionals for passing their PHR/SPHR Exams

### Fall/Winter session (2014/2015)

Raquel Calderon, PHR  
Kirk Henke, SPHR  
Jessica Wobick, PHR  
Rachael Knecht, PHR  
Megan Drake, SPHR  
Tammy Schuldt, PHR  
Ann Kjera, SPHR  
Raina Saxton, PHR  
Sharon Boegel, PHR  
Josh Patton, PHR  
Sarah Urban, SPHR  
Misty Pfeifer, PHR

Brenda Creek, PHR  
Megan Huges, PHR

### Spring 2014

Laura Acton, PHR  
Deborah Akpik, SPHR  
Carrie Burg, PHR  
Daniel Mainor, SPHR  
Jenny McConnel, PHR  
Sarah Peters, PHR  
Janus Reyes, SPHR  
Barbara Stott, PHR

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# ASHRM & Alaska SHRM State Council Pass Resolutions Supporting Amendment of Alaska's Wage & Hour Act

By Ben Castle Krisher, Legislative Director



“Beyond all reasonable doubt.”

You may have heard this phrase before (particularly if you've served on a criminal jury, or are a fan of Law & Order reruns) but this burden of proof – beyond all reasonable doubt – is a particularly difficult standard to achieve. As such, it is primarily reserved for criminal proceedings, while a “preponderance of evidence” burden of proof (50% + 1) is used in civil proceedings, including cases dealing with employment law.

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Except, as it turns out, in Alaska wage and hour exemption cases.



Gregory Fisher, an Anchorage-based attorney, first brought this issue to the attention of ASHRM and the Alaska SHRM State Council in early 2015. Due to a specific ruling on a separate topic, Alaska employers have been required to prove wage and hour exemptions “beyond all reasonable doubt” for the better part of a decade. This impossibly high burden of proof has made it difficult for employers to defend against wage and hour cases, and even when a preponderance of evidence may show a specific position to be exempt

from overtime regulations, unless it can be proved beyond all reasonable doubt, courts must rule against the employer.

It's important to note that this situation is entirely unique to Alaska. No other jurisdiction in the country imposes as high a burden of proof in these types of situations, and even the Federal government only holds to the “preponderance of evidence” standard.

Fisher reports that when employers are looking to come to Alaska, one of the first items they examine is employment law – how the local rules and regulations will apply. He shares that many employ-

ers are amazed at Alaska's high burden of proof for wage and hour exemptions. Having to meet such a high burden of proof may cause employers to outsource certain types of positions, even those that could be considered exempt in other states, out of an abundance of caution, leading to decreased hiring.

Additionally, in the instances where employees claim they were misclassified and are entitled to overtime pay, an employer would need to expend substantial resources and time in order to meet the “beyond all reasonable doubt” standard. This translates to greater exposure to risk and greater liabilities.

It was the inconsistency and the potential for this standard to harm both employers and employees that prompted Fisher to draft a proposed amendment to Alaska's Wage and Hour Act, which would amend AS 23.10.060 to add one subdivision: “(k) in an action to recover compensation or unpaid overtime compensation or unpaid minimum wages, the defendant shall have the burden of proof to establish the existence of any claimed exemptions by preponderance of evidence.”

Neither a professional lobbyist nor a politician, but instead acting as a private citizen, Fisher is now gathering support for this amendment, and he is speaking to groups and organizations across the state, with the goal of having an elected legislator introduce it in Juneau next year.

At the end of February, both ASHRM and the Alaska SHRM State Council passed resolutions supporting Fisher's amendment as a necessary and timely change that will improve conditions for both employers and employees. As Fisher continues to educate employers and individuals as to the merit of this amendment, ASHRM and the Alaska SHRM State Council will lend support wherever appropriate. \*

If you have specific questions about the amendment, or the issues prompting it, Gregory Fisher can be reached at [gregoryfisher@dwt.com](mailto:gregoryfisher@dwt.com).

# Alaska State Council Hosts the 2015 NHRMA HR Academy



**Y**our Alaska State Council had the pleasure of hosting NHRMA's 2015 HR Academy in Anchorage. The event was held February 2 – 4, 2015 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and was a great success! We had a record number of attendees resulting in this event selling out two weeks prior to the start.

Over the course of three full days, attendees heard from amazing presenters covering issues that are both relevant and timely to our profession. The three day agenda included sessions on:

- HR and Employment Law
- Recruitment, Selection & Placement

- Performance Management
- Compensation
- Benefits
- The Legislated Environment

The event drew a lot of positive feedback from our attendees. We had participants from all around the state including a large delegation from Barrow. It is always a pleasure to connect and provide educational opportunities to our HR professionals all around the state. ✨

# Employment Practices Insurance



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Employment Practices Liability Insurance (EPL) works to provide the necessary resources to defend your company against a lawsuit or to pay for a claim. To best understand how to cover your EPL risks, it's important to know the potential sources:

- Recruitment practices
- Employment applications
- Employment offers
- Employee orientation process
- Annual conduct reviews
- Enforcing performance policies
- Termination (or improper documentation of the items listed here)

- Alternative dispute
- Employment at-will
- Discrimination
- Disabled employees and accommodations
- Employee discipline
- Performance evaluations
- Pregnancy leave
- Hiring and interviewing
- Resolution/arbitration
- Employment application forms

Content for this article is provided by Denali Alaskan Insurance, who has been serving Alaskans since 1983 with attentive service and comprehensive insurance programs to fit business and individual needs. For more information, contact DAI at 907-257-1625, 800-764-1123 ext 1625 or visit [www.da-insurance.com](http://www.da-insurance.com).

