

Business Comments

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Vacaville Chamber of Commerce

CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE

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Travis Credit Union
Vacaville Sanitary Service

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KUIC 95.3
Pacific Gas & Electric

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CPV Vaca Station
First American Title Guaranty Co.
First Northern Bank
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The Reporter Newspaper
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Vacaville Convalescent &
Rehabilitation Center
Vacaville Honda
Vacaville Premium Outlets
Vacaville Residence Inn

Fund-raising, Networking Opportunity at Cowtown Classic

by: Alex Hall, Vice President of Operations

Start your networking now, at the 20th Annual Cowtown Classic Golf Tournament. It's your place to connect!

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Cowtown Classic Golf Tournament. With Interactive Hole Sponsors and more than 120 players, the Cowtown has become one of the most popular golf events in the county. And this year is going to be no different.

The Chamber would like thank PG&E for presenting this year's event, along with Hearn Construction, The Solano County Farm Bureau, Tri-Eagle Beverage and Outback Steakhouse as major sponsors.

This year's event will be held on September 4 at Green Tree Golf Course, with a 10 a.m. check-in and a 12 noon shotgun start. We currently have openings, not only for sponsors but we are also are looking to fill foursome spots. If you would like to play, sponsor or donate to the raffle, please give the Chamber a call at 448-6424.

There are many good reasons why you should support the Cowtown Classic, in-

cluding the fact that it is a great opportunity to network with fellow business associates and that it is the biggest fundraiser for the Chamber. It provides revenue to ensure the Chamber has the resources to, in turn, provide its members and the business community with the educational tools to thrive. So, sign up today! ■



(top) The team of Mark Schmiedeknecht, Marvin Braa, Dennis Mannle, and Doug Tatum get ready to tee off at the 2008 tournament. (above) Melinda Delohoz, Jim Villa, and Ralph & Colleen Berumen enjoy the 2008 Cowtown Classic.

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STAFF & CONTRACTORS

Gary H. Tatum

President/Chief Operating Officer
garyt@vacavillechamber.com

Alex Hall

Vice President of Operations
alex@vacavillechamber.com

Jennifer Capoot

Administrative Assistant
jennifer@vacavillechamber.com

Chad Oakes

Marketing & Sales
chad_oakes@yahoo.com

Jan Maguire

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From the Desk of...

Gary Tatum

In this month's issue of *Business Comments* you will see a letter written to our representatives in Washington, D.C. opposing the union-sponsored legislation, known as the Employee Free Choice Act, or better known as "card check." Simply put, passage of this legislation will abolish employee rights to private ballot elections during union organizing drives. It will allow for selection of a union if a majority of the workers simply sign a card.

With the abolition of a secret ballot, just how many workers are going to defy fellow employees and/or union representation by either refusing to sign the card, or by stating any opposition? Intimidation and fear of reprisals should be an obvious fear.

This particular issue is only one of a number of concerns your Chamber has that have direct impact on business. On July 29 the Government Affairs Committee met to discuss and prioritize some of our major upcoming issues. Legislation, both state and federal, is always on the front burner. For most of us who do not keep track of just what is going on in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. we see or hear very little about what legislative bills are making their way through committees, both houses and eventually the desk of the chief executive. We all hear about some of the more outlandish bills that thankfully

never usually even get out of committee. We also are faintly aware of major legislative attempts if only due to listening to our radios or watching TV news.

Aside from legislation, the Government Affairs Committee has listed such topics as the Transportation 2035 "Change in Motion" report for the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties, one of which is Solano.

The City of Vacaville will shortly be moving toward creation of a new city General Plan of which we need to be concern about.

There continues to be the state budget which will be of concern to us all for a long time. This year's budget passed and places what we at your Chamber feel to be draconian measures on our cities, counties and local districts. Just how absurd is it to have our state create a gigantic problem upon themselves through mismanagement, an inability to stem costs and creating an approximate \$20 billion debt, only to turn to otherwise struggling, but solvent lower levels of government and spread their disease of fiscal irresponsibility?

Additionally we will be watching the future of our delta, city sewage treatment and, in general, the future ability of our city to maintain an infrastructure that will take us 30 years into the future in support of our industrial, business and residential growth.

