

FAHROgram

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS

July/August 2015

President's Message

Re-Branding Takes Center Stage at ED Forum

Discussion to Continue During Annual Convention

I would like to start by saying thank you to the FAHRO members who were able to attend the Executive Directors' (ED) Forum at the Shores Resort and Spa in Daytona Beach in May. I would also like to thank the following for attending and bringing their expertise and knowledge to the event: Pam Davis of the Gainesville Housing Authority; Bill Russell of the Sarasota Housing Authority; Patricia Rice of the Winter Park Housing Authority; Jerome Ryans of the Tampa Housing Authority; Scott Keller, FAHRO's federal affairs consultant; Oscar Anderson, FAHRO's state affairs consultant; Ric Gilmore of Saxon, Gilmore, Carraway & Gibbons; Lisa Landers, FAHRO's communications and public relations committee

chairwoman; Ellis Henry, PIH director of the HUD Jacksonville Office; and Jose Cintron, director of the HUD Miami Office.



Maria A. Burger

The main topic discussed at the ED Forum was "Re-Branding Your Agency." This topic is so important that we have designed a class to address this issue specifically during the 2015 FAHRO Annual Convention & Trade Show. I am very excited to see how everyone is getting ready to be transported to the magical world of FAHROland, "The Affordable

See **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** on page 3

State Legislative Affairs

Finally ... A Budget

by Oscar Anderson, FAHRO State Affairs Consultant

The 2015 Legislative Sessions will go down in history. The unprecedented end to the Regular Session and subsequent Supreme Court ruling has shaped the way the Legislature will operate going forward. To recap, the House adjourned more than 72 hours before the end of Regular Session without getting an agreement from the Senate. The Supreme Court said that this violated the State Constitution, which contemplates that neither the House nor the Senate can adjourn for more than 72 hours without the

consent of the other body. The "72 Hour Rule" changed the way the Special Session had to function by requiring the Legislature to come back into session every 72 hours. This will undoubtedly impact every session going forward.



Oscar Anderson

The Special Session ended on June 19 with the House and the Senate

See **STATE LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS** on page 6

Calendar

July 30-August 1, 2015
Austin, Tex.
NAHRO Summer Conference

August 11-13, 2015
Orlando, Fla.
FAHRO Annual Convention & Trade Show
Disney's Yacht Club Resort

August 30-September 2, 2015
Orlando, Fla.
FHC Conference

September 15-16, 2015
Washington, D.C.
PHADA Legislative Forum

October 15-17, 2015
Los Angeles, Calif.
NAHRO National Conference

November 8-10, 2015
Jacksonville, Fla.
SERC Fall Workshop

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Member Feedback

Do you need help with a project or issue and want to see if any of our readers have the answer? Has a colleague done something wonderful that deserves an attaboy or attagirl? Or are you just frustrated and want to vent? Here is your chance to (anonymously if you wish) say thanks, ask for assistance, vent your frustrations, express your opinion or let us know how you feel.

- Thank you to Oscar Anderson, FAHRO state affairs consultant, for his hard work during the 2015 Regular Session and Special Session. As you know, budget issues were contentious this year. Don't miss the 2015 FAHRO Annual Convention & Trade Show, where Oscar will provide a detailed update on this year's legislative actions.
- Congratulations to the Housing Authority of the City of Cocoa on its recent award of \$250,000 from HUD's Capital



Fund Emergency Safety and Security Program, which supports public housing authorities as they address safety and security threats that pose a risk to the health and safety of public housing residents due to violent crimes or property-related crimes within the public housing community.

If you would like to contribute to Sounding Off, please email your comments to Susan Trainor, FAHROgram editor, editor.trainor@gmail.com.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued from page 1

Housing Kingdom," at Disney's Yacht Club Resort in Orlando. The 2015 convention will feature development, maintenance, HUD programs and commissioner tracks to help expand our offerings to members. After hosting a small development track last year, we have expanded it into a full track in order to prepare housing authority executives for the future. Additionally, we will be offering a session geared toward housing authority residents that will help with early childhood education and grade-level reading.

