



513.771.2277 Phone  
800.877.2053 Phone

One Sheakley Way  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45246

Sheakley.com

# Business Bulletin

April 2011

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION NEWS

### [Informed Ohio Business Workers' Comp Forum](#)

The Informed Ohio Business Workers' Comp Forum was formed on LinkedIn for businesses to make sure everyone is up to date on workers' compensation issues facing employers and employees in Ohio. This forum encourages its members to share experiences, expertise and also to ask questions related to workers' compensation rules, regulations and policies for businesses in Ohio. To join the forum click here <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Informed-Ohio-Business-Workers-Comp-3810852?mostPopular=&gid=3810852>.

### [Business Courier 2011 Fast 55](#)

On March 24<sup>th</sup> the Business Courier named the finalists for the 2011 Fast 55. This award recognizes the fastest-growing private firms in Greater Cincinnati. Finalists were selected according to revenue growth and Sheakley was named a finalist from a field of more than 85 entries. On June 9<sup>th</sup> Sheakley will be honored with the other finalists for this outstanding accomplishment.

### [BWC Net Assets](#)

The BWC Chief Fiscal & Planning Officer announced that the net assets had increased \$310 million in February resulting in net assets of \$5.3 billion. Since February 28, 2010, BWC net assets have increased \$1.5 billion.

### [BWC Deadlines](#)

Payroll reports and 45% of premiums are due Sunday, May 15th, the remaining 55% will be due Thursday September 1<sup>st</sup>. BWC offers online options that are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week at [www.ohiobwc.com](http://www.ohiobwc.com) to report payroll and pay premiums.

## SAFETY NEWS

### [Safety Council Program](#)

On March 31<sup>st</sup> Administrator Buehrer announced his intention to continue to expand the Safety Council Rebate Incentive Program. The program allows employers to earn rebates on their workers' comp premiums by participating in their local safety council and reducing workplace injuries.

Participating employers can receive a 2 percent rebate for attending a specific number of safety council programs and receive an additional 2 percent rebate for demonstrating a reduction in the frequency and/or severity of workplace incidents. BWC's proposal will continue the program and expand the participation to group-rated employers. The program will allow group-rated employers the opportunity to earn a 2 percent rebate for demonstrating a reduction in their frequency and/or severity of workplace incidents.

The new Safety Council program was announced by Buehrer at the BWC Safety Congress and will soon be proposed to the BWC Board of Directors for their approval.

### **Drug-Free Safety Program**

The application deadline to participate in the DFSP beginning July 01, 2011 is April 29<sup>th</sup>.

DFSP training deadline for initial year participants is April 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **DFSP Webinars**

Sheakley understands the concerns of employers regarding the new Drug-Free Safety Program. The BWC designed the program to assist employers in preventing on-the-job injuries and illness by integrating drug-free efforts into their workplace safety culture. This accident prevention strategy will help employers achieve cost-saving benefits, as well as strengthening their overall safety program. Sheakley is holding informational webinars on the following dates (April 13<sup>th</sup> at 3pm, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 1pm, and April 15<sup>th</sup> at 9am) to offer employers a better understanding of the value of this program and how it will benefit their existing safety plan. During these sessions, attendees will be given the opportunity to ask questions and determine if this program is right for their company! To register for any of the informational webinars please email [safety@sheakley.com](mailto:safety@sheakley.com).

## **UNEMPLOYMENT NEWS**

### **Ohio Unemployment Rate – February**

Ohio unemployment rate for February 2011 was 9.2%, down from 9.3% in January and 10.6% in February 2010.

The U.S. rate for February is down to 8.9% from 9.0% in January and 9.7% in February 2010.

### **Unemployment Benefits for School Employees**

Looking ahead to the end of this school year many districts will be sending letters to their employees giving them reasonable assurance. Employees working under continuing contracts are considered to have reasonable assurance and should be found ineligible for benefits during the summer months as long as their contract is intact for the upcoming school year and there are no other mitigating factors that could cause them to be eligible for unemployment.

Reasonable assurance in written form provides an employee of a school district with notice that it is the “intent of the district to have the individual return in the same capacity during the upcoming school year or term.” This means that a person with written reasonable assurance, no matter what position they are in, has the understanding that while they will be unemployed during the district’s traditional break, they will be returning to work for the district when the next school year or term resumes.

The key to this is “in the same capacity” which means that a person who worked as a casual, as needed substitute only returns as a casual, as needed substitute – a cafeteria employee who works only part time is returning as a part time cafeteria employee. These individuals may be found ineligible for unemployment benefits during the summer months if they are given reasonable assurance in a written form. The forms of assurance that are acceptable are: contract, letter of reasonable assurance, board approval.

Reasonable assurance is only valid from the date it is actually given to the employee, so it is best to provide the assurance prior to the last date of the current school year. It should be noted that reasonable assurance does not apply during the active school year. It is only applicable during breaks between terms, i.e., Winter, Spring, and Summer break.

## HUMAN RESOURCE NEWS

### Client Training Seminars

Sheakley's Human Resource department will be holding training sessions at our corporate office training room throughout 2011. Please contact Kym Martin at 513-728-6668 or [kmartin@sheakley.com](mailto:kmartin@sheakley.com) for more information or to sign up. Seating is limited, so call today!

May Seminar:

11<sup>th</sup> – “Developing Leaders” (9am to 12pm)

June Seminar:

6<sup>th</sup> – NextLevel's Sales & Growth Mastery Seminar Series #2 (1 to 2:30pm)

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

### Senate Bill 15 Dropout Programs (Turner, N.)

The Senate Bill (introduced February 1<sup>st</sup>) will require the State Board of Education to recommend performance standards for dropout programs operated by school districts.

### Senate Bill 116 School Employees (Seitz, B., Cates, G.)

The Senate Bill (introduced March 10<sup>th</sup>) would permit non-Civil Service school district boards to terminate positions of district transportation employees for reasons of economy and efficiency and to contract with independent agents to provide transportation services as long as certain conditions are satisfied.

### Senate Bill 118 Body Mass Screenings (Cates, G.)

The Senate Bill (introduced March 15<sup>th</sup>) would make schools' implementation of body mass index screenings optional.

### Senate Bill 127 School Bullying (Schiavoni, J.)

The Senate Bill (introduced March 22<sup>nd</sup>) proposes to enact the “Jessica Logan Act” to require that public school bullying policies prohibit bullying by electronic means and address certain acts that occur off school property and to require staff training on the bullying policy.

**To learn more about these changes and how they will impact your business, please contact our office at 513-326-4675 x2044 or visit our website at [www.sheakley.com](http://www.sheakley.com).**