

SOUTH CAROLINA BUSINESS

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THE PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

STARS OF BUSINESS

BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

S.C. TOP 100™

ECONOMIC SPORTING EVENTS

PUBLIC SERVANT OF THE YEAR

FAMOUS SOUTH CAROLINIANS

S.C. BIG 50®

SGT. JASPER FREEDOM AWARD

HUMAN RESOURCES:

KEEPING UP WITH THE TIMES

BY GAIL DEPRIEST

Whether you are working in the surgical unit of a large hospital or as a mechanic assembling a jetliner, you are involved in a world of work that has become increasingly complex. Human resource (HR) professionals are tasked with sourcing the appropriate employees and ensuring all the skills are in place to meet the demands of service delivery or product manufacturing.

South Carolina has its share of innovative human resource professionals who are working diligently to provide their organization, community and state with a competitive advantage in the area of workforce readiness.

TECHNICAL SKILLS GAP

* **E**d Parris, president of Phillips Staffing, recently addressed the Leadership Summit at Clemson University and stated that currently the greatest challenge facing the human resource profession is addressing the workforce readiness gap. With nearly a 10 percent unemployment rate in the state, there are thousands of jobs that remain unfilled because of the skills gap. The increasingly high-tech manufacturing jobs require better education and technical skills.

* Governor Nikki Haley has announced timely workforce initiatives and Parris believes that one of those, the WorkKeys® Program, is a uniquely suited tool to address the skills gap. It will require a comprehensive effort between industry, technical schools and grades K-12.

Beverly Deal, a certified WorkKeys profiler with Phillips Staffing, looks at manufacturing jobs and determines the level of skills needed to perform a particular trade. The WorkKeys assessment is then used to evaluate a prospective employee in the areas of: applied math, locating information, reading for information, applied technology, team work, workplace observation, listening for understanding, business writing and writing to find the best fit for that job.

The two most often needed skill areas include:

Locating Information – This assessment measures the skill people use when they work with workplace graphics. Examinees are asked to find information in a graphic or insert information into a graphic. They must also compare, summarize, and analyze information found in related graphics. This is a basic skill required in today's workforce.

Workplace Observation – This assessment tests the examinee's ability to

make inferences, anticipate outcomes and/or extrapolate information from an observed demonstration, procedure or process.

The director of human resources at Schaeffler Group USA, Rita Revels, partnered with technical schools to gain the customized training she needed for her organization. Collaborating with other organizations, Revels co-developed a program with the technical schools to meet their training requirements, incorporating the WorkKeys program and minimizing costs.

SOFT SKILLS NEEDED

I n the fall of 2011, human resource leaders from GE, BMW, Michelin, Milliken, Canal Insurance and others came together to discuss the realities facing new managers. Many indicated that transitioning from the individual contributor role to that of manager is as difficult as any transition an employee might ever make. It is especially challenging now that the role of manager is becoming more complex. Managers need soft skills training and practical application tools in the areas of self awareness, effective employee engagement, coaching direct reports and encouraging innovation.

Managers require special skills for leading and motivating. Focused change intervention can increase productivity, improve organizational communications, increase efficiency, improve quality and raise employee morale if the change is done well.

These companies partnered with the Center for Corporate Learning at Clemson at the Falls to co-design a new manager transition program specific to their needs. New managers participated in a blended learning program complete with classroom training, field assignments, an online learning center and a 90-day project.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Another major challenge facing human resource professionals is continually aligning the functional activities with the company's strategic goals. This effort often includes assisting employees' shift from task-oriented activities to more creative, customer-oriented approaches that are performance-driven and utilize project management methods and tools. Methodologies such as Total Quality Management and Lean Six Sigma can play a major role in an organization's transformation and help support HR and management in building a common culture.

Under the leadership of deputy director and CIO, John Supra, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) began implementing a Lean process to enable the organization to more effectively serve its stakeholders, Medicaid members and providers across the state. In launching the initiative in 2011, key team leaders were selected to participate in the process improvement training. This included not only documenting current processes, but also identifying ways to drive improvements and efficiencies. A critical component of the program was employee buy-in.

By using a Lean framework, the organization was able to train staff and execute projects in a consistent manner. Additionally, by developing a program that includes both classroom training and the completion of a three-month project, staff was able to engage in improving their own areas with the use of new tools. The program includes teaching creativity, leadership changes, collaboration techniques and coaching throughout the project period. Each group of trainees also presents their

project results to executive leadership and peers in order to solidify the buy-in for the program across the organization.

"By focusing efforts and energy around process improvement projects using the Lean Six Sigma principles, we have been able to start building a culture around performance-based improvement and management," Supra says.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

HR professionals are facing some of the most critical challenges as a result of legislation imposing new regulations in the areas of workforce readiness, labor, health care and taxes. Human resource professionals should monitor and know how new legislation will impact their business.

Steve Nail, vice president of human resources for Hubbell Lighting, pays attention and carefully tracks federal and state issues as well as new regulations put out by agencies. Nail stays in contact with

South Carolina's congressional members and lets them know how issues will impact South Carolina businesses and its human resource community.

HR professionals have been inclined to wait until legislation is passed and then respond. This is a mistake. Both Nail and Parris advocate that HR professionals represent large populations through their organizations and should take a very active role in supporting pro-business legislation.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is also impacting the human resource profession in a profound way. While the human resource community has begun using social media like Twitter and Facebook to improve recruitment, they have also seen that technology has brought to light new challenges. Some challenges include harassment investigations that involve texting and Facebook messages, termination for inappropriate web postings and keeping policies up to date with new technology components.

Now that technology is at the fingertips of employees and candidates, many believe that they should get an instant reply to an e-mail, a voicemail or a resume submission. Not responding as quickly as another company may cause an organization to lose an applicant. HR professionals need to be aware of the impact technology has made on responsiveness.

GLOBALIZATION OF HR

While Sharon Sellers has worked with many organizations as an HR consultant, she has created a niche for herself by serving entities from a number of countries, including Canada, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Europe and Asia. Sellers provides human resources and training services to these organizations. Many worldwide organizations are putting employees on the ground in the U.S., and Sellers helps ensure a smooth transition. She aids the companies in complying with U.S. employment regulations, various state regulations, monitoring benefit and compensation administration and providing advice regarding employee management. Many countries have very different employment laws than the U.S. Her challenge is to help the client create a benefit package that closely mirrors the packages found in other countries.

Talent that can make a difference in the global economy can be hard to find. The increased competitiveness for skilled workers and need for talent development ensures that workforce readiness remains the key challenge facing human resource executives. Organizations depend on the ability of the human resource department to hire, develop and retain the right talent to keep them performing well. South Carolina human resource professionals have illustrated that they are up for the challenge.

