



SSDA News

Service Station Dealers of America and Allied Trades

VOLUME 37, ISSUE 3

MARCH, 2023

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Right to Repair Introduced in House

By Roy Littlefield

Right to Repair legislation has again gained federal support with the reintroduction of the Right to Equitable and Professional Auto Industry Repair (REPAIR) Act, H.R. 906, by Congressman Neal Dunn (R-Fla.-02).

The bill is co-sponsored by Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-Penn.-02), Rep. Warren Davidson (R-Ohio-08) and Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-Wash.-03).

Right to repair remains a top priority for SSDA-AT members and a national law would provide for much needed clarity and direction in vehicle repair. SSDA-AT has supported efforts on both the state and federal levels in recent years.

Modern cars and trucks contain advanced technology that monitors or controls virtually every function of the vehicle including: brakes, steering, air bags, fuel delivery, ignition, lubrication, theft prevention, emission controls and soon, tire pressure. Car and truck owners, as well as the facilities that repair these vehicles need full access to the information, parts and tools necessary to accurately diagnose, repair or re-program these systems.

H.R. 906 will ensure consumers have access to data relating to their motor vehicles, critical repair information and tools, and to provide them choices for the maintenance, service and repair of their motor vehicles.

Congressman Dunn is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has responsibility for consumer

protection matters, where the bill has been referred.

“When it comes to repairing their automobiles, consumers deserve options,” Dunn said. “The REPAIR Act would give owners, including the rural communities in my district, secure access to critical data so the service center of their choosing can replace parts and repair their vehicles. I am proud to support competition in the vehicle repair industry and this important legislation.”

New vehicles require access to critical parts, tools and repair and maintenance data to properly service and complete repairs and routine maintenance.

SSDA-AT members need the repair and maintenance data that is now being wirelessly transmitted from vehicles via telematics systems in a cloud-based format.

As vehicle technology continues to advance, SSDA-AT has been on the forefront in addressing new vehicle technologies.

The REPAIR Act will reduce the repair access barriers.

Passing the REPAIR Act will be a focus and top priority for SSDA-AT in the 118th Congress.

SSDA-AT is actively recruiting members in the House of Representatives to join as a co-sponsor to the bipartisan legislation.

The Online Edge – What Your Business Needs to Thrive



By: Stephanie Santore,
Net Driven

Does your business have an online presence? If so, are you doing all you can to ensure

its virtual success? If not, what are you waiting for? Let's take a sneak peek at some statistical findings from the Pew Research Center. According to their most recent studies on the use of internet and technology it was found that:

Roughly three-quarters of Americans, or 77%, now own a smartphone, which nearly doubles the former findings since the Center began its research in 2011.

As of November 2016, nearly three-quarters, or 73% of Americans indicate that they have broadband service at home.

Nearly seven-in-ten Americans now use social media. When the Center started tracking social media adoption in 2005, just 5% of Americans said they used these platforms. Today, 69% of U.S. adults are social media users.

Half the public now owns a tablet computer. When the Center first began tracking tablet ownership in 2010, just 3% of Americans owned a tablet of some kind.

As you can see, now more than ever before, an online presence for your business is significant. And not just any online presence, but a quality one that provides a sense of credibility and legitimacy, turning its visitors into leads

and sales, and contributing to the success of your business.

First impressions matter. If your business has a website, rest assured that internet users are navigating to it to formulate their opinion, to see what other people have to say about you, and to "screen" shop your services and products, which is much like window shopping, but with the ease of never having to actually visit your business's location.

Your business can now be accessible to the masses thanks to technology. Therefore, it's vital to have a way for potential clients to find you with the swipe of their fingertip and also to ensure you have a website that makes a good impression.

So, how do you go about trying to meet your customers' needs online?

Let's Talk Internet Marketing Best Practices

There are several factors that play into the creation of a well-made website that will help your business's online presence generate traffic and rank effectively:

Design & Layout

Visual presentation plays an important role in the functionality of a website. A high-performing website will provide a positive user experience. It helps to have a responsive web design. What makes a website responsive? Responsive design helps to generate leads and sales without any limitations based on user devices. So, customers can find your automotive service site on their tablet, smartphone, smart watch, etc., viewing your website efficiently from any screen size.