Let's also hear from some of you who may have particular concerns that need to be addressed. Contact us at the Chamber at 448-6424. ■

Vacaville Chamber of Commerce

300 Main Street • Vacaville, CA 95688
(707) 448-6424 • www.vacavillechamber.com



volume 19, issue No. 9

Vacaville
magazine

Production coordinated by Vacaville Magazine • (707) 628-7835 • Lauren@vacamag.com

Editorial coordination is provided by Sally Miller Wyatt • smwyatt@pacbell.net

Printed by Eagle Press • Todd Fulton • (916) 996-3264

Business Comments is produced monthly for the Vacaville Chamber of Commerce by *Vacaville Magazine*. While every care has been taken to ensure accuracy of content, no responsibility can be taken for any errors and/or omissions. *Vacaville Magazine* is a registered trademark.

What's the CME Up to These Days?

by: Steve Huddleston

Somewhat unseen, working in the background, the Council of Major Employers at your Chamber keeps plugging along. This unassuming group regularly pulls together the top managers of the largest companies in town and connects them to those folks managing the top public sectors.

It started when then-plant manager Frank Jackson of Genentech told President and COO Gary Tatum that he would appreciate the Chamber's help in getting a regular audience with top city officials. Then former city manager John Thompson saw the value of regularly mingling with the top employers.

The idea was to have an open line of communication between government and business on the local level. It has been working ever since.

The next meeting will feature a talk by the new president and superintendent of Solano Community College, Dr. Jowel Laguerre. The college is beginning to break out of the tumult surrounding the potential loss of its accreditation. It has survived the challenge, however. And with a new, spirited leader at the helm, its prospect is bright.

Major employers have a keen interest in seeing the college not just survive, but thrive. A local work force is shaped by the community college. A stronger college contributes to a stronger local economy.

The council regularly welcomes Mayor Len Augustine and other City Council members. City Manager Laura Kuhn contributes a regular update on city affairs, as did John Thompson and David Van Kirk in the past. Superintendent John Aycock also gives regular reports.

The council includes companies with the largest payrolls, from Genentech to Alza to Travis Credit Union to North-Bay Healthcare and Kaiser. It also comprises some longtime local businesses, such as Kappel & Kappel, Hearn Construction and Cal Inc.

If you are interested or want more information, please let me know. ■

The author is chairman of the Council of Major Employers and a former chairman of the Chamber's Board of Directors.

Solano Ranks Tops in Technology

Solano County has been named one of the top counties in the United States for its technologically advanced county government, in a national survey conducted by the Center for Digital Government and National Association of Counties (NACo).

The award comes after the county launched a redesigned Web site that was intentionally designed to make it easier for residents to access useful information about county services and programs.

The 2009 Digital Counties Survey found that Solano County uses information technology in increasingly innovative ways to deliver service to county residents. Thousands of counties throughout the U.S. were invited to take part in the NACo survey, which included a questionnaire with more than 100 measurements of such things as online service delivery, infrastructure, architecture and government models.

About 1 million users visit the Solano County Web site every year, viewing more than 3.4 million pages. To see the award-winning site, go to www.solanocounty.com. ■

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networking events

Hisui #2 celebrates their Ribbon Cutting/Grand Opening (below) at their new restaurant located at 3001 Alamo Dr.



Merrill Gardens of Vacaville (top) hosted the July Wake-Up showcasing their fantastic facility.

Patrick and Louise of Merrill Gardens (above) enjoy the company of Chamber CEO, Gary Tatum, at their Wake-Up in July.

The Vacaville Chamber of Commerce offers many networking opportunities. Above are just some of the opportunities you can participate in when joining the Chamber. Ribbon cuttings and wake-ups are open to all members at no cost and mixers cost only \$5 to attend. For the full event calendar go to page 6 or visit the Chamber's web site at www.vacavillechamber.com.

Entrepreneurs: Check Out This Training Program

by: Charles Eason
 Director Solano College Small Business Development Center

In today's economy, entrepreneurs must be at the top of their game in order to compete successfully. This includes having a well-thought-out business plan. The thought of putting together a business plan or updating an existing business plan can be daunting. For those who would like a structured supportive environment to accomplish this task, one resource is a program called the NxLevel® Entrepreneurial Training Program.