Gail DePriest is the director of corporate relations & leadership development for Clemson at the Falls in Greenville, S.C.



Unemployment fraud is:

- Paying individuals "under the table" to avoid unemployment taxes
- Paying an employee who is submitting unemployment claims
- Purposely categorizing employees as independent contractors

For more information, visit: dew.sc.gov/fraud





CWRC/WorkKeys Presentations

August 14, 2012-SCDEW Business Panel ACT Business Engagement Workshop (Ed Parris)

September 2012-Workshop Presentation at SCSHRM State Conference (Beverly Deal)

January 8, 2013-Anderson Area SHRM Lunch Meeting (Beverly Deal)

February 21, 2013-Fountain Inn Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn (Beverly Deal)

April 10, 2013-Lowcountry HR Association Meeting (Beverly Deal)

April 18, 2013-Gaffney Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn (Ed Parris and Beverly Deal)

June 7, 2013-Anderson Chamber of Commerce Toast-n-Topics Meeting (Beverly Deal)

September 26, 2013-SCSHRM State Conference (Ed Parris and Beverly Deal)

CWRC Steering Committees-York, Lancaster, Anderson, Pickens, Oconee



Recertification Credit Hours Awarded: 1
Specified Credit Hours: General

Selecting, Hiring, Training and Developing a High-Performance Workforce

Learning Objectives: This training will help the HR professional understand how to identify an individual's workplace skills, why it would be important and how it can impact the company's bottom line. The skills gap, that gap between what an individual has and what the employer needs, identified in today's workforce has never been greater. By identifying the skills an individual possess, the company can greater predict an individual's success in the workplace. They can target limited training dollars towards training for those skills needed for the job.

WorkKeys goes hand in hand with skilled, job ready workers who meet the demands of employers across the country. Let's start by familiarizing ourselves with the who, what, where and most importantly how and why.

Who - ACT is a not for profit public trust with a mission to help people achieve education and workplace success. ACT has years of success with high school entrance and exit tests and are the only organization with the tools, including assessments, job analysis, training and curriculum, certification, research and analytics to lead this workforce transformation. They are transforming Workkeys assessments and the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) into a national reporting tool so there are solid benchmarks around the quality of the local and state wide workforce.

What - A comprehensive system for every stage of the employment cycle. Benchmarking skills, screening, selection, training and development, and succession planning are all critical for any successful business and are supported by WorkKeys.

Where - Everywhere! WorkKeys is nationally recognized

Why - Currently, there is no workforce development infrastructure. There is already substantial evidence that ACT Work Readiness system tools work. ACT is looking to skill up the US workforce, measure, and close the skills gaps. HR is a strategic part of any business. As such, any system that reduces hiring time and costs, improves the quality of new hires, reduces training time, reduces turnover and increases productivity will be beneficial for the financial health and longevity of a company. More and more, HR Professionals are expected to do more than manage benefits, pay, on-boarding and off-boarding of personnel. They are included in strategic planning, forecasting and overall operations. With almost 17,000 individual jobs across the country analyzed, ACT identified skills which are important to most jobs. By understanding what skills a job requires and what skills a person possesses, a company can develop a well qualified workforce thus contributing to their overall success.

How - Begin by identifying yourself as a WorkReady partner that supports the National Career Readiness Certificate. Encourage job seekers and employees to not only earn their NCRC, but improve their skills on an ongoing basis.

For more information or to schedule a presentation, please contact Ed Parris, SC SHRM State Council Workforce Readiness Director, at eparris@phillipsstaffing.com or 864-298-3442 or contact Beverly Deal at bdeal@phillipsstaffing.com or 864-298-3453.



The use of this seal is not an endorsement by the HR Certification Institute of the quality of the program. It means that this program has met the HR Certification Institute's criteria to be pre-approved for recertification credit.



*ANDERSON AREA SOCIETY FOR
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT*
P. O. Box 4195, Anderson, SC 29622



.....**SAVE THE DATE**.....

January 2013 SHRM Meeting

When: Tuesday, January 8, 2013
7:30 am Networking and Breakfast
8:00 am Speaker

Where: Bleckley Inn
151 East Church Street
Anderson, SC 29621

Selecting, Hiring, Training and Developing a High-Performance Workforce

Speaker – Beverly Deal

Understand how to identify an individual's workplace skills, why it's important and how it can impact your company's bottom line. The skills gap, that gap between what an individual has and what the employer needs, identified in today's workforce has never been greater. By identifying the skills an individual possess, you can greater predict an individual's success in the workplace.

Find out who, what, where and most importantly how and why.

WorkKeys





2013 Lunch and Learn Series

Date: 2/21/13
Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Location: Carolina Springs Country Club
1680 Scuffletown Rd. Fountain Inn, SC 29644

Event: Lunch and Learn

Host: Phillips Staffing

Speaker: Beverly Deal
Workforce Development and Work Keys
1115-C NE Main Street
Simpsonville, SC 29681
www.phillipsstaffing.com

Topic: **Selecting, Hiring, Training and Developing a High Performance Work Force**

Agenda:	11:30 AM – 11: 45 AM	Guests Arrive and Icebreaker
	11:45 AM – 12:00 PM	Lunch Served and Chamber Introduction
	12:00 PM – 12:45 PM	Host Presentation
	12:45 PM – 1:00 PM	Q&A, Close and Survey

Dear Members and Guests: THANK YOU!

The Fountain Inn Chamber of Commerce's board of directors, staff and today's host would like to extend a special thank you for attending today's presentation. We hope you enjoy the lunch and learn presentation. The goal of our lunch and learn program is to provide fun and educational topics that enable our members to learn, network and promote their knowledge and business. Our chamber of commerce is made up of members who are committed to improving, influencing and shaping the economic and social future of Upstate SC. If you would like to become an active part of our chamber of commerce through our board, one of our project teams or you have suggestions to improve our programs, please contact Yancey Epps, Director of Sales and Marketing at 864.770.5407 or yepps@fountaininnchamber.org.



Save the Date

Lowcountry Human Resource Association

Wednesday, April 10, 2013

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Holiday Inn and Suites Bluffton, South Carolina

Sponsored by: Christina Barker, Executive Leadership Solutions

*Please join us on **Wednesday, April 10** for our monthly LCHRA meeting. Our presenter is Beverly Deal, Workforce Readiness Director with Phillips Staffing.*

Click here to register: <http://www.eventbrite.com/org/3207723982?s=12896766>.