Content

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NET DRIVEN

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Content is the reason why visitors come to a site. They are seeking information about your business and its services. The key is to provide relevant content that is easy for visitors to digest. Too much or too little and your visitors might go elsewhere to find what they're looking for. Check out what Moz has to say about content regarding search engine ranking. By providing unique content that moves beyond self-promotion and is easily digestible to the user, your website offers valuable information.

Calls to Action

Calls to action within a site's content and design come in the form of clickable links or custom buttons. It entices a visitor to take action beyond the page they are on, an action like submitting a form, requesting a quote, purchasing a product, or even just clicking a link that leads to another page with relevant information. Through a CTA, a user moves to take a specific action that will benefit your business. And action is what it's all about.

Credibility

A business with an online footprint is a business that can be found, recognized, and confident in. From building a solid and consistent brand across all channels, to maintaining an active social media presence, gaining positive reviews, managing your online reputation with products like Net Driven's Reputation Management.

Mobile Viewability

More and more people are looking at your site from a mobile phone or web enabled device. It seems like anything with a screen and a microchip in it is capable of getting on the internet these days. Make sure your site is viewable on a mobile internet enabled device.

Search Engine Optimization

At Net Driven, we drive the traffic that drives your business! It begins with a website that keeps local search in mind. A strong SEO foundation puts proven strategies to work and improves your ability to get found.

From understanding searcher behavior to using tested best practices, the SEO team at Net Driven works hard to ensure that your site has all of the key ingredients for SEO success.

Look to us for:

Keyword research performed for your business and target geographic

Optimized meta tags for click through success

Relevant industry content

Local directory management

SEO-friendly site architecture

and more!

Don't have a website yet? What are you waiting for?! Talk to a representative from Net Driven today and ask about how we can help you create a website that not only generates traffic, but turns your traffic into leads and sales! Net Driven should be your choice for all your automotive internet marketing needs. Contact us today!

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U.S. Gas Producers Skipped on Price Hedges and Now Face a Reckoning, Reuters

A rally in prices in 2022 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine forced a lot of producers already hedged at lower prices to take on hedging losses. That may have encouraged them to hedge less.

"Last year was pretty jarring for folks, who weren't ready for the uptick in price. A lot of folks probably sold off those hedges and wanted to be exposed to the upside and might see themselves in the predicament they're in now," said Trisha Curtis, chief executive of energy consultancy PetroNerds added.

EQT Corp (EQT.N), the top U.S. producer of natural gas, last month said it expects a \$4.6 billion loss on derivatives for 2022, and net cash settlements of \$5.9 billion. No. 2 producer Southwestern Energy Co (SWN.N) posted a \$6.71 billion loss on derivatives for the first nine months of 2022.

Some companies have let their hedges expire, increasing exposure to current prices. Antero Resources Corp (AR.N) said in October that the vast majority of its hedges would roll off by Jan 1.

Another type of hedge, known as a three-way collar, could backfire because of the extent of the fall in prices, analysts said. These transactions have a producer buy an agreement to sell natural gas at one price, called a put, while also selling a put at a lower price in hopes of pocketing the premium from its buyer.

Effectively, this is a calculated bet that gas will fall to a certain level and no further. But when it falls below the predicted lower price, it takes away some of the benefits of the hedge.



Exxon Picks Technology Providers for Texas Blue H2 Plant

Danish company Topsoe and Illinois-based Honeywell will deliver decarbonization technologies for ExxonMobil's planned blue hydrogen facility along the Texas Gulf Coast, the companies announced.

Topsoe's SynCOR autothermal reformer and Honeywell's CO2 Fractionation and Hydrogen Purification

System will help the facility achieve 1 Bcf of daily low-carbon hydrogen production while capturing 7.7 million short tons of carbon dioxide annually.



Freepoint Eco-Systems Plans 190,000 Tonnes/Year Pyrolysis Facility in US Gulf, ICIS



Freepoint Eco-Systems LLC has announced a partnership with Alterra to develop a large pyrolysis-based chemical recycling facility in the US Gulf Coast Region.

