



## Annual Holiday Party

**Wednesday,  
December  
4th**

In lieu of our normal meeting, we will have our annual holiday party.

**Vittone's  
Restaurant Pizzeria**  
(across from the Princess Theater in downtown Decatur)

109 2nd Ave NE  
Decatur, AL 35601

5:30 pm — 7:00 pm



# December Newsletter

December 4, 2014

# Annual Holiday Party



We will have heavy appetizers, desserts and a cash bar.

If you would like to participate, we will play “Dirty Santa”. Most of you know the rules, but basically you will need to bring a wrapped gift valued at \$15 to play.

There is no charge for this event; however, we would like to ask everyone to bring a gently used jacket or coat for the Warm Coats From Warm Hearts organization. This group donates these to needy individuals during the winter months.



## President Obama Takes Executive Action on Immigration Reform

*Courtesy of Lehr Middlebrooks & Vreeland, P.C.*

Last Thursday, President Obama announced his long-awaited plan for a series of executive actions on immigration reform. While the exact details and contours of the plan are unclear, at a minimum, the President intends to allow parents of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents who have been in the U.S. since January 1, 2010, to request “deferred action” on deportation and to request employment authorization for three years. Affecting between 4-5 million undocumented immigrants, the President stated that this deferred action is only “temporary.” The President’s plan also intends to: expand the number of persons eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to young people who came to the U.S. before turning sixteen years old and have been present since January 1, 2010; extend the period of DACA and work authorizations from two years to three years; expand the use of provisional waivers of unlawful presence to include the spouses and children of lawful permanent residents and the sons and daughters of U.S. citizens; modernize, improve, and clarify immigrant and nonimmigrant programs to grow the economy and create jobs; and promote citizenship education and public awareness for lawful permanent residents. See <http://www.uscis.gov/immigrationaction> for additional guidance.

The President, as reflected in the White House’s Office of Legal Counsel’s Opinion justifying his executive actions (available at <http://www.justice.gov/olc/opinions>), believes his executive actions are lawful exercises of the executive branch’s “prosecutorial discretion” to delay enforcement under Federal Immigration Laws, particularly the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, as amended. Although the President claims deferring deportation is “temporary,” it does not take a political pundit to forecast that a large portion of these 4-5 million workers are likely here to stay. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) states that it will implement these directives “as soon as possible” and likely within ninety days, although it acknowledges it may take months. It is not currently accepting applications or requests from undocumented immigrants for these programs; however, it plans on rolling out timelines and a framework for doing so in the near future.

Last Friday, Republican Congressional Leaders responded by stating that they “will act” to thwart what they consider unconstitutional executive action. Although rare, courts have ruled that previous Presidential executive actions and orders were unconstitutional. For instance, in 1952, the Supreme Court found that President Truman did not have the authority to take over private steel mills in the face of what he feared would be a crippling Steelworkers strike during the Korean War. While battles between the President and Congress loom, including the potential for litigation and battles over related Congressional funding, ten prominent legal scholars—conservative and liberal—have issued a joint letter that the President’s actions are lawful. See <https://www.scribd.com/doc/247489145/Scholars-Letter-on-Immigration>.

The debate and potential litigation likely will take months to reach resolution; however, employers can anticipate the following in 2015:

1. Deferred deportations and the creation of temporary work authorizations for the 4-5 million persons who have been in the U.S. for 5 or more years and who either came to the U.S. as children or are the parents of U.S. Citizens and lawful permanent residents (of any age);
2. An increase in the number of green cards available to skilled and professional workers, as well as an increase in the employment opportunities for highly skilled workers by streamlining the permanent immigrant visa process, reducing the backlog and increasing the portability of the visas;
3. Authorization of employment for spouses of professional workers with H-1B visas who have received approval of their permanent immigrant visas;
4. The creation of a temporary immigration status for entrepreneurs who will create jobs in the U.S., and a related green card path for entrepreneurs, inventors, and researchers; and
5. Extension of work-related training authorizations for science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) graduates of U.S. universities.

Of course, the constitutionality of the President’s executive actions, or lack thereof, may preclude one or more of these directives from being implemented; however, we should assume that most of these directives will be the controlling law and may affect your workforce in 2015. We will keep you updated on future developments.

## How Holiday Financial Stress Affects Employee Wellbeing

*Courtesy of Elisabeth Doehring and Kimberly Ryder*

At holiday season, seemingly dedicated Alabama employees have an additional weight bearing down on their Monday through Friday workweek. Alabamians are worried about paying bills and making rent or that next mortgage.

A newly-released report from the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC) <http://www.nclc.org> entitled “No Fresh Start: How States Let Debt Collectors Push Families Into Poverty” shows that four states get poor marks. Residents of Alabama, Delaware, Kentucky, and Michigan scored an ‘F’ grade in an across-the-board consumer protection report. According to NCLC attorney Caroline Carter, “Employers in Alabama beware! You might have a good employee who is producing and contributing to your company’s profitability. Yet this employee is susceptible to having a debt collector go straight into their individual bank account and confiscate funds. This is money that an employee might truly need to pay for that week’s full tank of gas or use as bus fare to work.”

