

Chamber continues goal of service to its members

The Edwardsville/Glen Carbon Chamber of Commerce is celebrating a successful year, proudly serving as the voice of Metro East businesses and striving toward organizational advancement.

The chamber continued its effort to advocate for business-friendly legislation, encouraging transparency and accountability from government agencies.

In March of 2019, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation awarded the Ed/Glen Chamber accreditation with five-star distinction, the highest level possible. This recognition signifies the chamber’s commitment to excellence in organizational leadership and adherence to industry best practices. With this rare achievement, the Ed/Glen Chamber is one of seven accredited chambers in Illinois and is now ranked in the top 1.7 percent of chambers of commerce in the country.

Throughout 2021 the Ed/Glen Chamber focused on providing outstanding value and customer service to its members. The member experience is continuously evolving by offering new communication methods and customizing service delivery to best suit business needs. The chamber has embraced a culture of innovation and recently began the process of detailed data collection and benchmarking to better understand members and serve the business community.

The chamber continues earning national and statewide recognition. In 2019 Ed/Glen Chamber President

& CEO Desirée Bennyhoff was competitively selected to participate in the U.S. Chamber Foundation’s Business Leads program and was honored as the Brann Award recipient – Illinois Chamber Executive of the Year – by the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (IACCE). In 2020, the chamber was named Outstanding Illinois Chamber of the Year by IACCE. In 2021 Bennyhoff earned the Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) credential from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE).

Staff leadership and professionalism remain paramount. Bennyhoff serves on the Midwest Institute for Organization Management’s (IOM) board of regents, on IOM’s national curriculum committee, on the Illinois Chamber of Commerce board of directors, and is past chair of IACCE. Membership Director Katie Haas is actively involved with IOM and will graduate from the program in 2023.

“Despite the challenges 2020 and 2021 brought, I am proud of the high-value services our team was able to deliver to businesses throughout the year. We remain committed to industry best practices, we proudly stand alongside our job-creators as the voice of business, and we believe in setting the standard for organizational excellence at a national level. I am thankful for our dedicated board, staff and volunteers for making it all happen,” said Bennyhoff.

TOP 3 BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

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Small employers should plan for OSHA vaccine mandates

By CANDACE JOHNSON

The heavily litigated Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) has large employers across the country preparing for its implementation despite the rule’s uncertain legal future. While small employers are not currently included in the rule, they could be impacted by future mandates that may be enacted by federal, state, and local jurisdictions. With much attention currently being focused on large employers, what does this all mean for smaller employers?

There are cautionary steps small employers need to take now to be ready in the event they become subject to a future employee vaccination mandate. These steps focus on collecting vaccination data on their employees, developing human resources practices for managing that data, and updating their employment policies on COVID vaccination and testing, to name a few.

Collecting and managing vaccination data on employees presents a sensitive and complicated task for employers of any size. Policy-making decisions await small employers on how to ask for this confidential information, who can be exempted, options for testing vs. vaccination, masking requirements for unvaccinated employees, and what unemployment benefits, if any, may be available to employees that refuse to be vaccinated. Once these decisions have been made, small employers will also need to train their front-line managers and human resources staff on how to properly com-

municate these guidelines to employees.

Another important consideration for small businesses surrounds the confidentiality of vaccination information, how it is stored, and its relationship to other employee information. Who gets to see an employer’s vaccination data, and how is it shared?

Though OSHA has temporarily suspended its activities related to the imple-

mentation and enforcement of its ETS based on a recent United States Court of Appeals Fifth Circuit order, the landscape remains uncertain. Given this uncertainty, small employers should take heed and begin thinking about these challenges. The day may never come, but small employers could well be the next group to come under vaccination mandates.

Candace Johnson is an attorney at Carmody MacDonald and focuses her practice in the areas of labor and employment, real estate, and general civil litigation. Contact Candace at cej@carmodymacdonald.com or (314) 854-8647. This column is for informational purposes only. Nothing herein should be treated as legal advice or as creating an attorney-client relationship.

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