The NxLevel® Entrepreneurial Training Program is an intensive, 12-session business development program designed to help entrepreneurs advance their skills in growing and managing their business. NxLevel® is one of the world's most proven entrepreneurial training programs. The program is designed to help both the existing entrepreneur reach their next level of success or the start-up entrepreneur get started on the right foot by developing a comprehensive business plan to guide future growth. Since 1996, more than 160,000 business leaders in 47 states have participated in the program.

NxLevel® participants meet weekly for three hours during the 10-week program, complete a business plan, and present their business at the end of the session. Throughout the class, the instructor will invite local guest speakers to share their expertise in specific areas of business operations. According to Wendy Graves with Certified Reporting Services and an NxLevel® graduate, "it was full of so much information on how to successfully run a business, I almost felt like I completed an MBA program in 10 weeks. The curriculum covered everything from human resources, to financial statements to marketing to legal matters; this all helped me successfully complete my business plan."

A third-party evaluation was commissioned to determine the economic impact of the NxLevel® courses. The results showed that an existing business, on average, experienced a 32 percent increase in gross sales within one year after graduation, and created 1.3 new jobs. Graduates with smaller companies (annual gross sales less than \$200,000), experience an even more dramatic success rate with an average of over 200 percent increase in sales. With regards to business

start-ups, 40 percent of participants start a business within one year after completing the course. When surveyed after three years, over 93 percent of the businesses were still in operation, whereas the national average is a mere 16.5 percent for the same time period.

Locally, the NxLevel® Entrepreneurial Training Program is offered twice a year by the Solano College Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The fall class starts in September. To learn more about the NxLevel® Entrepreneurial Training Program, you can attend a free orientation on September 1, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the SBDC. To reserve a seat at the orientation, call the SBDC at (707) 864-3382 or visit www.solanosbdc.org. ■

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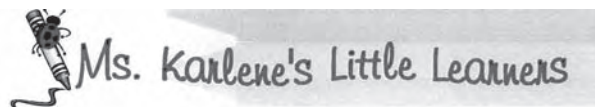
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 Raley's

10 - 19 Years

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 Costco Wholesale
 Suihkonen CPA's
 Vacaville Premium Outlets
 In-N-Out Burger
 First Northern Bank
 Solano Napa Commuter Information

Western Health Advantage
 NorthBay Healthcare
 Gold's Gym
 Hand-Me-A-Rib
 CSI Career College
 Jelly Belly Candy Company
 PRJ Insurance Marketing, Inc.
 Tormey's Catering & Deli
 Hisui's Japanese Steak House
 Wal-Mart

1 - 9 Years

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Reinvestment Spotlight

Tom's Glass

Tom's Glass became a Vacaville Chamber of Commerce member in 1974, the same year the business opened, and the father-and-son operation has opted to continue their Chamber membership all these 35 years despite "not being too involved in many Chamber activities," according to Tom Pergakis, owner. Why does he continue to support the Chamber year after year? "Because it's important; as business owners here in town; I like to support the Chamber in this way."

Tom and his father worked together for about 20 years, and now Tom's two sons, Nicholas and Bryan, are part of the business. He agrees it's rare for a company to last long enough to become a third-generation operation, "but it has worked out real well for us," he says. ■

Meet Gwyn Runnels... First Northern Bank's Business Services Officer in Vacaville!

Gwyn's product knowledge, superior customer service and follow through make Gwyn a great asset to Solano County's business community.

Gwyn has worked in First Northern Bank's Fairfield Branch since 1999, most recently as Vice President/Financial Services Manager. Gwyn is very active in the Fairfield community, and is excited that her expanded territory will provide opportunities to become involved in the Vacaville community as well.



Gwyn Runnels, Vice President/
Business Services Officer



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Congratulations, Graduates!

by: Jan McGuire - Leadership Vacaville

The Vacaville Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the graduation of Leadership Vacaville Class of 2009. The graduation marks the end of 10 months of activities in and around Vacaville geared toward learning more about our community assets and how to continue to improve the quality of life in Vacaville. Participants flew on an air refueling mission at Travis Air Force Base, performed arthroscopic surgery in the new NorthBay Healthcare operating room, gowned up for a behind-the-scenes tour of Genentech and much more.