Though operational timing was not disclosed, this facility will have the capacity to process 190,000 tonnes/year of waste plastic, one of the highest volumes yet announced.

The facility will utilise Alterra's proprietary thermochemical liquefaction process technology. Currently, Alterra operates a 20,000 tonnes/year pyrolysis facility in Akron, Ohio.

The recycled plastic output from this new proposed facility will be sold exclusively to Shell Chemical to be further processed into circular products.

While circular products, such as waste plastic pyrolysis oil, are in

high demand by large petrochemical companies hoping to expand their sustainability footprint, sourcing adequate volumes of waste plastic feedstock for chemical recycling operations continues to be a concern for many in the industry.

With several large facilities starting up in the coming years, access to quality feedstocks that meet cost criteria will become increasingly difficult, as US plastic waste collection infrastructure has yet to see significant improvement.

Freepoint Eco-Systems has already partnered on another large chemical recycling facility to be located in Texas, potentially in close proximity to this latest planned facility.

This comes shortly after the December announcement that Freepoint Eco-Systems has broken ground on their Hebron, Ohio pyrolysis facility, which is intended to process 90,000 tonnes/year of mixed plastic waste.

The facility, originally expected to be operational in 2023, is now slated for start-up by the first half of 2024.

White House Touts Easing of Supply Chain Pressures, Freight Waves



The White House has outlined progress on commitments made over the last two years to ease supply chain backups caused by the pandemic but failed to acknowledge recent signs that improvements have been losing steam.

“Just over two years ago, then-President-elect Biden addressed the nation in a prime time speech to propose his economic agenda: a plan for a strong, worker-centered economic recovery from the pandemic, followed by long-term investments to lay the foundation for more durable, resilient, and inclusive long-run growth,” wrote Brian Deese, director of the White House National Economic Council, in a blog posted by the White House.

“In those remarks, the President made a series of concrete commitments to the American people about his plan for economic recovery and renewal.”

In reviewing those commitments, Deese cited steps taken to accelerate the federal government’s efforts to end the pandemic while limiting disruptions it has caused, including those within the supply chain.

“The Administration, for example, brought business and labor together to broker an agreement to move ports to 24/7 operations, which has helped increase goods movement through the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach by 24% above pre-pandemic record levels, while bringing goods transportation prices down,” Deese asserted. He touted the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, which passed last year, as a measure that is helping lower costs for consumers.

Deese said the administration’s Trucking Action Plan, a multi-program strategy launched in 2021 aimed at recruiting more truck drivers into the industry, helped double the number of new commercial driver’s licenses issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

He also pointed out that more than 70% of pandemic-related supply chain pressures had eased, as cal-

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White House Touts Easing of Supply Chain Pressures, Freight Waves

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culated by the latest monthly assessment by the New York Federal Reserve. The bank's Global Supply Chain Pressure Index (GSCPI) incorporates supply chain delivery time and backlog data reported by purchasing managers.

However, while the long-term trend has shown improvements, the index has actually worsened over the past three months.

"Synchronously, we have seen a worsening COVID situation in China," according to a summary accompanying the index.

"After analyzing the contributions of the underlying variables in the index, we can partly attribute the recent slowdown of the GSCPI's return to its historical average to worsening supply conditions in China, which have also spilled over into its neighboring trade partners," the summary states. "In this context, it will be interesting to see how future GSCPI readings evolve in light of the recent relaxation of China's pandemic restrictions and resulting wave of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths."

Deese's review of Biden's economic agenda — which comes as lawmakers in the new Republican-

controlled House of Representatives begin introducing legislation that ignores even the long-term supply chain progress claimed by the administration — also notes how Biden has worked with Congress to make good on long-awaited infrastructure investments.

"Already, the Biden Administration has launched \$185 billion in infrastructure projects, including funding for 6,900 projects, reaching over 4,000 communities across all 50 states, D.C., and the territories," Deese said.

"From our roads and bridges to rail, public transit, and the first nationwide network of electrical vehicle chargers to universal high-speed internet, the Biden economic agenda is enabling the kinds of infrastructure investments that economists have long argued would boost economic capacity and crowd-in private investment."