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Topic: Selecting, Hiring, Training and Developing a High-Performance Workforce

This training will help the HR professional understand how to identify an individual's workplace skills, why it would be important and how it can impact the company's bottom line. The skills gap, that gap between what an individual has and what the employer needs, identified in today's workforce has never been greater. By identifying the skills an individual possess, the company can greater predict an individual's success in the workplace. They can target limited training dollars towards training for those skills needed for the job.

About the Presenter:

Beverly Deal, Workforce Readiness Director with Phillips Staffing, is an authorized WorkKeys Job Profiler, holds a SC Basic Economic Developers' Certification and is a Career Development Facilitator Instructor. She serves on the GSHRM Workforce Readiness Council, Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce Leadership Development Council, Spartanburg Area Chamber Workforce Opportunities Resource Council and is President-Elect for the Spartanburg Human Resources Association. Ms. Deal is a member Leadership Spartanburg Alumni Association. She is a graduate of Leadership Spartanburg and the Clemson Leadership Summit.

Beverly has many years of experience in staff training and development as well as workforce development. She graduated from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill with a Bachelors Degree in Mass Communications.

Beverly lives in Campobello, SC with her husband, two teenage sons, 3 dogs and a cat.

Please RSVP by **Friday, April 5th**, by clicking here : <http://www.eventbrite.com/org/3207723982?s=12896766>. **Select the date from the pull down menu in the upper right hand corner.**

Thank you for supporting LCHRA. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Sylvia C. Williams
VP Programs - LCHRA
Email: sylviaw@lowcountryhr.org
Tel: 843.263.7721

Human Resource Business Consultant | Align Education Consultants |
2015 Boundary Street, Suite 234 | Beaufort, SC 29902 | Tel:
843.379.8696 | Email: Sylvia@AlignEdu.com



LOCATION:

225 South Limestone Street / Gaffney, SC 29340
864.489.5721 / pfoxx@cherokeechamber.org

C⁴ LUNCH AND LEARN

NOON— Thursday, April 18, 2013

Lunch compliments of KAPSTONE, sponsor of the C⁴ Series.

WorkKeys: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU?

SPEAKER: Gaffney native, **Ed Parris**, President of Phillips Staffing, Greenville SC

WorkKeys provides a common language between education and industry.

Parris says: "It seems that there has been a long term struggle to *get the education community to truly understand the workplace skills necessary in today's manufacturing environment.* WorkKeys really addresses that gap and helps both parties communicate about what skill levels are needed to be successful."

The SC Work Ready Communities initiative is a multi-agency, public/private partnership initiative. Although this is strictly a locally driven initiative, funding is being provided with federal and state monies; application approval and statewide oversight is needed by a statewide entity. The State Workforce Investment Board, a business majority run board, works with an unbiased goal of improving the prosperity of businesses and the lives of South Carolinians. The SWIB will serve as the statewide entity to oversee the SC Work Ready Communities initiative.



Why is South Carolina involved with this initiative?

To assist counties in truly linking and aligning state and local economic development, workforce development and education efforts to show new, current and expanding businesses that South Carolina has the workforce and expertise they need in order to grow and prosper.

RSVP: 864.489.5721

By 04/15/13

"Work Keys has helped up to identify critical skills needed to achieve our goals in Safety, Quality, and Productivity. It also has provided us an opportunity to ensure employees have the right skill sets and abilities to ensure employees numerous initiatives including Work Keys, our Safety Performance and Incident Rates have drastically improved to appear well below the National Average".
CMC Steel, Cayce, SC

"Itron believes WorkKeys is a valuable tool not only for our employees, but also in workforce development and employment."
Sue Gray, Human Resources Manager, Itron, Inc.



C⁴ Series Sponsor



Gaffney native shares formula for success

Ed Parris says WorkKeys links education and industry

By SCOTT POWELL Ledger Staff Writer spowell@gaffneyledger.com

Ed Parris has found the right formula for hiring workers to match the technical job skills often sought by companies used by his Phillips Staffing Company in Greenville.

Parris returned to his hometown in Gaffney on Thursday to share with area human resource officers how his company has used job profiling, WorkKeys tests and career readiness certificates to find good employees for companies. He spent his lunch hour at the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce for a presentation on how the WorkKeys test from the American College Test (ACT) can be used as a workforce and economic development tool.

"I felt that WorkKeys provided the best kind of common language between education and industry I'd seen," Parris said. "It seemed that there has been a long-term struggle to get the education community to truly understand the workplace skills necessary in today's manufacturing environment. WorkKeys really addresses that gap and helps both parties communicate about what skill levels are needed to be successful."

More than 600,000 manufacturing jobs in the Southeast are going unfilled, with more than 50,000 vacancies in South Carolina, according to a 2012 National Skills Coalition Report by the Manufacturing Institute. Automation in manufacturing has transformed factories and changed the skills required to operate and maintain factory equipment.

Work Keys is a series of tests to provide employers with a standard way for identifying and evaluating whether workers have the skills required for specific jobs. The most common tests are Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics and Locating Information.

The national career readiness certificate issued by ACT is a portable, evidencebased credential that certifies an employee has the knowledge and job skills needed for workforce success.

Local residents can earn a platinum, gold, silver, or bronze certificate based on their WorkKeys score. People with a silver WorkKeys certificate are qualified for 67 percent of the 16,000 job profiles listed in the ACT database.

Parris learned about career readiness certificates as the local Workforce Investment Board chairman. His experience as a recruiter for large tool manufacturer Singer amid the transition to automated manufacturing has taught him the importance of being able to evaluate employees' job skills in a standard way.

For more info: www.scworkready.org.



NEXSEN | PRUET



Presents:

**Hurry!
Early Bird for
Conference and Hotel
Ends soon! See last page
for details!**

the **19th**
Annual
SOUTH CAROLINA
SHRM State
CONFERENCE



See HRCI
disclaimer
below**

Platinum Sponsor:



19th Annual
South Carolina SHRM State Conference

September 25-27, 2013
Hilton Resort, Kingston, Myrtle Beach, SC

"Communication is the Key to Success!"

**"The use of this seal is not an endorsement by the HR Certification Institute of the quality of the program. It means that this program has met the HR Certification Institute's criteria to be pre-approved for recertification credit." Conference has been approved for 9.0 General Credit Hours

Nexsen Pruet

Presents:



**The 19th Annual
South Carolina SHRM State Conference:
“Communication is the Key to Success”**

How many times have you investigated a conflict and have found that the key issue was “a failure to communicate”? Join over 250 of your fellow Human Resource professionals for the SC SHRM State Conference September 25-27 to laugh at our communication shortcomings and learn how we can overcome them.