Employment law is complex and varies depending on the jurisdiction.

Well-organized and credible employment documents can demonstrate fair treatment, deter litigation, ensure employee honesty, and, should litigation occur, they can demonstrate the employee's actions.

Evidence of desirable employment practices and policies may be required for an EPL policy, and will certainly help defend against a suit (even for a small, home-based business with only a few employees). The underwriter may require a copy of the following policies to show that you are taking steps to reduce your risks:

- Sexual harassment
- Equal opportunity
- Grievances
- Termination
- Internet usage/employee privacy
- Internal job postings

## WHY YOUR COMPANY NEEDS EPL

Employment-related lawsuits are a growing concern for employers of all sizes, including home-based businesses.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) reported that almost 100,000 charges were filed in 2012.



# Grassroot Activism: The Art of Growing Change

By Susan Morgan, The newsLink Group

**A**nyone interested in any sort of activism should focus on political grassroots because the opportunities there can transform government on every level, from city government to federal government and everything in between. Why is grassroots activism effective? It's simple. That's where you can cause the most change.

If you are like most people, you may hesitate to get involved because so many people look down on it as being inherently dishonest. But maybe that's because the wrong people have been involved. If enough good people decided to make a difference, isn't it reasonable to think they could elevate the day-to-day interactions that define politics?

The truth is that politics are a necessary part of modern life. We rely on each other to talk and get the things done in our neighborhoods, cities, states, and country. It's not all that different from taking care of a home, when you think about it. If the dishes need to be washed, or a car is dirty, you take care of it. If a child needs a fresh diaper, you grab one and do what's necessary. You wouldn't say you don't want to get involved because it's too unpleasant. You deal with the problems and then move on. It's the same with politics.

Acting sooner is better than acting later. The earlier you head off problems, the easier they are to solve. Neglect the problems, though, and they only get worse. In politics, the work isn't that bad: educating yourself so you can vote, and maybe volunteering some help wherever it seems you could do so most effectively.

There are three reasons you should consider grass-roots organizations:

1. They are effective. Few people participate in the political process, so those who do take a part have more influence than they would

have otherwise. You can often find politicians who are involved with grassroots organizations. It's only natural for them to recognize the importance of such organizations, and to listen to what these organizations have to say.

2. They do a good job of educating voters, especially when media sources are not getting the story right. By informing other people about important issues, it becomes easier to involve those others about making changes. Most people suffer from information clutter — there is simply too much going on for people to be able to thoughtfully consider every piece of information that comes their way, and it can also be hard to know who to trust. A grassroots organization can solve these problems, extracting the most important parts and deciding where effort can be made to maximize results, and then give that information to those who are interested. The process can be both efficient and reliable. The result? People who are informed and know they can make a difference are much more likely to vote than people who are apathetic because they are unprepared.
3. Grassroots organizations train future leaders. When someone gets involved on a grassroots level, it can sometimes become obvious that they have the ability, the intelligence, and the willingness to do more and be more. As people provide service through a grassroots organization, it's not uncommon for them to be noticed and then given additional opportunities.

Having a community voice and being empowered to make a difference in the issues you care about is important work. That work starts with involving yourself in grassroots organizations. ✨

# Why You Should Participate in Your Association's Convention



**Y**our time is valuable. So are your financial resources. That being the case, why should you invest the time and money in attending an association convention? Couldn't you have just as much impact professionally by participating in something like social media?

Social media is important, of course, and doing it well can be vital to career development. But there is just no substitute for seeing people face-to-face and talking to them. Associations provide a valuable way to get you in a room with other people, learning from each other; the other resources they provide will strengthen you professionally as well. You would be surprised at the number and variety of resources that are available to you through an association membership.

Associations are also good insurance for staying in business. Approximately 85 percent of the businesses that fail are ones where the people who worked there didn't think associations were important. People really do need each other in order to succeed. Association membership can be one of the most important investments you can make professionally — and that goes double when economic times are hard.

## The Pitch for Professional Development

The top reasons why convention attendance should be a must-do item on your list include the following:

- **Contacts, contacts, contacts:** Everyone talks about the importance of networking; but a lot of people don't understand what networking really is. It's a network of friendships and acquaintances, some strong, some weak, and it isn't something you lock in your desk and expect to keep fresh. If you know someone and never call them or have any regular contact with them, there's always a chance that your friendship will not starve a slow and lonely death. More likely is that you will begin the slide away from each other. To thrive, any relationship will benefit from regular feeding. A cell phone call or a blog entry is better than nothing. But don't you want to raise the bar just a little? A convention is a great excuse for

getting together. Share a lecture, a meal, a laugh. Done right, it will build you professionally. It might also be fun.