But Republican lawmakers say they plan to push back on the administration's infrastructure priorities as well over the next two years, including how projects overseen by the bipartisan infrastructure law are funded and speeding the approval process.

IRS Issues Guidance on State Tax Payments to Help Taxpayers

The Internal Revenue Service provided details clarifying the federal tax status involving special payments made by 21 states in 2022.

The IRS has determined that in the interest of sound tax administration and other factors, taxpayers in many states will not need to report these payments on their 2022 tax returns.

During a review, the IRS determined it will not challenge the taxability of payments related to general welfare and disaster relief.

This means that people in the following states do not need to report these state payments on their 2022 tax return: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. Alaska is in this group as well, but please see below for more nuanced information.

In addition, many people in Georgia, Massachusetts, South Carolina and Virginia also will not include state payments in income for federal tax purposes if they meet certain requirements. For these individuals, state payments will not be included for federal tax purposes if the payment is a refund of state taxes paid and either the recipient claimed the standard deduction or itemized their deductions but did not receive a tax benefit.

The IRS appreciates the patience of taxpayers, tax professionals, software companies and state tax administrators as the IRS and Treasury worked to resolve this unique and complex situation.

The IRS is aware of questions involving special tax refunds or payments made by certain states related to the pandemic and its associated consequences in 2022. A variety of state programs distributed these payments in 2022 and the rules

surrounding their treatment for federal income tax purposes are complex. While in general payments made by states are includable in income for federal tax purposes, there are exceptions that would apply to many of the payments made by states in 2022.

To assist taxpayers who have received these payments file their returns in a timely fashion, the IRS is providing the additional information below.

Refund of state taxes paid

If the payment is a refund of state taxes paid and either the recipient claimed the standard deduction or itemized their deductions but did not receive a tax benefit (for example, because the \$10,000 tax deduction limit applied) the payment is not included in income for federal tax purposes.

Payments from the following states in 2022 fall in this category and will be excluded from income for federal tax purposes unless the recipient received a tax benefit in the year the taxes were deducted.

1. Georgia
2. Massachusetts
3. South Carolina
4. Virginia

General welfare and disaster relief payments

If a payment is made for the promotion of the general welfare or as a disaster relief payment, for example related to the outgoing pandemic, it may be excludable from income for federal tax purposes under the General Welfare Doctrine or as a Qualified Disaster Relief Pay-

IRS Issues Guidance on State Tax Payments to Help Taxpayers

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ment. Determining whether payments qualify for these exceptions is a complex fact intensive inquiry that depends on a number of considerations.

The IRS has reviewed the types of payments made by various states in 2022 that may fall in these categories and given the complicated fact-specific nature of determining the treatment of these payments for federal tax purposes balanced against the need to provide certainty and clarity for individuals who are now attempting to file their federal income tax returns, the IRS has determined that in the best interest of sound tax administration and given the fact that the pandemic emergency declaration is ending in May, 2023 making this an issue only for the 2022 tax year, if a taxpayer does not include the amount of one of these payments in its 2022 income for federal income tax purposes, the IRS will not challenge the treatment of the 2022 payment as excludable for income on an original or amended return.

Payments from the following states fall in this category and the IRS will not challenge the treatment of these payments as excludable for federal income tax purposes in 2022.

1. Alaska
2. California
3. Colorado
4. Connecticut
5. Delaware
6. Florida
7. Hawaii
8. Idaho
9. Illinois

10. Indiana
11. Maine
12. New Jersey
13. New Mexico
14. New York
15. Oregon
16. Pennsylvania
17. Rhode Island

For a list of the specific payments to which this applies, please see this chart.

Other payments

Other payments that may have been made by states are generally includable in income for federal income tax purposes. This includes the annual payment of Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend and any payments from states provided as compensation to workers.

Only for the supplemental Energy Relief Payment received in addition to the annual Permanent Fund Dividend.

Illinois and New York issued multiple payments and in each case one of the payments was a refund of taxes, which should be treated as noted above, and one of the payments is in the category of disaster relief payment.



Biden Restarts \$10 Billion Tax Credit for Clean-Energy Makers, BNN



The Biden administration is restarting a popular tax credit for manufacturers of solar panels, wind turbines, fuel cells and other clean energy equipment after getting a \$10 billion infusion from the Inflation Reduction Act.