Interested in being an Exhibitor or Sponsor at our conference? Contact Elliott Wilson at elliott.wilson@trcstaffing.com

Pre-Conference Workshop – SC SHRM Strategic Academy:

Wednesday, September 25: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – SC SHRM Strategic Academy

Note that the SC SHRM Strategic Academy is a Pre-Conference Workshop. The workshop fee is not included in the Regular Conference Fee.

Culture Driven Strategy

Can culture be your strategy? Some of today’s most successful companies are utilizing a strong corporate culture to lead strategy and drive overall success. New perspectives, methods, and techniques are utilizing culture as an overall driving force to overcome traditional and unique challenges. Spend the day interacting with HR leaders to understand what culture is, how others are using it, and how to evolve it in your organization.

Upon completion of this strategic workshop, HR leaders will be able to:

- Understand the need for a culture-driven strategy
- Develop documents that organize and communicate your organization’s culture
- Use culture as a recruiting tool to attract and retain top talent
- Develop a recognition program that spreads positive behavior virally
- Align people with passion by using goal setting and performance reviews
- Implement a communication strategy that focus on people and culture
- Understand how a Servant Leadership approach can facilitate the development and communication of the organization’s core values, mission and ethical behaviors

This workshop has been submitted to HRCI for 7.5 Business Management & Strategic Credits. We will notify our email subscribers when we receive notice that this has been approved.



At Left: Our SC SHRM Strategic Academy Team— Tim, Lee-Anne, Chad, Christina, and John

About the SC SHRM Strategic Academy Presenters: The SC SHRM Conference Committee is pleased to have a team from SPARC presenting this year's Academy. Below are their bios.

John Smith has started a wide-range of technology-focused companies over the last 20 years and received the honor of being chosen as one of the nation's top 25 CTO's by InfoWorld magazine. Currently, John focuses his passion through leadership in corporate culture, employee recognition, and engagement as the Chief Product Officer and Chief Evangelist of SPARC, a software product company that has been able to balance, both high growth, and an amazing culture and a best place to work in SC.

Christina Lock, PHR, has over 10 years of human resources and recruiting expertise with a proven track record of driving results, implementing 'best-in-class' processes, and instilling a business-minded approach to functional situations. Christina is a strategic problem solver with excellent aptitude in client negotiations and building rapport. As the Vice President of HR and Recruiting at SPARC, Christina and her team have hired over 200 Team Members in less than 3 years, all the while standing up internal HR processes from the ground-up. Previous to her position at SPARC, Christina held positions as Lead Recruiter for the Corporate Headquarters of a Fortune 500 (ARAMARK), as well as a highly successful career in an external search firm.

Chad Norman is a digital marketing strategist, proven leader, speaker, and author. As Director of Marketing at SPARC, he manages marketing and communication strategy across all products and services, and represents the company as a Social Evangelist. Previously at Blackbaud, the leading provider of nonprofit technology solutions, Chad managed digital marketing and online training teams. His book, 101 Social Media Tactics for Nonprofits: A Field Guide was published by Wiley in February 2012. Chad has presented at dozens of industry events including IHRIM, SXSW, NTC, DMA, AFP, and has lectured at Wake Forest University.

Tim Limbert is a Servant Leadership Evangelist who has thrived as a successful team builder in some wildly different environments. He is a veteran and former Officer-In-Charge of a navy bomb squad team that supported combat operations throughout the Middle East. He developed globally dispersed teams for rapid development efforts across multiple products as Director of Project Engineering at General Dynamics Land Systems – Force Protection. As a Project Manager at SPARC, he is responsible for aligning team member skills and goals with commercial client happiness. Tim also teaches a course in management and organizational behavior as an Adjunct Professor at The Citadel School of Business Administration.

Lee-Anne Scalley is a cutting-edge innovator, leader of diverse teams, and a self-driven executor. As the Director of Talent Acquisition and Human Resources at SPARC, Lee-Anne Scalley and her team are known as the top recruiters in the Charleston-area. They hire only top talent with a true turnover rate of less than 3%. Lee-Anne has taken SPARC's Human Resources/Talent Acquisition department from zero to success in a rapid time frame. Lee-Anne comes as a seasoned Recruiter from Aerotek and Innovative Hiring Technologies. Lee-Anne can be found presenting all over Charleston, and blogging monthly at lascalley.com.

Conference Schedule:

Wednesday, September 25th:

- 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Academy Check-in and Continental Breakfast for Academy Attendees
- 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. SC SHRM Strategic Academy (advance registration required) *Palisades A - C*
- 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Conference Registration
- 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. **Welcome Reception for All Conference Attendees and Exhibitors** *East Patio*
Outside East Patio between Hotel and Conference Center – weather permitting
Conference Center Registration Foyer – inclement weather
Attendees may use drink tickets provided in the "Welcome" Envelope in their Conference Bags or cash bar.
These drink tickets are also used during Networking Night, so budget accordingly!
Sponsored by: Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd and SLS Consulting, LLC

Thursday, September 26th :

- 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast – Exhibitor Hall
- 7:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Conference Registration
- 8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. General Session – Welcome & Announcements *Palisades A – C*
Rita Revels, SPHR, GPHR – State Director
Nancy Conway, Field Services Director- North Central Region, SHRM
Mike Ressegue - SHRM Foundation
Colonel Tom Mullikin, Deputy Commander, *South Carolina*
State Guard
- 8:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. **Day 1 Keynote Address – Todd Hunt**

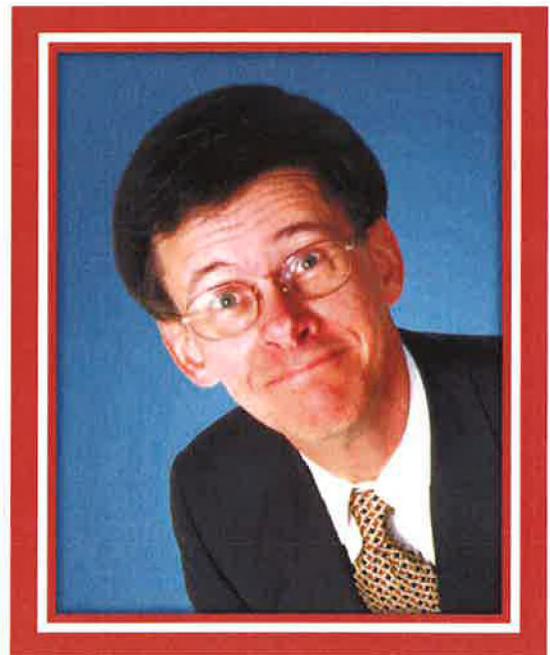
“Communication Bleeps and Blunders in Business”

You said one thing, your employee or coworker heard something else. Nobody is wrong, but now confusion runs rampant and you have to handle it! Laugh and learn as **Todd Hunt** shares vital HR communication concepts wrapped in humor, providing fresh insights on how to communicate better with colleagues and employees to increase productivity. We'll even laugh at ourselves, with Todd leading the way.