We are also hosting the third annual FAHRO Statewide Invitational Basketball Tournament in conjunction with the 2015 convention. We return to the Orlando

Sports Complex as we challenge our housing authority youth to compete against athletes from other agencies. Given the success of the 2014 tournament, we look forward to continuing this event and enriching the lives of our residents both young and old. We encourage all members attending the convention to come out and watch the games, which begin on Friday, August 7, at 4 p.m. and conclude on Sunday, August 9, when we will crown the 2015 King of the Court.

Visit FAHRO.org for more information. If you haven't done so already, please visit FAHRO.org/convention to register for the 2015 convention! See you in Orlando!

Send Your News to FAHRO!

Tell us about your accomplishments, milestones and other interesting member news. Your fellow members want to know!

Submit your news to FAHRO via email:

editor.trainor@gmail.com

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Photographs are welcome!





We Love Our Lindsey Software.

Bartow Housing Authority

Executive Director: Catherine E. Reddick
Bartow, Florida

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not use anything else.
Lindsey has so many
good shortcuts, that it
doesn’t take me long
to do anything!”*

— CATHERINE REDDICK —

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- User-friendly software
- Easy to learn
- Economical
- Saves time
- Free, unlimited training
- Great support
- Mobile solutions
- Online rental applications

THE SITUATION

Catherine Reddick, Executive Director of Bartow Housing Authority in Florida loves to talk about Lindsey software. With more than 23 years as a user, she feels that Lindsey is user-friendly, very easy to learn and helps her do her job more effectively.

Catherine began her career in public housing at the Winter Haven Housing Authority. After 13 years, she moved to the Bartow Housing Authority as Executive Director and has been there for 11 years.

THE SOLUTION

Lindsey is a total solution for Catherine and her staff and she is not afraid to tell other agencies. “I know I am not their largest client, but they always treat me like I am,” says Catherine.

Bartow HA uses almost every module Lindsey has, plus the mobile solutions and HousingManager.com online rental applications. They have made an investment in the entire package and like the way everything works together.

MOBILE

Catherine comments, “When we first got the mobile products, I was a little afraid of making the change. Then I went out and did an inspection on the iPad myself and realized that it was much easier than I ever expected.”

HOUSINGMANAGER.COM

Moving applications online has been extremely beneficial in reducing tenant traffic in the office. Tenants are very versatile and have adapted well to filling out applications from their computer, tablet or mobile device.

TRAINING & SUPPORT

Catherine and her staff take advantage of the free training opportunities whenever possible, attending webinars and using the online Portal. “We use support when there is a problem, or something I just cannot figure out. They know me by my first name,” says Catherine with a smile.

Bartow Housing Authority is a satisfied Lindsey customer. After 23 years using Lindsey, Catherine says it would be hard to find another company that could change her mind. “Lindsey has made an investment in this industry by creating products that make my job easier, and I have made an investment in Lindsey.”



Supreme Court Holds Disparate-Impact Claims Are Valid Under the Fair Housing Act

by Tracy M. Evans



Tracy M. Evans

On June 25, 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States issued its opinion in the case of *Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs et. al. v. The Inclusive Communities Project, Inc.*, Case No. 13-1371, holding that disparate-impact claims are cognizable claims under the Fair Housing Act (FHA). Our firm has been monitoring the outcome of this case since we first reported on it in December of last year. For a review of the

facts underlying the case, please see the article “Supreme Court to Decide Whether Disparate-Impact Claims Can Be Asserted Under the Fair Housing Act,” available at www.SaxonGilmore.com under the tab “Articles.”

Disparate-impact claims challenge policies that appear on their face to be neutral but in practice have an unjustified, disproportionately adverse effect on minorities. In determining whether disparate-impact claims are viable under the FHA, the Supreme Court looked at two other antidiscrimination statutes where the Supreme Court had previously determined that the disparate-impact claims were viable: Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination Employment Act of 1968.

The Supreme Court found that all three statutes contain similar, catchall phrases that look to the consequences of policies, not the intent behind the policies. The Supreme Court determined that the similar language in the FHA was sufficient to show the legislative intent to impose disparate-impact liability under the FHA.

The Supreme Court considered the fact that prior to the 1988 amendments to the FHA, nine different federal courts of appeal had previously held that disparate-impact liability applied under the FHA. In examining the legislative intent behind the FHA, the Supreme Court noted that Congress made sure to retain



The Supreme Court warned that if disparate-impact litigation becomes too prevalent, private developers may be discouraged from constructing or renovating low-income housing units.