Clean energy projects that expand domestic manufacturing, reduce industrial greenhouse

gas emissions or help create a domestic supply chain for critical minerals can begin applying for the “advanced energy” tax credit at the end of May, the Treasury Department announced Monday.

The program provides a 30% tax credit for technologies including carbon capture systems, grid modernization projects, clean hydrogen production, and electric or fuel cell vehicles, as well as equipment that reduces emissions from industrial facilities, the department said in a notice. The first round of funding, some \$4 billion, includes \$1.6 billion devoted to projects in areas where coal mines and coal-fired power plants have shut down.

The Qualifying Advanced Energy Project Credit was first created as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009, which provided \$2.3 billion at the time. The program quickly ran out of cash, and efforts to refund it stalled in Congress until it was included in Democrats’ marquee climate bill last year, which provided some \$370 billion in climate funding.

In addition, the Treasury Department announced it is establishing an Inflation Reduction Act program to provide up to 20% in an additional bonus tax credit for wind and solar projects located in low-income communities that could increase the total value of the incentive to as much as 50% of the project’s cost.

Biden Wants Citizens to Police Oil Wells for Methane. Industry Leaders Are Pushing Back, BNN

A Biden administration plan to empower private citizens to police oil wells and pipelines for methane leaks is being blasted by industry leaders who say it sets a dangerous precedent.

Under the Super-Emitter Response Program proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency, individuals who have agency-approved expertise and equipment would be authorized to monitor oil industry operations for emissions of the potent greenhouse gas and notify companies of any high-volume leaks. Operators would have five days to analyze any credible third-party methane reports and 10 days to fix most leaks.

Environmental activists have cheered the proposal, saying it boosts the incentive for oil and gas companies to stifle methane leaks. But the oil industry's main lobbying body lashed out against it, saying it raises a raft of legal, logistical, commercial and safety risks, in addition to potentially setting a precedent of tapping private citizens to do the government's job.

It's "essentially delegating duties that are appropriate for a regulatory agency out to third parties," American Petroleum Institute senior vice president Frank Macchiarola said on a conference call Monday. The plan could also "have a chilling effect on companies' ability to work with the EPA and work with third parties" to reduce methane emissions," he said.

Capping methane has taken on new urgency in the quest to limit global warming because the greenhouse gas is estimated to be at least 80 times more powerful than carbon dioxide at warming the atmosphere during the first 20 years after it is released. The sweeping climate-and-tax law known as the Inflation Reduction Act last year established a new fee on the emissions.

For years, citizen activists wielding specialized cameras have documented venting wells and methane plumes unseen by the naked eye. The campaign has helped encourage more intense regulation and voluntary industry action.

But even with documented evidence from optical gas imaging cameras, reports of leaks filed with state authorities "often do not result in any action taken to limit air pollution and protect the public," the group Earthworks said in submitted comments.

Industry officials say the initiative could encourage activists to trespass on private land, including on farms and near homes with active wells. And they warn that third-party data can be riddled with errors.

Better requirements on the "validity and veracity of the data" are needed to ensure companies don't have to shut operations over nothing, the Independent Petroleum Association of America and more than a dozen state oil industry groups told the EPA in written comments.

Some oil companies have expressed openness to a new third-party monitoring program.

BP America Inc. said that when third-party organizations contribute scientifically sound data, it "can help to identify and solve problems in a transparent, efficient and responsible way." But the EPA needs to do more work to ensure "there are adequate guidelines and systems in place to verify the quality and integrity of community-generated data," the company said.



Wyoming Bill Proposes to Ban EV Sales by 2035, The Buzz

A group of Wyoming legislators is championing a bill proposing to ban the sale of electrified vehicles in the state, citing a lack of charging infrastructure and the importance of gas and oil sales to the local economy. Sponsored by Senator Dick Anderson (R) and co-sponsored by Senators Brian Boner (R), Edward Cooper (R) and Dan Dockstader (R); and Representatives Donald Burkhardt Jr. (R) and Bill Henderson (R), Senate Joint Resolution No. SJ0004 proposes that the sale of new EVs in Wyoming be phased out by 2035.