- Discover where your listener is “coming from,” and how to tailor your communication style to improve your own performance.
- Review the eight problem words that could cost you customers, members or even employees!
- Re-think your voice mail greeting to eliminate confusion and save precious time.

10:10 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Todd Hunt will be holding a book signing in the corner of Palisades C immediately following his presentation. **We are giving away complimentary books to 50 attendees** (check your conference bag to see if you have a special flyer). Additional books will be available for purchase at the book signing table.



Thursday, September 26th (continued) :

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Break in the HR Exhibitor Hall

Col. Mullikin, Deputy Commander, SC State Guard will have materials for distribution at a table on the East end of the Conference Center near the Registration Desk.

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Choose one of the following concurrent sessions:

HR Leadership: Influencing Organizations, Decisions and People

Palisades A

Dr. Patrick Wright, Darla Moore School of Business, Univ. of SC

Many people talk about HR Leadership as being the next paradigm for HR, but few agree on what HR Leadership means. In this session Professor Patrick Wright will discuss the roles and responsibilities that comprise HR leadership, with a focus on how HR leaders can influence the organization, decisions, and people to add value. HR Professionals will expand their view of their roles from being an order-taker to an influencer, and to provide strategies and tools for how to do so.

Professional Ethics: A Preventive Maintenance Approach

Palisades B

Dr. Christopher Bauer, Bauer Ethics Seminars

This isn't a review of the ethics code, case studies, or case law! Instead, it is a unique program designed to help assure that you and your entire organization are able to more easily "walk the talk" of great ethics. This often-humorous program will show us ethics risks we never even knew we had and what can be done right now to make sure those risks don't turn into costly ethical and legal problems on the job. You will also learn how even a slightly changed focus on ethics can significantly build your organization's bottom line.

Organizational Success in the Social-Sphere

Palisades C

Jeannie Sullivan and Jason Fararooei

Organizations big, small and everywhere in-between are facing one very similar challenge: How do I leverage social media for success? From brand awareness to business development, from motivating employees to engaging learners the opportunities for impact continues to increase regardless of industry or line of business. Data shows that customers, clients, employees and learners are increasingly committed to connecting online. Are you prepared to lead your organization or line or business into the social-sphere?

11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Lunch – Buffet Lunch in Hilton Ballroom (Mezzanine, 2nd Floor of the Hilton Hotel)

12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Choose one of the following concurrent sessions:

Managing Mental Health Issues and Risks in the Workplace

Palisades A

Karen Luchka and Hagood Tighe, Fisher & Phillips

There have been many advances in the area of mental health in recent years. But with these advances come greater responsibilities for employers. Employers must balance business concerns with restrictions under the ADAAA, the FMLA, and a myriad of other laws. This session will explore complicated issues like: What do you do with the bipolar employee who loves guns and tweets his hate for his boss? What medical inquiries and examinations can employers require? Attendees at the session will: Learn the most recent legal developments on employer's obligations under FMLA, ADA, USERRA and other laws to provide leave and accommodations to employees with mental health issues; Understand when an employer can require a fitness for duty report, medical exam, or other documentation from a doctor; Apply the law to real scenarios through interactive case studies

You can Make or Break My Day: Communication Skills for Leaders

Palisades B

Janis Allen and Michael McCarthy

Every word you utter and every eyebrow you raise influences the behavior of others. Are you making or breaking someone's day? Problem-solve, don't finger-point. As a "first responder," resuscitate, don't asphyxiate; Avoid muddle-tasking (a.k.a. multitasking); When only squeaky wheels get grease, what do you get? More squeaks. Extinguish whining, excuses, and negative talk. Redirect to positive, productive, and "goal-behaviors"; where attention goes, behavior grows. Be careful where you put yours. Learn and practice verbal and body language skills which send important messages that influence the behavior and performance around you, every minute of the day.

The "New" NLRB and the Non-Union Workplace: Concerted Activity in the 21st Century"

Palisades C

James Fowles, III, Ogletree, Deakins Law Firm

With four more years of a union-dominated NLRB, all employers – both union and non-union – urgently need to keep abreast of expansive interpretations of the NLRA, especially given the NLRB's attempts to remain relevant in the modern workplace. Participants will review basic NLRA protected concerted activity principles along with recent applications of the same to the non-union workplace. Also discussed will be the new "Worker Centers," organizations that appear to be unions calling for better wages for convenience stores, fast food industries, and Wal-Mart but whose activities are not sanctioned by the NLRB. What should employers do if confronted with these organizations?

Thursday, September 26th (continued) :

2:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Mini-break to Change Rooms

2:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Choose one of the following concurrent sessions:

What's New in Wellness under HIPAA and PPACA (Affordable Care Act)
Chris Gantt-Sorenson, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A.

Palisades A

The Legality of wellness programs will be explained under Health Care Reform and most recent regulations, as well as HIPAA. Examples of legally compliant and legally non-compliant programs will be explored in detail, involving the audience in scenarios for a more in-depth learning process.

HR Leadership Competencies for Value Added Results
Trip Gregory, The Benefit Company

Palisades B

How will you lead your HR organization? What does your boss expect from you and will you deliver the goods? How will you connect with your organization and it's various constituencies? Based on 30 years of international, longitudinal research conducted by Dave Ulrich, the University of Michigan and The RBL Group, the presentation centers on six competencies HR leaders will need to pursue their craft over the next decade. This course offers a new perspective for HR leaders to understand their role for the future. To challenge HR leaders to move toward more strategic thinking and center their HR expertise in non-traditional areas.

Protecting Confidential Information in the Workplace – New Rules, New Ways to Fight Back

Palisades C

David E. Dubberly, Nexsen Pruet

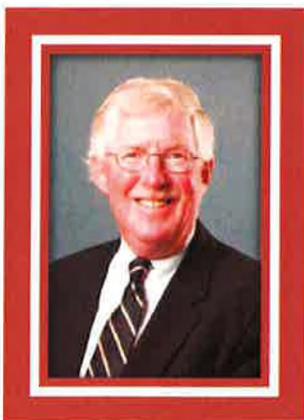
Departing employees often take their former employer's confidential information with them. Many employers do not take adequate steps to protect their information. In this session, we will discuss the newest threats to trade secret security and identify some of the latest best practices to manage those risks, including the use of social media, workplace agreements, and computer forensic experts.