- **Feeding your brain:** How long can you expect to stay at the top of your field — or even just get there in the first place — if you don't ever put yourself in situations where you can get a lot of different information from a lot of different sources in a short period of time? There's a collective synergy that can only come to life when you have many competent, professional people all in the same room, ready to talk shop. Don't fool yourself: search engines can never replace personalized, expert information delivered in real time. You'll find out about trends, legislation, and important issues by becoming a member and actively choosing to participate.

## The Game Plan

To get the most out of any convention, you need to start ahead of time.

- The first step is to identify the associations that will most benefit you, personally and professionally. Examine both regional and national options, and be thoughtful about joining. You will be better off joining one really good association than joining several of them and not really have enough time for any of them. If you are a student, you are probably eligible for a discounted student membership. There's also usually a discount if you sign up for a multi-year membership.
- Do more than just pay your dues. You won't get the benefit of joining the association if you stop at giving it money. That's a little like buying something in a store and then just leaving it behind on the counter.
- Find out what conventions are being sponsored by the association that would best fit your professional needs. Most trade associations have an annual meeting, although the meeting schedule might be more frequent than that.
- Decide to attend something. Register in advance — it will

Association's Convention | *continued on page 14*



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<http://www.shrmalaska.org>

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### Association’s Convention | *continued from page 12*

generally save you money. If you have to travel to another city and will be staying overnight, there will usually be a recommended hotel. Stay there. The goal is to be immersed in the richest environment possible for networking. That won’t happen in the hotel across the street or across town.

- Do the research. You want to get an idea of what the program will be so you can make best use of your time. You should also read any available publications so you can figure out who the important players are, and what it is that people are currently involving themselves in. Figuring out where to spend the time might be a challenge; you may have to make some difficult choices. Which speakers will teach you the most? What subjects could have the most benefit for your life? Who are the most important people to meet?
- Focus on being more extroverted than usual. Arrive early, stay late, and look for opportunities to meet people. If you are shy and talking to strangers is hard for you to do, focus on trying to make it easier for other people to talk to you. Strangers don’t have to stay strangers. Getting into a genuine conversation can happen with remarkable speed once you identify some common interests. At the same time, be polite, but make sure you continue to circulate. You will be in many different social situations while you are at the convention. Each one is an opportunity for another new conversation.
- Pay attention to the professional information that is presented. Education is a privilege in all of its forms. The things you

learn during a convention may change or enhance your career direction significantly.

- Bring business cards, and exchange them with other people. It’s easier to reconnect later with someone if you do.
- Keep initial conversations light. The first time you talk to someone is probably not the time to talk about your childhood dreams and aspirations. Instead, ask questions about subjects that are of interest to you, such as finding out major employers in our field, ways to get involved, and skills to focus on for improvement.
- Take advantage of discounts and handouts. There may be product and service exhibits that would help you, and the convention cost may be lower than it would normally be.

### After the Convention

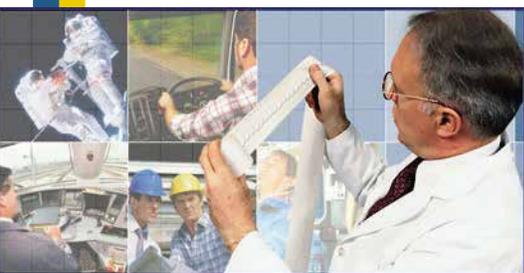
The convention should continue to benefit you after you leave:

- Your association may offer professional services to members, such as help with finding a job. You may also find opportunities (especially for jobs) as a result of your access to directories and journals.
- Seasoned professionals may decide to mentor you.
- Put the knowledge you gained to work, and continue to collect more insight as you go along.
- Most important of all, look for service and leadership opportunities where you could benefit others, then make sure you give these opportunities your best efforts. You might end up writing and publishing articles, serving and eventually leading committees, influencing legislation, and becoming one of the must-meet attendees yourself. ✨

# BEACON

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Beacon was developed with your business in mind. From on-site requirements and examinations to drug screen collections, to medical and safety staffing, Beacon brings quality health and safety services to your workplace.



Beacon understands the demands placed upon businesses today and our goal is to assist them in providing a safer, healthier environment for their employees. We provide high quality, convenient, market competitive medical, occupational health, drug and alcohol, training and safety services to all size employers. Our focus is on providing comprehensive professional services to organizations requiring assistance with development, implementation, and maintenance of required health and safety needs.

Our medical providers, staff, and professional service employees all are dedicated to our mission of providing the best health and safety response for your workforce. Our team is flexible to fit any of your needs and facilitate solutions while providing the best value for your company.

We invite you to contact us directly to discuss your organizations medical and safety needs!

- **ON-SITE MEDICAL SUPPORT**
- **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**
- **DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING**
- **CASE MANAGEMENT**
- **SAFETY SERVICES**
- **TRAINING**

**907-222-7612**  
**WWW.BEACONOHSS.COM**



A good website establishes professional presence, draws traffic, is an  
**invaluable marketing tool,**  
and **increases revenue.**

If your website isn't performing as it should. **Call us.**