A few of the reasons that banning EV sales in the state makes sense are, according to the bill:

- Oil and gas production are valued industries and create revenue and jobs within the state;
- There's a lack of EV infrastructure, and building out new infrastructure will require "massive amounts of new power generation;"
- EV batteries require minerals not easily found domestically, and these minerals are not easily recyclable or disposable; and
- EVs "will be detrimental to Wyoming's economy and the ability for the country to efficiently engage in commerce."

According to the state's transportation department, Wyoming is set to receive about \$24 million over five years from the federal government to help build out charging infrastructure on Interstates 80, 25 and 90.

Red States Bet on 5th Circuit to Take Down Biden Agenda, E&E

When Republican-led states seek to block President Joe Biden's environmental policies, there is one court they turn to more often than any other.

Nearly half of all multistate lawsuits against the Biden administration have been filed in federal district courts that feed cases to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals — a bench where three-quarters of the active judges were tapped by Republican presidents, and half of those GOP nominees arrived at the court under former President Donald Trump.

“Republican attorneys general, when they can, have tried to get into the 5th Circuit for two reasons,” said Paul Nolette, associate professor and chair in the political science department at Marquette University, who tracks multistate challenges. “There’s a lot of Republican judges, and the judges are much more — for a lack of a better term — activist.”

According to data compiled by Nolette, 43 percent of multistate lawsuits from Republican attorneys general against the Biden administration have originated in federal district courts under the purview of the 5th Circuit, which covers just three states: Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. During the Obama years, most multistate challenges came up through the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, which by law has the first bite at Clean Air Act disputes.

Under Biden, red states have advanced only four — or about 7 percent — of their multi-

state cases in the D.C. Circuit. Nearly all of those are Clean Air Act cases.

Forum shopping — or selecting a court that is more likely to favor a litigant's claims — is nothing new. During the Trump years, multistate challenges, most of which came from Democratic attorneys general, were evenly distributed across courts largely seen as more favorable to their side: the D.C. Circuit, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on the West Coast and the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New York.

But the fact that an outsized number of GOP lawsuits against Biden are landing in the 5th Circuit is notable because some judges on the court have been receptive to burgeoning legal theories — such as the “major questions” doctrine — that are helping conservatives wage war against federal regulations, Nolette said.

“It’s not all about the law here,” he said. “Part of it is legitimizing arguments that might have once been considered an off-the-wall argument.”

Multistate litigation emerged in the Trump administration and the later years of the Obama administration as an important tool for like-minded attorneys general to launch coordinated challenges against federal rules promulgated by their opposing political parties.



According to Yahoo, Oil Workers Expect More Pay Raises Amid Competing Job Offers

Soaring pay for oil workers around the globe is expected to continue climbing amid a shortage for talent that has some fielding multiple job offers in a single year, according to a recent survey.

It's a big switch from last year's Global Energy Talent Index which showed that most oil workers had yet to cash bigger paychecks despite the run-up in crude prices and were ready to leave the oil patch altogether.

"The sentiment of oil and gas workers has completely changed from a year ago," said Janette Marx, chief executive officer for Airswift, a global recruiting firm in its seventh year releasing the survey, which closed in November. "People are feeling a bit more settled and they're feeling happier where they're at, and that's making them want to stay."

The US shale patch in particular is struggling to find enough workers to drill, frack and map underground deposits of crude as President Joe Biden calls for more output in order to bring down gasoline prices. The most recent government data showed that pay growth in December jumped the most in almost two

decades, while the unemployment rate tumbled to a record low.

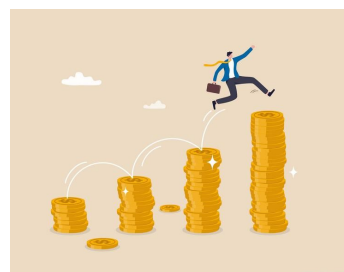
Looking ahead, the resurgence of the energy sector has translated into more optimism over compensation. Two thirds of workers expect salaries to rise over the next year, compared with 54% in last year's survey. Some 41% of workers expect pay to grow by more than 5% this year. Hiring managers see even bigger gains.