3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Break in the HR Exhibitor Hall

Janis Allen and Michael McCarthy (concurrent speakers at 12:45) will be selling their most recent book and having a book signing on the East end of the building near the Registration Desk.

4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. **General Session: Mr. Ed Parris, Phillips Staffing**

Palisades A-C



South Carolina's Certified Work Ready Community Initiative

South Carolina was recently recognized by SHRM as being the **FIRST** state in the country to have every county registered and committed to be a Certified Work Ready Community. HR Professionals will learn why SC is involved in the CWRC initiative, why it's important for YOUR business to recognize the CWRC, and what it means for the future of our state's workforce.

ACT[®] Work Ready Communities

6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Networking Night Begins – **Wristband Required**

West Lawn outside Palisades A-C

Enjoy your favorite beverage during a cocktail reception

7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Buffet Dinner in Ballroom – **Wristband Required**

Palisades A-C

8:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. Networking and Entertainment

Palisades A-C

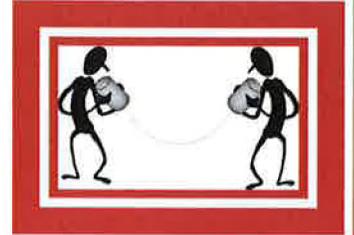
Wristband Required for Reception and Ballroom Admission for Dinner and Entertainment. Attendees will also receive drink tickets for event. In lieu of tickets, drinks may be purchased.

Networking Night:

Enjoy a cocktail on the West end of the Conference Center followed by a banquet and dancing in Palisades A-C. This year's entertainment is D.J. Barry Miller of Record Breakers. The last time we presented Barry, we had to extend the party because people wouldn't get off the dance floor at closing time! Wear your comfortable dancing shoes and have fun!

Photo Station:

During your dancing breaks, look for the DIY Photo Station in the West Hallway and show your friends that you are "The 2013 Communicator of the Year"!



This event includes the Thursday Night Reception, the Banquet, and the Entertainment and is included with the Conference Fee for All Attendees. **ATTENDEES MUST WEAR THE PROVIDED WRISTBANDS TO BE SERVED.** Exhibitors and Other Guests may purchase wristbands. Please see the Registration form for more information. A limited number of drink tickets will also be provided or attendees may pay cash for beverages.

Friday, September 27th :

7:30 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. Continental Breakfast – HR Exhibitor Hall

8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. General Session: Welcome & Announcements

8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Day 2 Keynote Address – Dr. Marlena Smalls

Palisades A-C



“This is What You’re Saying, But This is What I Hear”

During this interactive session, Dr. Smalls will discuss our changing times and how communication from different persons affects the story. Attendees will understand the value of clear communication and learn the keys to creating tools for a clear understating and for a better outcome of effective communication. Discussions will include our diverse world and our needs to understand various perspectives.

9:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Break & Vendor Prize Drawings – Exhibitor Hall; Silent Auction Closes at 10:15 a.m.*

10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. ***Who Wants to Be An HR Millionaire?***

Test Your Knowledge In Response to Real Life Scenarios

Palisades A-C

Molly Cherry, Jamie Hedgepath and William Floyd, Attorneys, Nexsen Pruet

During this interactive game-style session, the presenters will provide questions and answers that tackle the following issues: PPACA and the changing rules; Same-Sex Marriage and Benefits in SC; Supreme Court Rulings that Affect HR; Retaliation and its new definition; The NLRB- its status and its rulings. This session received top scores last year due to its fun, interactive format where attendees gathered practical information regarding today's hot HR topics.

11:45 a.m. – Noon Closing Remarks, Door Prizes, Adjourn

We will have a lot of great door prizes to give away – you MUST be present to win, so plan to stay until the end!

Follow us on Facebook (SC SHRM) and Twitter (scshrm) to receive updates!!! You may also get Twitter updates via SMS (on your cell phone) by texting **follow SCSHRM to 40404**. Find out the "last minute" news!!



Silent Auction:

Check out the gifts, baskets, and more in the East End of the Conference Center all day on Thursday and on Friday morning as we hold a silent auction to benefit the SHRM Foundation. The Non-Profit SHRM Foundation advances global human capital knowledge and practice by providing thought leadership and educational support, and sponsoring, funding and driving the adoption of cutting-edge, actionable, evidence-based research. You will hear from a representative of the SHRM Foundation during Thursday morning General Sessions or you can speak with them at the SHRM

exhibit booth. The Silent Auction is a lot of fun for a good cause. SC SHRM Chapters from across the state, as well as individuals and businesses, donate the items. Simply write your bid on the paper by your item and check often to see if you are outbid! The Silent Auction will end at 10:15 on Friday. Winners will be expected to pay for the item at the end of the conference and take their item. We cannot provide shipping, however, the hotel can provide you information regarding shipping your item if you cannot take it with you.

Exhibit Hall – Vote for the Booth that’s “Best in Theme”:

Our conference wouldn’t be possible if it were not for the support of our sponsors and exhibitors. Please take a few moments to visit our exhibit booths and find out about the services and products that help improve the success of your organization and tell them “thank you for supporting HR in SC.” Check your attendee bags for a list of the exhibitors. Go to each booth and get your list stamped. Put your name on the sheet and at the bottom, VOTE FOR THE BOOTH that best represents our “Communication is the Key to Success” theme. Place your completed form in the box on the Registration Desk. Not only will the winning Exhibitor win a prize, but we will hold a drawing of all of the submissions and:



Two attendees will win gift cards at noon Friday in General Sessions.

YOU WILL LOVE OUR KEYNOTES!

On Thursday, Comedian and author **Todd Hunt** will treat us to a funny, yet thought provoking presentation involving Communication Bleeps and Blunders. You said one thing, your employee or coworker heard something else. Nobody is wrong, but now confusion runs rampant and you have to handle it! Laugh and learn as Todd Hunt shares vital HR communication concepts wrapped in humor, providing fresh insights on how to communicate better with colleagues and employees to increase productivity. We'll even laugh at ourselves, with Todd leading the way.



Dr. Marlena Smalls is a versatile and dynamic entertainer, educator, singer and actress. She began singing at early age and furthered her education at Central State University. A vocalist and lecturer, Marlena ventures into the early history of musical genres such as South Carolina Sea Island plantation melodies, as well as gospel, jazz, and blues. Her educational programs for schools include lectures, music, and Gullah storytelling.