Congratulations to our graduates!

Nicole Byrd, Solano Land Trust
 Alex Hall, Vacaville Chamber of Commerce
 Nav Khanna, Travis Credit Union
 Lt. Col. Clarence Lukes, United States Air Force
 Kim Forrest, Vacaville Unified School District
 Daman Mott, NorthBay Healthcare
 Julia Lopez, Vacaville Sanitary
 Deanna Mott, NorthBay Healthcare
 Heather Devaney, First 5 Solano

Each year the class plans The Heart and Soul of Vacaville, a non-profit fair in the Town Square designed to

promote awareness of the non-profits that contribute to the richness of our community. This year, the class raised more than \$6,000 at the event and has decided to donate most of the money to Dream of a Lifetime, an organization within NorthBay Healthcare that grants end-of-life wishes to people in our community. The class also set aside money for one scholarship to a small business or non-profit representative who would like to participate in the next Leadership Vacaville class and would require some financial assistance to do so.

Leadership Vacaville is recruiting for participants for our next class. Applications received before August 25 will receive a discount on tuition. For more details, download the Leadership Vacaville brochure from the Vacaville Chamber Web site at www.vacavillechamber.com.



Calendar of Events

August

August 27 - Wake-Up Vacaville hosted by Ryan Bates Photography, 542 Main St. 8 am

September

Sept. 4 - 20th Annual Cowtown Classic Golf Tournament
 Green Tree GC – 12 noon Shotgun Start
 Sept. 4 - Business Issues Committee at the Chamber 9 am
 Sept. 7 - Labor Day (Chamber Offices Closed)
 Sept. 10 - Ambassadors Meeting at the Hampton Inn & Suites. 8 am
 Sept. 10 - Ribbon Cutting at the Law Office of Anne Campbell - 190 S. Orchard Ave., Suite B 201 - 5:30 pm
 Sept. 14 - Joint Mixer with the Fairfield Chamber at the KUIC- 555 Mason St., Vacaville. 5:30 pm
 Sept. 17 - Wake-Up Vacaville at Kaiser Hospital, Vacaville. 8 am

Sept. 17 - Ribbon Cutting at Ambience Designs, 333 Merchant St. 5:30 pm

Sept. 23 - New Member Orientation at the Chamber Office 8:30 am

October

October 4 - Vacaville Magazine presents Community Pride held at the Nut Tree. 10-3 pm
 October 5 - Chamber Mixer – Site TBD - 5:30 pm
 October 8 - Ambassadors Meeting at the Hampton Inn 8 am
 October 22 - Wake-Up Vacaville hosted by All Size Flooring Center and Carpet Cleaning -1021 Mason St. - 8 am

Save the Date!
Cowtown Classic Golf Tournament at Green Tree Golf Course

September 4th

For more information call the Chamber at (707) 448-6424



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News from the CalChamber

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recently took action to clarify and modernize civil procedures for handling electronically stored information during litigation by signing a California Chamber of Commerce-supported bill.

AB 5 (Evans; D-Santa Rosa) provides clarification and certainty for all parties to litigation by providing procedures for electronic discovery—the pre-trial phase of litigation when each party requests relevant information and documents from the other side.

CalChamber supported the bill as a necessary reform, given that information today often is stored and transmitted electronically, but current discovery rules were created for information in paper format. As a result, there are gaps in the law due to complexities and issues unique to electronic data, giving rise to confusion and costly and lengthy disputes. AB 5's modernization of the discovery rules provide clarification and guidance to the parties and the courts that will reduce disputes and facilitate their resolution.

Improvement of the discovery rules to better accommodate electronic discovery issues will cut down on unnecessary disputes and promote efficiency. Preservation of resources is especially important at a time when both the public and private sectors are experiencing fiscal difficulties. ■

Leader Needed for 10th Congressional District

By Gary Tatum - President/COO

Even though Vacaville does not lie in the 10th Congressional District, that particular representation is important to us. Not just because our neighbors in Fairfield and Suisun lie within that particular district, but because of Travis Air Force Base.

Travis is an extremely important economic reality to all of us, not only in Solano County but regionally. Therefore, we will hold a political forum on August 18, starting at 5 p.m. at Travis Credit Union's Community Room, located at #1 Travis Way here in Vacaville.

