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#### HOLIDAY FUN FACTOID

Thought you might enjoy a little fun financial factoid to kick off the holiday season. Since 1984 PNC Bank has been calculating the Christmas Price Index (CPI) by calculating the costs of all the gifts in the "Twelve Days of Christmas" song. Yes, they actually have been doing this for 27 years. This year's cost was released yesterday and the index is up 9.2 percent over 2009. That's a pretty big jump considering our struggling economy. I've [attached](#) the list of 12 gifts and their associated price tags for 2010 in case you are in the market for any of them. PNC also has a neat interactive website if you wish to explore in more detail at [www.christmaspriceindex.com](http://www.christmaspriceindex.com).

*Article provided by Bryan S. Simmons, AIFA, CRPS, Retirement and Investment Services Consultant, David Martin Agency, Inc., [bsimmons@davidmartinagency.com](mailto:bsimmons@davidmartinagency.com).*

#### HEALTH CARE

The Health Insurance Exchange and 2011 Changes Webinar - DECEMBER 16

The Minnesota Chamber is hosting a three-part webinar series created to assist employers in understanding and implementing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (HR 3590). This program will cover the new Health Insurance Exchanges under PPACA and the new laws scheduled to take effect January 1, 2011 (e.g. Small Business Tax Credit, W-2 Reporting, HSA Limits & Penalty, FSA Limits, Brand-Name Drug Tax, Federally Subsidized Long-Term Care and Physician Ownership Referral).

Presenters:

**April Todd-Malmlov**, state health economist and director, health economics program, Minnesota Department of Health

**Manny Munson-Regala**, deputy commissioner, market assurance division, Minnesota Department of Commerce

This webinar is free to Minnesota Chamber members and \$89 for nonmembers.

 REGISTER NOW

2011 Compensation & Benefit Trends

Well-designed total rewards programs involve the deliberate integration of key elements that effectively attract, retain and motivate the talent required to achieve desired business results. On November 16, the Chamber hosted a program to share current compensation and benefit trends, provide guiding principles to assist in developing a total rewards program and making future decisions in your business compensation and benefit plan. The presenters were Karen Bundy, principal, Mercer, and Maureen Driscoll, managing director, human capital consulting, McGladrey, Inc.

To listen to the program, go to [www.mnchamber.com/benefits/help\\_line](http://www.mnchamber.com/benefits/help_line).

#### RELIABILITY WORKGROUP CHARTER: VOLUNTEER REQUESTED

The Minnesota Chamber is asked from time to time to submit a name for employer representatives to serve on a "task force or working group" at the state level to work on issues that are then brought before the legislature or a commission...HERE IS THE LATEST REQUEST. The Minnesota Department of Health is looking for consumers/purchasers to sit on their Provider Peer Grouping reliability workgroup. [Attached](#) is background on this workgroup as well as a preliminary timeline. If you are interested in serving on this workgroup, please contact Mary Bethke at (651) 292-4672 or [mbethke@mnchamber.com](mailto:mbethke@mnchamber.com). Thank you for your consideration of this request.

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#### WHEN IS EMPLOYEES' ONLINE ACTIVITY PROTECTED ACTIVITY?

Many Human Resources professionals already have confronted the issue of what an employer can do or should do when employees' social media activities (on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, blogs, etc.) negatively affect the employer's business. A recent complaint filed by the National Labor Relations Board suggests employers may have to tolerate critical or even disparaging Internet postings if the communications reasonably could be construed to relate to working conditions.

 [READ MORE](#)

*Article provided by Nicole Haaning and Gabrielle Mead, Dorsey & Whitney, LLP, [www.dorsey.com/minneapolis](http://www.dorsey.com/minneapolis).*

#### SIX WAYS TO SOLVE THE PEOPLE THING, SO YOU CAN FOCUS ON YOUR REAL WORK

Q: "I sometimes think managing people is a lot tougher than my real job, which is to get the right information to the right people at the right time. How can I spend less time spinning my wheels on people issues so I can get my work done?"

A: So you're looking for a strategy that will help you get your work done? Have I got a solution for you:

Spend even more time on people issues!

 [READ MORE](#)

*Article provided by Doherty Employer Services, a recognized leader in Professional Employer Services. For more information, go to [www.dohertyhro.com](http://www.dohertyhro.com) in cooperation with Heidi Croot principal of Croot Communications.*

#### FIVE KEY HR PRACTICES FOR NEW BUSINESS OWNERS

Amid crippling business losses and chaos in the financial markets, the Great Recession brought many companies to their knees. However, as in past recessions, the downturn also brought new business ventures.

In fact, business start-ups reached their highest rate in 14 years, with an average of 558,000 businesses created each month in 2009, surpassing even the tech boom of the late 1990s.

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Article provided by Administaff, the nation's leading professional employer organization (PEO). Administaff serves as a full-service human resources department that provides small and medium-sized businesses with administrative relief, big-company benefits, reduced liabilities and a systematic way to improve productivity. For additional information, call (800) 465-3800 or visit [www.administaff.com](http://www.administaff.com).

## BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING FOR SAFETY

Interviewing job candidates can be a daunting experience for people who are responsible for hiring employees. What do I ask them? Am I asking the right questions to provide insight into a person's core safety beliefs and his or her past involvement in safety practices?

 [READ MORE](#)

*Article provided by Jan Fedora, occupational safety and health consultant with the Minnesota Safety Council, [www.mnsafetycouncil.org](http://www.mnsafetycouncil.org).*

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