In 1990, Marlena formed the Hallelujah Singers to preserve the Gullah culture of the South Carolina Sea Islands. Marlena gained further acclaim when she was introduced as Bubba's Momma in the Academy Award Winning movie "Forrest Gump." In addition to this, she has worked with Academy Award winners Tom Hanks, Demi Moore and Glenn Close. Throughout her career, she has performed for many U.S. and international dignitaries which includes the Queen of England, former US Presidents William Jefferson Clinton and George W. Bush.

We'll have even MORE fun with games, prizes, an outstanding Networking Night, and our FABULOUS Silent Auction which benefits the SHRM Foundation!

Visit our website <http://sc.shrm.org> frequently for more information and HRCI credit info. Or follow us on Twitter [scshrm](#) to get updates as they happen!

Registration is Now Open!

Go to:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=qrivt9cab&oeidk=a07e7dxwalc3bf1ecff>
to register for the conference. **Early Bird Ends Aug 30!! HURRY**

Go to: http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/M/MYRBHHH-SRM-20130923/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG to register for a room at our Discounted Rates! Rates as low as \$133 a night (parking fee and tax extra). SC SHRM will again provide free internet. **The discounted hotel rates are good only until Aug 29!! HURRY!**

"Communication" regarding conference fees: Early Bird conference registration is \$300 up until August 30, \$350 thereafter. SC SHRM Strategic Academy is \$290. Networking Night is included with registration, additional guests \$60 each. No conference refunds will be allowed for cancellations after September 15.



Phillips Staffing Finds the Formula for Matching Workers with Client Company Positions

THE ORGANIZATION:

Phillips Staffing

Greenville, South Carolina

THE CHALLENGE:

- » Ensure that workers placed at client companies are matched with the skill requirements of each position

KEY COMPONENTS:

- » Perform job profiling by ACT-authorized, on-staff profilers to develop detailed task lists and conduct task and skill analyses for positions at client companies in upstate South Carolina
- » Offer a training curriculum to help individuals prepare for workplace skills assessments
- » Provide on-site testing for registered Career Readiness Certificates (CRC), credentials that are used across all sectors of the economy and certify the following skills:
 - › Problem solving
 - › Critical thinking
 - › Reading and using work-related text
 - › Applying information from workplace documents to solve problems
 - › Applying mathematical reasoning to work-related problems
 - › Setting up and performing work-related mathematical calculations
 - › Locating, synthesizing, and applying information that is presented graphically
 - › Comparing, summarizing, and analyzing information presented in multiple, related graphics

- » Offer additional WorkKeys® testing as defined by specific job profiles

THE RESULTS:

- » More than 35 profiles have been completed by Phillips Staffing profilers for client companies
- » Itron, a leading provider of energy and water resource management solutions for utilities around the globe, now requires Career Readiness Certificates from all applicants for permanent positions at its manufacturing facility in West Union, South Carolina

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Founded in 1968, S.B. Phillips Company is the parent company of Phillips Staffing. A full-service agency, Phillips Staffing uses a consultative approach with client companies to offer staffing, payroll management, professional placement, and human resources consulting services. Headquartered in Greenville, South Carolina, Phillips Staffing has 10 additional offices in the state and one in Northwest Georgia. The firm's stated commitment is to provide employers and job seekers alike with the highest standards of service and partnership.

THE CHALLENGE

When Ed Parris, now president of the Staffing Group at Phillips, joined the company about five years ago, he suggested the implementation of job profiling, WorkKeys testing, and Career Readiness Certificates to his new colleagues. Parris learned about Career Readiness Certificates as chairman of the local Workforce Investment Board, and his experience as a recruiter for a large tool manufacturer taught him about the challenge of assessing employees' workplace skills. "I felt that

WorkKeys provided the best kind of common language between education and industry I'd seen," Parris recalls. "It seemed that there has been a long-term struggle to get the education community to truly understand the workplace skills necessary in today's manufacturing environment. WorkKeys really addresses that gap and helps both parties communicate about what skill levels are needed to be successful. It was truly a 'bingo' moment for me."

At Phillips, Parris suggested that this same level of communication is essential for a staffing agency in serving clients. "If we know that an hourly line worker at a particular client company really needs a Bronze-level Certificate to do the job, then it is ideal if we send that company only those workers who have already proven their workplace skill levels at that level or higher," says Parris. "The match is more likely to be a good one for the worker and for the employer."

In September 2010, Phillips Staffing partnered with Greenville Works to launch a WorkKeys pilot program. Greenville Works is a partnership of local, state, and federal organizations working together to help new and existing businesses in Greenville County meet their workforce and business growth needs. These organizations share the view that ACT's Work Readiness System—which includes job analysis, assessments, training and curriculum, and certification—is an effective tool to upgrade the skills of the local workforce and benefit economic development.

IMPLEMENTATION

In the fall of 2010, Phillips deployed two ACT-authorized job profilers to work directly with employers to analyze specific positions. Profiling involves a focus group process to gather job task and WorkKeys skill information from job incumbents. A report is produced with a customized task list and identified skill levels related to specific work examples.

In October 2011, Phillips Staffing was named a full-service WorkKeys Solutions Provider, allowing the firm to administer WorkKeys assessments at Phillips Staffing offices or on-site at an employer's location.

"What sets us apart as a staffing agency is our consultative approach," says Parris. "We tour a prospective client's plant or business; we do risk assessments; we offer as many value-added services as we can. The WorkKeys program is certainly one of those. We have evidence that this innovation has helped with safety, turnover, productivity, and quality issues. We're a big believer in what this can mean for our clients' success." Parris reports that the system has improved almost every important metric for Phillips Staffing

and its clients. "It is nationally validated, and the success stories from diverse business settings are remarkable."

Parris continues, "Too many companies have relied on a promote-from-within approach based solely on work history and attendance. Individuals are promoted who just don't have the skills to succeed. The ACT Work Readiness System gives us the data and the tools to establish measurable skills criteria, and it gives workers an objective idea of what they need to succeed."

"The ACT Work Readiness System gives us the data and the tools to establish measurable skills criteria, and it gives workers an objective idea of what they need to succeed."

— Ed Parris, President, Staffing Groups, Phillips Staffing

With profiling services and testing in place, Phillips Staffing began serving a broad variety of employers and client companies, including tool manufacturing, plastic injection molding, sportswear manufacturing, and chemical companies.