See **SUPREME COURT** on page 6

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the relevant statutory language that the nine courts of appeal had relied upon in determining the existence of disparate-impact liability under the FHA. Further evidence of the congressional intent to include disparate-impact liability under the FHA was apparent in the congressional rejection of a proposed amendment to eliminate disparate-impact liability in certain instances, and the inclusion of amendments assuming the existence of disparate-impact liability under the FHA.

The Supreme Court recognized the importance of properly limiting disparate-impact liability and cautioned courts against using expansive interpretations of disparate-impact liability. As a means of limiting liability, the Supreme Court emphasized the importance of ensuring that housing authorities and private developers are given the opportunity to explain the valid interest served by their policies. Conversely, the Supreme Court pointed out that a disparate-impact claim that relies solely on statistical disparity must fail unless the plaintiff can attribute the disparity to an existing policy.

The Supreme Court also warned that if disparate-impact litigation becomes too prevalent, private developers may become discouraged from constructing or renovating housing units for low-income individuals. Such a result would undermine the purpose of the FHA, to eliminate discriminatory practices within the housing industry, and also would undermine the free market system.

Tracy M. Evans, Esq., is an associate at Saxon Gilmore & Carraway P.A. 🌿

passing a budget and then adjourning together *sine die* as has historically been the case.

The \$78 billion budget had two of the governor's priorities, though at lower levels than the governor had hoped. The education budget saw a 3 percent increase to \$7,100 per-pupil funding, which was just short of the governor's record ask for education funding. The House and the Senate also agreed to set aside more than \$400 million in tax cuts for Floridians.

The Medicaid expansion discussion that almost caused the state government to have a shutdown was not really resolved. Enough funds were included in the budget to draw down the federal match for Low Income Pool funds, but the larger question went unanswered as both chambers passed their versions of health care legislation. Without a real compromise, the issue of Medicaid expansion will be looming large over the next session as well.

For affordable housing programs, the Legislature agreed to fund SHIP (State Housing Initiatives Partnership) and SAIL (State Apartment Incentive Loan) at \$175 million. This funding level is only 68 percent of the \$256 million available in the Sadowski Trust Fund but is a significant amount and will be helpful as rent and home prices begin to rise once again. Of the \$175 million, almost \$10 million was set aside for homeless programs and other housing projects.

I will present a detailed recap of the budget at the FAHRO Annual Convention & Trade Show. See you in August! 🌿

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Combating Fraud in Broward County

Recognizing that the Federal Trade Commission has identified Florida as the state with the highest per capita rate in reported fraud and identity theft complaints and the highest percentage of complaints involving government documents or benefits fraud, Broward County Housing Authority (BCHA) decided to place increased attention on educating staff, landlords and families on its commitment to preventing and eliminating these problems within its programs.

With South Florida ranking among the top 20 U.S. metropolitan areas with the highest concentration of reported fraud, BCHA investigator and Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) Tim Thomas set his focus on stepping up efforts aimed at both prevention and detection. His strategy was straightforward: 1) train staff members to recognize discrepancies and to use public records sources and EIV reports to identify possible inconsistencies in information provided to them; 2) give participants and landlords information on what to watch for; and 3) make the general public aware of how to report possible fraudulent activity.

An example of the strategy's success occurred in May when a former BCHA voucher participant was prosecuted for her involvement in a complex case of fraud. Responding to a complaint, and using readily available public records such as mortgage documents and a quitclaim deed, the BCHA investigator

was able to gather enough information to establish a case. Working in collaboration with the HUD Office of Inspector General, the case was presented to the U.S. Attorney's Office, which took it to the grand jury. The case resulted in the arrest and conviction of the perpetrator, who was sentenced to 33 months in prison and \$49,000 in court ordered restitution.

