

HRATT Current members:	68
SHRM members:	41 (60%)
Certified members:	16 (24%)



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The President's Corner

When I began my term as president of this chapter, I started to review the financial health of HRATT. Sure, we had money in the bank, and our goal is not to make a profit. . . but I needed a handle on whether all of our sources of income were covering all of our expenses. If you attended the State of the Association presentation I conducted at Tag's a year ago on that snowy day last February, you would know we have been operating at a net loss for the previous four years. I am pleased to report that we ended 2014 in the black! I consider this a small victory and credit one of the decisions the board made to this victory. We decided to incorporate a "pay one price" option on our membership renewal application. Ten members took advantage of this for 2015. At \$200 per person, we received \$2,000 in income where we normally would have received \$500. This contributed to our favorable balance at the end of 2014 of \$1,473.04.

The board continues to take steps to improve our financial health by setting goals to keep us operating without losing money. That is why last November we made the decision to raise the monthly attendance fee for meetings beginning in 2015. We have set a goal to offer valuable programs to our membership with little or no expense to the association. We are working to transition our website to a SHRM hosted site for free and shed the expense of web hosting we are currently paying. We also are working to eliminate the use of a storage shed we have been maintaining as a way to save money.

There are many other initiatives the board is undertaking. I would be happy to boast about any one of our board chairs and the accomplishments we have made so far and the lofty goals we have set for 2015. I end this article as I have my previous articles, with an invitation to our membership to ask questions, get involved, and continuing to participate in our monthly programs. Without all of you, we would not be as successful as we are. So thank you for your time and attention, and here's to another successful year for HRATT!

Jenine Cleary, SPHR, SHRM-SCP
Chapter President

Employment Law Briefs

Conrad R. Wolan, Esq.

Emily M. Rockett, Esq.

EEOC Enforcement and Litigation Trends

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recently released statistics from fiscal year 2014 detailing the 88,778 charges of workplace discrimination received by the agency in the federal fiscal year ending September 30, 2014. Nationwide, overall charge filings were down from the prior year, although the numbers were likely impacted by the government shutdown. Retaliation claims continue to be the biggest problem for employers.

While one might expect race, sex, disability, or age claims to figure prominently, charges alleging retaliation were 42.8 percent of the total. Race claims were second at 35 percent, sex claims at 29.3 percent, disability claims at 28.6 percent, and age claims at 23.2 percent. (The total is greater than 100 because charges can contain multiple allegations.) Claims alleging discrimination based on national origin, religion, color, and other discrete areas rounded out the report.

In New York, the number of total charges filed in fiscal year 2014 increased slightly from 2013 but was otherwise still below the numbers from the prior four fiscal years. The New York filings represent 4.1 percent of all charges filed across the country. Similar to the national statistic, 42.6 percent of charges in New York alleged retaliation. The next highest category of complaint involved sex discrimination charges, which amounted to 31.2 percent of the state total.

While the EEOC did receive nearly 90,000 charges, only 133 lawsuits were filed by the EEOC regarding the merits of any particular case. (The EEOC is involved in more litigation, but those matters often involve procedural or technical matters.) In fiscal year 2014, the EEOC obtained, either through awards or settlements, \$22.5 million.

The EEOC noted that 30 percent of the charges, across all types, alleged harassment (rather than direct adverse employment actions). The EEOC is prioritizing the prevention of harassment through systemic enforcement and targeted outreach.

State No Longer Requires Annual Notices of Pay Rate

On December 29, 2014, the Governor signed a bill that made a variety of amendments to the State Labor Law. Although the majority of the bill pertained to increasing fines for various violations of the law, the most immediate impact was the elimination of the requirement that employers provide annual written notices regarding rates of pay.

The effective date of the legislation was originally scheduled to be well after the 2015 wage notices would have been delivered. However, the Governor noted in his signing statement that he had already reached an agreement with the legislature to amend the law so that it would be effective for the January 2015 notices.

Although the amending legislation has still not been enacted, the New York State Department of Labor has treated the elimination of the annual notice as if it were effective immediately. The Department of Labor noted on its website that, "Accordingly, given the pending enactment of this chapter amendment, the Department will not require annual statements in 2015." Notices are, of course, still required upon hiring.





How Diversity Makes Us Smarter

Being around people who are different from us makes us more creative, more diligent and harder-working. Decades of research by organizational scientists, psychologists, sociologists, economists and demographers show that socially diverse groups (that is, those with a diversity of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation) are more innovative than homogeneous groups. It seems obvious that a group of people with diverse individual expertise would be better than a homogeneous group at solving complex, nonroutine problems. It is less obvious that social diversity should work in the same way. This is not only because people with different backgrounds bring new information. Simply interacting with individuals who are different forces group members to prepare better, to anticipate alternative viewpoints and to expect that reaching consensus will take effort.

The first thing to acknowledge about diversity is that it can be difficult. Research has shown that social diversity in a group can cause discomfort, rougher interactions, a lack of trust, greater perceived interpersonal conflict, lower communication, less cohesion, more concern about disrespect, and other problems. So what is the upside?

The fact is that if you want to build teams or organizations capable of innovating, you need diversity. Diversity enhances creativity. It encourages the search for novel information and perspectives, leading to better decision making and problem solving. Diversity can improve the bottom line of companies and lead to unfettered discoveries and breakthrough innovations. Even simply being exposed to diversity can change the way you think.