Ideally, the process begins with profiling the specific jobs to be filled. Phillips' workforce readiness director, Beverly Deal, reports that the workers involved in the profiling process seem to enjoy the fact that their employer really wants to know, in great detail, what it takes to do a job well. "They take the focus group process very seriously and often are surprised at the amount of information in the final report. Our client companies appreciate the fact that hiring can be a more standardized, objective process, and they often report a positive impact on their bottom line in terms of reduced turnover and higher productivity from new hires."

RESULTS AT ITRON, INC.

Itron is a leading provider of energy and water resource management solutions for nearly 8,000 utilities around the globe. With nearly 9,000 employees in 130 countries, Itron empowers utilities to manage energy and water resources responsibly and efficiently.

Itron's plant in West Union, South Carolina, employs more than 750 full-time employees to design and build meters to measure electricity use. This Oconee County facility

employs about 450 full-time Itron hourly production workers and an additional 300 Phillips Staffing employees. These contingent workers may spend a few weeks at Itron or stay as long as two years, depending on workflow demand. Contingent workers are not required to hold a Career Readiness Certificate, but any individual wishing to apply for a full-time position with Itron must earn a CRC.

The 35 job positions profiled at Itron represent 100 percent of the hourly production positions at the West Union location. Phillips Staffing personnel completed 22 of the 35 profiles for Itron.

“Itron believes WorkKeys is a valuable tool not only for our employees, but also in workforce development and employment.”

— Sue Gray, Human Resources Manager, Itron, Inc.

The next implementation goal will be to use WorkKeys assessments for internal job openings. To bid for a posted opening, employees must have the skill levels required by the position profile to apply. “Researching and documenting information on all hourly positions is vital for Itron when planning staff development needs,” says Deal. “And it is also invaluable for us as a staffing agency when we can be confident we are sending candidates to Itron with the necessary skills to succeed.”

“Itron believes WorkKeys is a valuable tool not only for our employees, but also in workforce development and employment,” says Sue Gray, Itron human resources manager. “Hourly positions are among the hardest to hire. We may know an applicant’s work history and that they have manufacturing experience, but we also need to know whether they have the skill sets to perform the jobs at our plant. This program has given us that knowledge. The employees provided by Phillips Staffing working on-site are aware that we require Certificates as part of the hiring process and have chosen to document their skills by taking the assessments.”

Brooke Dobbins, a senior human resources business partner at Itron’s West Union plant, adds, “It may be surprising, but this has really been a good morale booster for our workers. They invested training time to prepare for the assessments, they tested, they achieved their Certificates,

and they take a lot of pride in their scores. The confidence they have gained has greatly outweighed any reluctance they may have had with the process.”

In 2012, Itron expects to begin using the system for full-time employees bidding on positions, and one of Itron’s Minnesota plants is beginning to explore the use of assessments and ACT’s National Career Readiness Certificate for their workers. Gray believes the West Union plant already has earned distinction as one of the first companies in the state to have a high percentage of workers with a CRC. “We look forward to celebrating that accomplishment.”

NEXT STEPS

Phillips Staffing is committed to continued use and advocacy of the system. According to Parris, “Greenville Works has brought a lot of key parties together—economic development, technical schools, high schools, United Way, and others—to address workforce issues together.” This is a model that Parris would like to see implemented across the state. “I have to give kudos to Greenville Works,” he says. “The open forum and broad cooperation they’ve created is really making a difference.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parris and Deal believe that staffing agencies across the nation can benefit from the ACT Work Readiness System. Parris concludes, “It’s a tool for providing the best available workforce to our customers, and it also says a lot about us that we have profilers on staff, offer testing at our offices and on-site at client companies, and are committed to being the best service provider we can be.”

Learn more at WWW.ACT.ORG/WORKFORCE

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101 ACT Drive
PO Box 168
Iowa City, IA 52243-0168
www.act.org/workforce
800.967.5539



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Rev 1

Ed Parris

From: noreply@shrm.org
Sent: Tuesday, June 04, 2013 8:28 AM
To: Ed Parris
Subject: Re: S.C. SHRM Working Hard to Boost State's Workforce Readiness

This www.shrm.org article content was sent to you by: **Ms. Cheryl Forlines CEBS, SPHR**

Comments from Ms. Cheryl Forlines CEBS, SPHR: woo hoo!!

S.C. SHRM Working Hard to Boost State's Workforce Readiness

By Bill Leonard

5/30/2013

When 12 South Carolina counties earned their Work Ready Community In Progress designations on May 12, 2013, the state became the first in the nation to have 100 percent of its counties approved for the groundbreaking [workforce readiness initiative](#) created by ACT, the college assessment and testing group.

Members of the SHRM S.C. State Council were instrumental in getting all 46 counties in the state to apply for the designations and to meet the program's rigorous requirements.

"It really was a labor of love for everyone on the state council," said Rita Revels, SPHR, director of the SHRM S.C. State Council and an HR manager at Schaeffler Group USA Inc. in Fort Mill, S.C. "We are all very passionate about improving workforce readiness in our communities, and this program is an excellent way for us to get involved and make a real difference in our communities."

To earn the S.C. Work Ready Community In Progress designation, each county had to demonstrate a two-year commitment to achieving certain goals, such as improving high school graduation rates, achieving certifications in national career-readiness standards, and ensuring the support of community stakeholders.

Members of the SHRM state council were involved in every step of the process, according to Revels.

“If someone from the SHRM local chapters couldn’t attend a planning or assessment meeting, then someone from the state council was there,” she explained. “Ed Parris and members of the state council’s workforce readiness committee should really be commended for all their hard work and dedication to this project.”

Parris, the SHRM state director for workforce readiness, said the effort he and others put into earning the work-ready designations goes beyond the traditional boundaries of volunteer work.

“The workforce readiness initiative really is essential to my work and my business,” said Parris, president of Phillips Staffing in Greenville, S.C. “The skills gap in the U.S. has reached critical mass, and businesses simply cannot find the skilled workers that they need, which is having a negative impact on our economy.”

South Carolina’s manufacturing industry is at the core of the state’s economy, but the skills needed by today’s high-tech companies are much different than the state’s textile industry of 30 years ago.

“Manufacturers like BMW and Boeing have invested millions in South Carolina, and these companies have spawned other businesses that supply them,” Parris said. “In the Greenville area alone there are 40 suppliers for BMW. And most of those businesses need highly skilled machinists and tool and die makers, and they are facing a tremendous challenge filling those jobs.”

The skills-gap challenge has made programs to promote workforce readiness an economic necessity, Parris claims. He is proud that South Carolina is now recognized as a leader in the national effort to improve work skills.

“This is a great starting point, but we still have a lot more work to do to make sure that workers have the skills businesses need to compete and thrive in today’s global market.”

Bill Leonard is a senior writer for SHRM.