BCHA remains committed to promoting integrity and accountability in its programs and operations. Not yet ready to ease up on its enforcement efforts, BCHA is still hard at work prosecuting other cases at the state and federal levels to help eliminate fraud and to recover resources lost through fraudulent activity. 🌿



Broward County Housing Authority is committed to promoting integrity and accountability in its programs and services. www.freedigitalphotos.net; photo by Stuart Miles

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HACFM Celebrates Dads at Annual Father's Day Event


In partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lee County and Lee County Black History Society, the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers hosted its Fifth Annual Father's Day Celebration, an initiative created to strengthen families and communities by supporting dads. The event was held on June 20 at Roberto Clemente Park in Fort Myers.

The HACFM combined its Father's Day festivities with the Lee County Black History Society's Juneteenth celebrations. As part of President Obama's Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative, the HACFM's annual Father's Day Celebration joins a nationwide day of events encouraged by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative partners with the Administration for Children and Families, White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, fathers, mothers, family-serving organizations and other leaders from across the country who wish to be positive role models and mentors for the children in their lives and communities.

"It is the goal of the HACFM to encourage all fathers, especially absent fathers, to become a strong and vital part of their children's lives," says Marcus D. Goodson, executive director of the HACFM. "We hope to inspire and encourage our fathers to be a positive role model for their children by providing an atmosphere of love, support and entertainment during the Father's Day



The HACFM's Father's Day Celebration was filled with a variety of fun and entertainment for the entire family to enjoy. Event attendees also received free information from community businesses in the areas of wealth, health, education, job training, employment, housing, corporate and government services and more.

weekend and for the rest of their lives. It is our belief that with a strong family unit in place, children will thrive and become an instrumental part of the communities in which they live." 

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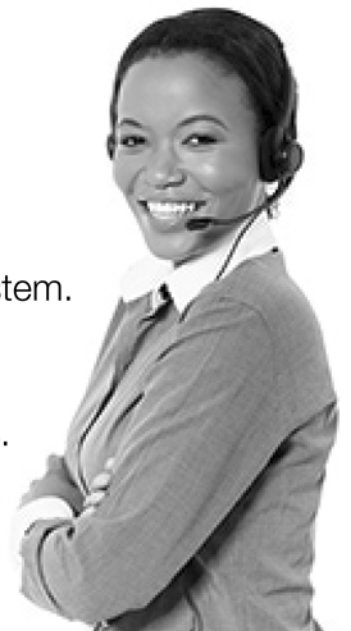
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Pinellas County Housing Authority Celebrates Completion of Community Revitalization

On May 21, approximately 150 guests attended the ribbon cutting celebration for the beautiful, completely renovated Landings at Cross Bayou in St. Petersburg. Prior to its rehab and renovation, the property was a vintage 1970s public housing property with failing infrastructure.

The Landings at Cross Bayou was the first HUD Rental Assistance Demonstration project to close in Florida, preserving the HUD subsidy for very-low-income families. Norstar Development USA LP and Pinellas County Housing Authority co-developed the project. Financial partners included the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Florida Housing Finance Corporation, Raymond James, Pinellas County, Norstar Development USA and Pinellas County Housing Authority. The new property was designed by Bessolo Design Group and was constructed by Brooks & Freund.

In addition to the partners that made Landings possible, other attendees and participants in the ribbon cutting included State Representative Kathleen Peters; representatives from the offices of Congressman David Jolly and State Senator Jeff Brandes; HUD Field Office Director Alesia Scott-Ford; and PCHA board members Joseph Triolo, Angela Rouson, Michael Guju and Alan Swartz. Rep. Peters praised Pinellas County Housing Authority



St. Petersburg City Councilman Wengay Newton, HUD Field Office Director Alesia Scott-Ford, PCHA Chairman Joseph Triolo, PCHA Commissioner Alan Swartz, Stephani Lavelly representing Congressman David Jolly, PCHA CEO Debra Johnson, PCHA Vice Chairwoman Angela Rouson, PCHA Commissioner Michael Guju, Raymond James Bank Executive V.P. Thomas Macina, Florida Housing Finance Corporation Legislative Affairs Director Jacqui Peters, Florida State Rep. Kathleen Peters and Raymond James Tax Credit Funds Senior V.P. Sam Shupe celebrate the opening of the renovated Landings at Cross Bayou.