Information and Innovation

The key to understanding the positive influence of diversity is the concept of informational diversity. When people are brought together to solve problems in groups, they bring different information, opinions and perspectives. People who are different from one another in race, gender and other dimensions bring unique information and experiences to bear on the task at hand.

The Power of Anticipation

Diversity is not only about bringing different perspectives to the table. Simply adding social diversity to a group makes people *believe* that differences of perspective might exist among them and that belief makes people change their behavior.

Members of a homogeneous group rest somewhat assured that they will agree with one another; that they will understand one another's perspectives and beliefs; that they will be able to easily come to a consensus. But when members of a group notice that they are socially different from one another, they change their expectations. They anticipate differences of opinion and perspective. They assume they will need to work harder to come to a consensus. This logic helps to explain both the upside and the downside of social diversity: people work harder in diverse environments both cognitively and socially. They might not like it, but the hard work can lead to better outcomes.

The pain, as the old saying goes, produces the gain. In just the same way, we need diversity—in teams, organizations and society as a whole—if we are to change, grow and innovate.

Hello HRATT Members,

We successfully “went live” with the HRATT LinkedIn group page in mid-December 2014 and currently have 31 members have joined the group. We will be updating the webpage with upcoming HRATT events, membership information, pertinent legal rulings and legislative changes. The page is for the membership to ask questions and share information on issues we all face in HR, feel free to share information with everyone and ask questions.

Continue to watch for updates on the HRATT LinkedIn page, if you have not joined the group page and are interested please let me know.

https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=8162029&trk=my_groups-tile-grp

-Matthew W. Burr, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

HRATT- VP Marketing and Communications

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HRATT Volunteers Needed

A heartfelt thank you to all HRATT members who already support Career Development Council and our Workforce Readiness Programs! Your time and effort help make our programs as successful as they are...we literally couldn't do what we do without you.

Our biggest events of the year are coming up and we need your help! Career days, career panels and mock interviews require many volunteers to make them successful. Career Days and Mock Interviews can require 20 – 30 volunteers for each event. We have 4 Career Days and 6 Career Panels scheduled in March! Mock interviews are scheduled in April and May. Mock Interviews can take as little as 1 hour of your time. Please consider taking advantage of these opportunities to influence our future workforce! Share your career knowledge with students; talk about your background, schooling and experience. Shape students' knowledge of soft skills, work expectations, interview skills and help them develop their work ethic.

There are literally hundreds of opportunities to volunteer your time supporting Workforce Readiness which is considered a core leadership area of the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM). Your efforts would be in keeping with the values of SHRM and your local chapter, HRATT.

If any of these highly effective and valuable career exploration events inspire you to share your expertise, please contact the CDC office at 607-975-5320 or e-mail me, Diane Vang, at dvang@gstboces.org.

Career Development Council is an educational not-for-profit affiliated with GST BOCES. We rely heavily on the generosity of time and expertise of our local business community to provide career awareness and career exploration opportunities for students across our region and we thank you for your support.

Who we are:



- **SHRM Foundation Vision**

The SHRM Foundation is the globally recognized catalyst for shaping human resource thought leadership and research.

- **SHRM Foundation Mission**

The 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.



Leading People.
Leading Organizations.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION

June 28 - July 1, 2015

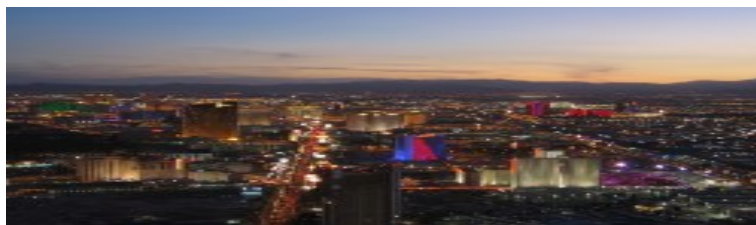
Las Vegas Convention Center

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The SHRM Annual Conference is the best — and biggest — HR Conference in the world. Here, you'll find an array of experiences that can be found nowhere else - experiences that can help transform you, your team, and your organization in big and small ways. With over 200 sessions, inspiring keynote speakers, 49+ recertification credits, endless networking and world's largest HR marketplace, you'll leave Las Vegas more prepared for what's next.

- See more at: <http://www.shrm.org/conferences/pages/default.aspx#sthash.6nAzji0K.dpuf>



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The Human Resource
Association of the Twin Tiers

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Elmira, New York 14902

VISIT US ON THE WEB:
WWW.HRATT.ORG

The Association

The Human Resources Association of the Twin Tiers (HRATT) is an organization for human resource professionals from the private and public sectors who daily deal with personnel matters, wage and salary administration, labor relations and other aspects of human resource management.

HRATT serves the Twin Tiers including the counties of Chemung, Steuben and Schuyler in New York, and Bradford and Tioga counties in Pennsylvania.

HRATT meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the Elmira-Corning area. Meetings usually alternate between breakfast and lunch unless otherwise indicated, except July and August. On the months where a holiday is involved in the week, we move the meeting to the 3rd Thursday of the month.

Goals

1. Provide the members a means for exchange of information on area HR practices & challenges.
2. Further members' professional development and education.
3. Develop & publish a survey of wage/salary & HR practices in the area.
4. Enhance the area's labor relations image.

Benefits of HRATT Membership

- Monthly meetings dealing with local and national HR issues.
- Professional speakers covering current HR topics.
- HRATT Membership Directory.
- Networking with local HR professionals.
- Opportunities for professional and personal growth