Among the survey's other key takeaways:

80% of respondents in the Airswift survey said they had been approached for another job over the past year

An increasing number of workers in the power and renewables sectors said they're willing to switch to oil

Out of a list of 10 factors affecting job satisfaction, pay had the biggest impact at 51%, followed by benefits and having the opportunity to work on "exciting projects"



Opinion: Employee Well-Being is a Team Sport, Smart Brief

Most companies are focused on helping individual employees as if employee well-being and health are solo sports. However, the science bears out that well-being is a team sport.TM We are more likely to reach our goals when we are supported by those we work with and when we are employed in a supportive work environment. Programs and resources are important, but, in most cases, they can't make a difference if they aren't offered in a workplace with a well-being culture. To help leading organizations build a well-being culture, I've identified key building blocks to implement. This article provides an overview of half of them — peer support, leadership engagement and norms.

Building block #1 – Peer support

Our friends, families and co-workers have a huge influence on our habits. For example, if you're trying to quit smoking, you have a much higher chance of success if you attempt to quit with a co-worker who also smokes. You are more likely to lose up to three times as much weight when you work with a group of three or four co-workers than if you try and lose the weight alone.

It's not just our physical health that benefits. Our emotions are tied to others as well. When we're around happy people, we're more likely to be happy. Even just seeing someone smile improves our mood. When we're next to someone stressed, we are likely to feel stressed ourselves.

We can take advantage of this strong connection and encourage peer support on our teams and in our organization if we think in pairs or groups.

Design efforts with the intention of pairing your team members. When a new employee starts on the team, assign a "buddy," someone to answer their questions and guide them through the new workplace. This will certainly make for a less stressful onboarding experience.

Team wellness program participation. If your company is offering a wellness program, think about having your whole team participate together. When co-workers participate together, not only will they show up, but they will also be more likely to take something away from the event that they can carry forward with their teammates.

Recognize well-being support. We offer praise for "hard work." Why not recognize and appreciate employees who are supporting a co-worker in their well-being goals? What the leader pays attention to gets repeated.

Building block #2 – Leadership engagement

It's not enough for leaders to say they support employee health and well-being; they need to be engaged in the effort. We know that team leaders have a disproportionately large influence, including on the happiness and health of the team.

Be a well-being role model. Your team is watching you. If you take a lunch break,

Opinion: Employee Well-Being is a Team Sport, Smart Brief

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they will take a lunch break. We all need breaks! If you walk at lunch, they will be more likely to get up and move as well. If your well-being habits aren't visible, tell your team about them during a meeting. Sharing what you do to stay healthy shows your team that well-being is important.

Add well-being to the agenda. When we neglect our well-being it makes getting to our goals more difficult, so make it a priority. That means putting well-being on our team agenda. This way, there is always a placeholder to cause us to think about where we stand with our well-being and what we want to discuss, practice, or plan to support our health.

Keep emotions in check. Just as the emotions of our peers impact our health, our emotions influence those we lead. When we are stressed, we need to slow down and take a breath. Consider even faking a smile until it starts to feel more natural – and it will.

Building block #3 – Norms

Norms are the expected behaviors of a group of people, like those on your team. Some norms support a healthy workday — like eating lunch together (which builds a sense of community among co-workers). Unfortunately, your team also likely has norms that are unhealthy, like working at your desk through lunch while answering emails.

There are steps you can take to create healthier team norms.

Have a health goals conversation. Have a discussion with your team to learn what health goals they are trying to achieve. Be careful not to solicit personal health information, but the simple question of “Did anyone make a New Year’s resolution?” might get the conversation started.

Drive norm agreement. Try and steer the team toward a consensus of what norm they’d like to see. One common wish I often hear is to not be answering emails after work hours.

Address norm obstacles. Identify what hurdles are getting in the way of achieving the norm, and remove them. Perhaps you, the leader, need to be a role model and exemplify the desired behavior.

Encourage a team promise. Have the team sign a pledge that you’ll all support each other in making this happen.

When the team works together to create a healthy norm, it’s more likely to come to fruition, and everyone benefits.

There are three more building blocks to shaping a well-being culture on your team. Watch for them in the next installment of this series.





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Published monthly by the Service Station Dealers of America and Allied Trades, ©