See **PINELLAS COUNTY** on page 12

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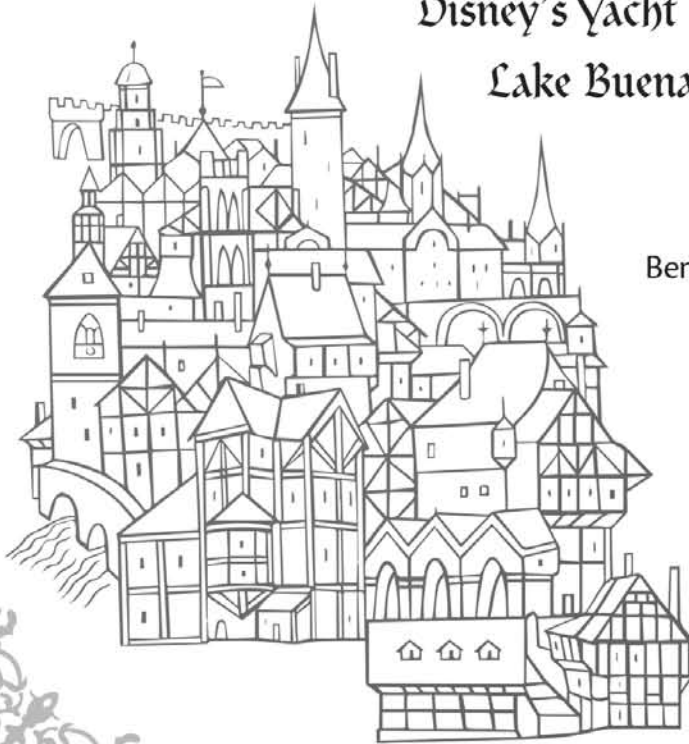
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Benefits of Attending

- Networking
- Education
- Advocacy
- Trade Show



PINELLAS COUNTY continued from page 9

and partners for a job well done, saying, “The people that have put this together have really worked on building a really, really strong community for some of our most vulnerable citizens.”

Landings at Cross Bayou is the result of public-private partnerships providing mixed-financing for 184 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartment homes. The new property has income-based rents through HUD’s Rental Assistance Demonstration program. Each unit has Energy Star appliances, ceramic tile floors, cherry wood cabinets, central air conditioning with humidity control, and walk-in showers. On-site amenities include a spacious Community Center with a warming kitchen, a lounge area with TVs, a library, a business center with computers and internet access and a fitness center. The Youth Center will house the Pinellas Police Athletic League program and includes a computer lab, craft space, a large gathering room and a playground with a basketball court.

Pinellas County Community Planning Manager Frank Bowman says, “The renovations are magnificent ... but the inclusion of the community space and acknowledging the need for programs for children and opportunities and facilities to provide the residents with support services show that this is going to be a wonderful, wonderful community for hopefully another 50 years. Pinellas County is very, very proud to participate in this project and to work with our wonderful Pinellas County Housing Authority partner on a regular basis.”



Landings at Cross Bayou was designed by Bessolo Design Group, which had previously worked with PCHA on Pinellas Heights in Largo.

The community is professionally managed by Norstar Accolade Property Management.

“We are tremendously grateful to all of our partners for making the complete revitalization and preservation of HUD subsidy for this property possible. Pinellas County continues to be in dire need of good, quality housing for low-income individuals and families, and we’re very thankful that we were able to preserve this property for many years to come,” says Debbie Johnson, PCHA executive director. 🌿

HACFM Dedicates Flagpole to Longtime Employee

The Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers (HACFM) recently lost a beloved employee. Victor King was on his way home from work on Oct. 10, 2014, when he died in a tragic motorcycle accident. Victor was a housing inspector and a U.S. Marine who was proud to serve his country. Every morning he would give the OOH-RAH Marine chant to his fellow employees. The HACFM family referred to Victor as the gentle giant due to his height and build.

On June 10, 2015, staff members gathered to dedicate their flagpole in memory of Victor and in honor of his daily salute to the flag each morning as he walked into the administration building.

“We miss Victor very much and pray that he is at peace,” says Marcus D. Goodson, HACFM executive director. 🌿



Ismael Silva, a fellow housing inspector, and Victor King’s longtime girlfriend, Anne Bailem, remember their friend.



SAVE THE DATE!
August 11-13, 2015
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Visit www.FHARO.org for more information.



