



February 2005 Newsletter



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open

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February 2005 BVHRMA Luncheon

When: Thursday, February 3, 2004

Where: Room 101, College Station Conference Center

Time: 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Cost: \$10/member; \$15/guest

RSVP: konny@igoergo.com by noon Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Topic: Health Savings Accounts (HSA's)

- Develop and implement a successful HSA Program
- Establish and support an effective framework that facilitates HSA Programs
- Understand the legislative issues surrounding HSAs
- Educate employees about the benefits of a cafeteria-driven HSA plan
- Overcome the challenges of marketing HSAs to employers

Presented by: Marilyn Hood & Richard Kasper

Most Companies Don't Cover Weight Loss Surgery

According to a recent survey, most organizations do not cover weight-loss surgery (e.g., bariatric surgery) under their health care plans, however, HR professionals say increasingly more employees are requesting bariatric surgery to lose weight. According to the survey, 23 percent of respondent companies cover bariatric surgery. And, 34 percent said that there has been an increase in employee requests for bariatric surgery in the past 12 months.

Diversity Dates

February 2005

February 1-28 is Black History Month

Black History Month is the successor to Negro History Week which was initiated on February 12, 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, a pre-eminent historian and founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Woodson was concerned that the contributions of Black Americans were overlooked or misrepresented and he began lobbying for Negro History Week as early as 1915. He selected February because it included the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and Frederick Douglass (February 14) whom he believed had dramatically impacted the lives of Black Americans. In 1976, Woodson's legacy, now renamed the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History successfully lobbied to extend Black History Week into a month-long observance.

2 – Candlemas, Groundhog Day (United States), Imbolc (Wiccan)

5 - Anniversary of the Constitution (Mexico)

8 - Mardi Gras (United States)

9 - Ash Wednesday (Protestant, Roman Catholic)

9 – Chinese lunar New Year (China, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam)



A festive holiday celebrated for about two weeks. The Lunar New Year is observed by the Chinese, Koreans, and Vietnamese. The event takes place during the first three days of the first lunar month (late January or early February). People dress up in costumes, exchange food and gifts, visit family members, and remember ancestors. They settle all business accounts and forget all grudges.

9 - Tet Nguyen Dan (Vietnam)

10 - Al Hijra - Muslim New Year

12 - Abraham Lincoln's Birthday (United States)

14 - Valentine's Day (United States)

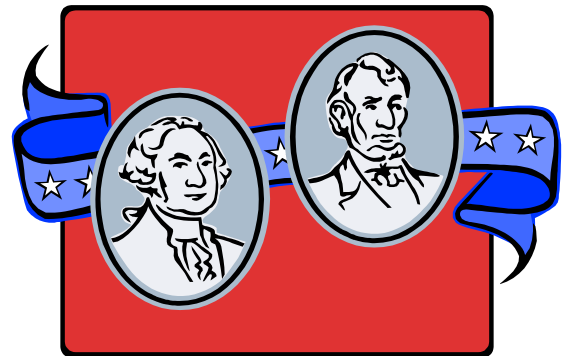
19 - Ashura (Islamic, Muslim)

21 - President's Day (United States)

22 - George Washington's Birthday (United States)

23 - Lantern Festival (Taiwan)

24 - Flag Day (Mexico)



For other Diversity Dates please visit: http://www.multiculturalcalendar.com/Calendar/138jan_main.php

Tidbits & Things

Free e-Filing Available for Eligible Taxpayers

Whoever said there is no such thing as a free lunch may have been right. But for millions of eligible taxpayers this year, there is Free File. **Free File is Free online tax preparation and electronic filing.** In other words, you can e-file... for free. You will want to note the program has expanded this year and companies like H&R Block and TurboTax are offering Free federal online tax prep and e-filing for all taxpayers. **No restrictions. Everyone qualifies.** But you must go through the link to get this offer. Go to http://www.irs.gov/app/freeFile/jsp/all_offers.jsp to see a list of all participating companies.

President Bush Signs Vets Benefits Improvement Bill

On December 10, 2004, President Bush signed into law S. 2486, the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004. Among its provisions, the measure requires employers to post a notice informing employees of their rights under the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). In addition to the posting requirement, the Act contains another provision that amends USERRA to increase from 18 months to two years the period during which employers must extend to an employee in the military service the option of maintaining employer-sponsored health insurance coverage.



IRS issues Guidance on ERISA Automatic Rollovers



The IRS has issued guidance on the automatic (or default) rollover rules for qualified retirement plans under the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (EGTRRA; Pub L. No. 107-16) i.e., 401(a)(31)(B). The guidance, which is presented in question and answer format, explains that these new rules will be effective for mandatory distributions made on or after March 28, 2005, which is the effective date of related final regulations recently issued by the Department of Labor. The guidance includes a sample amendment that plan sponsors can use to amend their plans to comply with the new rules. [Notice 2005-5, 2005-3 IRB 337]. http://www.irs.gov/irb/2005-03_IRB/ar10.html

DOL Lawsuit Settled

IBEX Engineering Services, Inc., a subcontractor on Boston's "Big Dig" project recently settled a DOL lawsuit for \$116,500. The DOL had sued IBEX for misclassifying 15 "field test engineers" as exempt employees and failing to pay them overtime when, in fact, they were not exempt.



WE NEED YOU!!



Volunteers are still needed to serve in various functions in the association. Specific needs include certification, legislation, school to work initiative, website, and president elect. If you would like more information about any of these areas, check out the website for job descriptions or contact Chris Grunkemeyer at ChrisG@cctr.tamu.edu.

BVHRMA Meetings 2005

February 3, 2005, 11:30am
March 3, 2005, 11:30am
April 7, 2005, 11:30am
May 5, 2005, 11:30am
June 2, 2005, 11:30am

Luncheon, College Station Conference Center
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Upcoming SHRM Seminars

[Employment Law & Legislative Conference](#)

March 14-16, 2005 in Washington, D.C.
(More information coming soon.)

[SHRM Global Forum Conference & Exposition](#)

April 11-13, 2005 in Chicago, IL
(More information coming soon.)

[EMA Conference & Exposition](#)

April 20-22, 2005 in Dallas, TX
(More information coming soon.)

[SHRM Annual Conference & Exposition](#)

June 19-22, 2005 in San Diego, CA
(More information coming soon.)