According to Stephen Stetson, policy analyst and attorney for Alabama Arise, a nonpartisan public policy organization, “As a native Alabamian, I was stunned and dismayed to see that instead of Alabama moving forward that the results from the NCLC study showed that we are actually falling behind in time.”

Payday lenders are setting up shop in Alabama. “Even if the average Alabama worker or company owner does not walk through the doors of these private high cost payday lender storefronts, the problem still affects everyone. It decreases overall consumer spending in our state,” says Stetson.

According to The Net Economic Impact of Payday Lending in the U.S. - InsightCenter for Economic Development -March 2013 Study, “Every dollar spent paying back a high-cost lender takes \$1.94 out of the local economy.”

Doug Hurst serves as Program Director of Gateway Financial Freedom in Birmingham. A nonprofit United Way Agency that covers Blount, Jefferson, Shelby, St Clair Counties, and Walker, the organization sees a wide demographic of clients. Half of Hurst’s clients have college degrees. Gateway counsels the workforce of most major companies in North Alabama. We are seeing dramatic increases in payday and title loans overextensions within the last 2-3 years,” notes Hurst. This is creating distractions at work, and calls from creditors.

What Hurst is seeing is that “Instead of teaching their children how to balance a checkbook, parents in Alabama are focused on giving their children all the best things in life. We also hear from many clients who have applied for general financial jobs such as cashiers that have been refused employment due to poor credit scores. This just perpetuates the cycle of debt.”

Human resources and benefits departments have watched employees struggle. Now these same professionals are focused on getting their financially worrisome employees back on track. Financial wellbeing programs dot the world and now extend into the Alabama landscape. Company leaders are taking notice. Financial wellbeing programs are now part of a company’s overall employee wellness program.

Education incentives and programs that focus on financial wellness are now wide-reaching in today’s competitive workplace culture. Financial wellbeing programs serve as both drivers and enhancers of employee engagement. Stronger profits and a competitive edge are the current trend and the wave of the future globally. Companies and organizations in Alabama are leading the way with employee financial wellbeing programs.

Organizations are finding that financial wellbeing strategies deliver more employee engagement, higher customer care, and increased revenue. With more and more companies looking to increase employee engagement and profitability the outlook for financial wellbeing programs is a new trend for human resource and benefits departments and forward-thinking companies. Financial wellness is paying dividends for employee loyalty. As more companies look for that competitive edge financial wellbeing will become a key ingredient in employer benefit offerings. The trend is clear. World and company leaders here in Alabama are moving closer and closer to promoting individual and employee financial self-sufficiency.

Make the holidays more about the reason for the season and less about bills in January. Consider using free resources in your community for employee finance coaching classes and some down-to-earth spending habit choices. Enjoy your holidays !

## 2015 TVC-SHRM Board Members

We are pleased to announce the following Board of Directors for TVC-SHRM for 2015:

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Tiffany Weaver
- Past President:  
Robin Cook

## Volunteers Needed for the Job Group

Volunteers are needed to do presentations for the November and December meetings for the Job Group.

Dates: Tuesday, November 18 5:30 pm and Tuesday, December 16 5:30 pm

Where: Decatur Public Library

Subjects can be on interviewing, job search, how to apply at a specific local company, what skills are most needed in this area and how to obtain them, networking in this area (what events should they attend or groups to join, etc.), how to dress for the interview, volunteering, and resume writing.

## CCC Pantry Items Needed

Please bring pantry staple items in support of the Women's Chamber initiative for The Committee on Church Cooperation. The CCC's pantry is low on flour, sugar, corn meal, baking powder, baking soda, salt & pepper, and etc. Remember those in need during the time of Giving

**2014 TVC-SHRM BOARD****President**

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**Special Events Advisor****Newsletter**

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**Advisor to the Board-Technology****Amanda Tidwell**

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**Get Connected (Clickable Icons)****Save the Date! Upcoming Events**

- **Thursday, December 4, 2014**  
*Christmas Party* at Vittone's (more details coming soon)
- **January 31, 2015**  
*TVC-SHRM Membership Renewal Form Deadline*
- **Every 1st Wednesday**  
*Workforce Coalition meeting* at The Chamber of Commerce  
(Contact Taylor Simmons- [taylor@dcc.org](mailto:taylor@dcc.org) for more info)

Please contact **Tiffany Weaver** at [tweave@ascendmaterials.com](mailto:tweave@ascendmaterials.com) if you have an upcoming event that you would like to add.

**In lieu of our normal meeting in December, we will have our annual holiday party at Vittone's in Decatur. Hope to see everyone there!**



**Tennessee Valley Chapter SHRM**  
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