Fourteen candidates are prepared to fill the seat of Ellen Tauscher, who has been selected to fill a position in the Department of State. Your Vacaville Chamber, in conjunction with the California Credit Union League and the Fairfield/Suisun Chamber of Commerce, will host this event.

As we have at past forums, a series of questions will be asked of the candidates and they each will be given a limited amount of time to respond. With the number of candidates we do not expect to finish until approximately 9 p.m. So, we encourage any of you who plan to attend to be prepared to remain for at least four hours. ■

Member to Member Discounts

Below is just a sampling of discounts available to Chamber members. For a full list, go to the Chamber's Web site at vacaville-chamber.com.

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Editor's Note: The following letter was recently sent under Gary Tatum's signature to our two U.S. Senators and our Congressman as well as other members of the U.S. Congress and State Legislature. See Gary's column "From the desk of..." for further information.

August 5, 2009

Dear Senator Feinstein,

The Chairman and Board of Directors of your Vacaville Chamber of Commerce stands firmly opposed to the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. The Vacaville Chamber has business clients in two counties in California (Solano and Yolo) as well as five cities in the greater Vacaville area. Our client/members employ approximately 15,000 people who keep the local economic engine moving ahead in our portion of California.

Current law allows an employer and union to negotiate void of any government involvement. This has worked very well and should remain a topic that does not have direct government involvement, whether state, or as in this case, federal.

In an already difficult economic environment, and in a state that has an approximate \$20 billion deficit that it is trying to balance by cuts and attacks on the coffers of its counties, cities and special districts, we can ill afford yet another attack on the continued viability and productivity of our business community.

If the United States Congress wishes to see the further demise of the entrepreneurial achievements that have made this nation a world leader, and if their desire is to further ignore their Constitutional dictates then passage of this bill seems inevitable. However, should cooler heads prevail that understand the absolute importance of maintaining a strong workforce then defeat of this bill is mandatory.

The fact that this onerous legislation will also authorize an arbitrator from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to force a settlement after 90 days of bargaining and 30 days of mediation is also counterproductive to the best interest of any business in this nation. Settlement would cover every aspect of employment plus be final, not subject to any appeal process.

I must truly wonder why anyone would seek to own and operate a business in this great nation of ours should this proposed legislation pass. The passage of the Employee Free Choice Act would furthermore be completely contrary to our time-proven system of voting through a secret ballot. This Act is neither Free, nor a Choice when one is being directly scrutinized by another as to how their "Free Choice" is being made.

Please do everything in your power to see the Employee Free Choice Act "card check" defeated and fight to return us to the democratic principals that have made this once great Republic great once again. ■

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NorthBay Invests in Green Technology

After three years of planning, installation and fine-tuning, NorthBay Healthcare has flipped the switch on new cogeneration facilities at NorthBay Medical Center and VacaValley Hospital, a move expected to save millions in energy costs.

A 10-year energy savings performance contract was signed with Siemens Building Technologies, Inc., Energy and Environmental Solutions group. The cogen units are expected to contribute nearly 30 percent in annual electricity savings, while reducing our carbon footprint.

According to Dave Mathews, director of plant operations and general services for NorthBay Healthcare, the new system will reduce the need for utility-delivered energy and save the hospitals money by producing both heat and electricity.

“We are under tremendous pressure to find new ways to manage operating costs without impacting patient care or staffing,” said Dave.

Facility-wide energy efficiency improvements installed during the last three years have been designed to reduce electrical, heating, cooling and waste disposal costs, as well as allow NorthBay Healthcare to generate some of its own electricity.

“However, it’s the cogeneration system that will offer the biggest portion of energy savings, contributing nearly 30 percent of total annual kilowatt-hour reductions at both facilities,” said Scott Wallace of Siemens Building Technologies.

In the end, it was decided that two generators would serve NorthBay, and one would meet requirements at VacaValley. Waste heat is now being recovered from the three combined heat and power cogeneration units implemented by Siemens.

The cogen units use small, extremely efficient natural-gas turbines – similar to helicopter engines – to spin the generators that make electricity.