FAHRO Peer Assistance Network Stands Ready to Help

FAHRO offers many great resources to members, including education, advocacy and communications relevant to your agency. One of the greatest benefits of membership, however, is being a part of the FAHRO family. Many agencies have relied on the members and staff of FAHRO to help them out of a tough situation when they had many questions and very few, if any, answers.

One way to receive support is by contacting the FAHRO Peer Assistance Network. This committee, chaired by Becky-Sue Mercer of the Arcadia Housing Authority, provides members with solutions to their toughest problems. The committee consists of 12 members of variously sized housing authorities eager to assist you with whatever your issue might be. If you would like help from the committee, please email Becky-Sue at arcadiabousing@embarqmail.com. 🌿



Maintenance Mechanic OCALA HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Ocala Housing Authority (OHA) is seeking a full-time maintenance mechanic. This position will be responsible for repairs and maintenance duties at a journeyman level, as it relates to building maintenance and structure. In addition, the person must be able to work independently and complete assigned tasks with minimal supervision. Additionally, the prospective employee will be required to, at minimum, walk on a single-story roof, as well as serve in the on-call rotation. Minimum qualifications: skilled laborer with a high school diploma/GED and a minimum of three years' experience in construction/remodeling/home repairs, and must be in good physical condition—able to lift at least 50 pounds. A valid Florida driver license is required. Salary: minimum of \$11/hour plus excellent benefits. Submit a completed application and three verifiable work references to the attention of Gwendolyn B. Dawson, chief executive officer, Ocala Housing Authority Administrative Office, 1629 NW 4th Street, Ocala, FL 34475. Applicants may also submit applications via fax (352/369-2643), email (contactus@ocalahousing.org) or in-person. Applications are on OHA's website (www.ocalahousing.org) or can be picked up from the administrative office, and will be accepted until position is filled. OHA is a HUD Certified Housing Counseling Agency as well as an Equal Opportunity Employer, an Equal Opportunity Housing Agency and a Drug-Free Workplace. 🌿



SOLUTIONS

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FPHASIF FACTS



Time for a Check Up: What Every Employer Can Do to Improve Employee Health and Wellness *Brought to you by FPHASIF!*

Several studies show that sitting for extended periods of time can lead to health issues. Poor ergonomics and fatigue on the job also have negative effects on one's health. Experts project that if Americans continue living sedentary lives, 42 percent of the adult population could be obese by the year 2030.

While large organizations are pushing health and wellness to their employees, small businesses are lagging behind. In fact, a recent poll revealed "77 percent of small businesses do not provide non-traditional seating options" to their workers (e.g., stand-up desks, treadmill desks or balance balls).

Of the 506 small business owners who responded to the survey, 29 percent report "their employees typically remain seated for more than an hour at a time." Forty-two percent (two out of five businesses) admit that employees who work primarily on computers are not provided with monitor stands that can improve posture and comfort. Only around 55 percent who work primarily on computers are encouraged to take routine breaks to rest their eyes, and 23 percent "often wait up to three or four hours before taking a break."

Researchers also found that small business employees do not take enough time off from work. In fact, 42 percent (two out of five employees) do not use all of their allotted vacation leave every year. Sixty-five percent of business owners also admit to having worked at some point during their

planned time off. "Small Businesses Slow to Embrace Workplace Wellness Best Practices, Study Finds," *insurancenewsnet.com* (Feb. 10, 2015).

Commentary

Employers who ignore unhealthy working conditions now, especially small employers who are focused on maximizing production from their small staffs, are just postponing future productivity down time and loss of good employees. Studies show productivity losses related to health problems "cost U.S. employers \$1,685 per employee per year, or \$225.8 billion annually."

Encouraging employees to take their vacation pays dividends in health and morale.

In addition, some employers provide free memberships to gyms. Some of these employers extend the traditional lunch hour to allow employees time to travel to and from the gym, take a class or complete a workout.

Consider your workforce and begin to make small adjustments, especially if your employees are sedentary most of the day. It doesn't take much to make a positive health difference. Standing desks cost \$379 to \$499 on average. Standing desks and other ergonomic solutions can go a long way toward making employees happy and healthy.

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Mission Statement

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