When operating, these engines create tremendous amounts of heat, which in theory could be wasted if just allowed to vent. With cogen, the heat generated by the engines is captured through heat exchangers to heat the

water that would normally have to be heated separately by boilers—much like a hot water heater in one’s home. This process offsets the natural gas normally used to heat the water



Dave Mathews (left) fields questions from the local media while Siemens Building Technologies representative Adam Rinehart looks on.

used to regulate Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems.

The new-found energy efficiency will contribute to the overall sustainability of NorthBay’s facilities. Energy savings for both facilities are guaranteed to reach 2,765,634 kwh per year. According to Siemens, during the 10-year term of the contract, this will reduce emissions of typical greenhouse gases by approximately 17 million pounds and save emissions equivalent to driving the typical family car some 100,000 miles.

Hospitals have very specific heating and air conditioning needs, explained Dave. Equipment needs to be kept cool. Patient rooms need to be comfortable. “All humans have different preferences,” said Dave. “We strive to keep the patient rooms between 68 and 72 degrees.”

The facilities presented their own unique issues, due to their age and configuration.

Siemens also financed the project, loaning NorthBay the money to complete it. “Implementing this performance contract solution with Siemens was an excellent way to achieve our cost-savings goals because the energy-efficiency upgrades—which normally would consume our capital improvement budgets—are financed by the savings the upgrades are guaranteed to produce. More importantly, we will have better overall control of each facility’s environment, which means better patient and staff comfort, as well as a significant reduction in environmental emissions.” ■



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photo by Ryan Bates Photography



Logan Bryce

Logan Bryce is the owner of Vacaville Signs. “We want to make strong, lasting relationships and become a part of our clients’ business. We support our clients in ways that no other sign shop does, by advertising them on our Web site and in our monthly newsletter, ‘Sign Language.’”

“Value you can trust” is our promise – to ourselves, as well as our clients. It demands that we only use high quality parts and go the extra mile on every job, large or small, to ensure that you are delighted and walk away as a Raving Fan.”

Many people are surprised by the wide range of products and services we offer, Bryce says. Signs, banners, digital graphics, business cards, postcards, graphic design services, promotional materials, flyers, and apparel are some of the items that can be produced. “If you think it can be designed, printed, or produced, just ask; we might surprise you, too.”

“Even though I grew up in Fairfield, Vacaville has always felt more like a home,” Bryce says. “Once I had the opportunity to join the Chamber and really dedicate myself to it, I leapt in with both feet. I hope that my business and I will become a big part of our local community.”



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Drop off at, fax or mail to: Vacaville Chamber of Commerce, 300 Main St., Vacaville, CA 95688

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If the State Can Do it, Should You?



By: Teresa A. Cunningham, Esq.,
Director and Employment Practice Chair with
Gaw Van Male

In view of the continuing spiraling economy, employers struggle to ensure their business longevity. Employers must face tough personnel decisions. Average and/or poor performance simply is no longer tolerated and they are enacting separations more commonly in the workplace.

Alternatively, employers are searching for creative ways to maintain their work force, but provide certain economic stability. Guided by the state's implementation of work furlough plans in various public sectors, many private employers are now considering the same.

Work furlough programs are replete with dangers for the private work force. Critical financial analysis is necessary beforehand to calculate any potential cost savings in comparison to widespread work force panic and depressed morale. Further, the employer should utilize an objective criteria to identify what employees or department units would be selected for a voluntary or involuntary furlough. Potential protected class violations are replete in such selections. Is there a "legitimate business reason" for your selection and do you have strong documentation to support such a determination?

Deciding between exempt and non-exempt personnel also requires care. Remember, you cannot prorate an exempt employee's salary even though he/she may have worked less than forty (40) hours in a work week. Reductions must be in at least one week increments. In addition, you must ensure that the exempt employee does not work on or off site—no computer access, no PDAs, no cell phones, etc. Such violations could result not only in Labor Code penalties, but also in losing the exempt classification.

Work furlough plans are replete with significant labor and employment issues. Consider alternative options to furloughs, including performance-based separations, layoffs, terminations, and salary reductions. The state's response to this economic crisis may not be the solution for your business.■

This article is prepared with the understanding that the author or the firm is not rendering legal advice or opinions on specific facts or matters and, accordingly, assumes no liability whatsoever in connection with its use.



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