

## ECNC January 2007 Newsletter

### You Can Assist ECNC With Workers' Comp

ECNC (*Employers Coalition of North Carolina*) is gearing up for the North Carolina Legislative long session, which starts January 24, 2007. One of our top issues continues to be Workers' Compensation Reform. Many of our members have given us examples of problems with the current system that have been helpful when sharing such problems with legislators in past legislative sessions. For this session we need examples where companies were not able to expand their NC operations, chose to expand operations in other states or even had to eliminate jobs due to the high cost of workers' compensation. Please e-mail your examples to [jedwards@ecnc.us](mailto:jedwards@ecnc.us).

### Computer Problems at the Industrial Commission

A recent *News and Observer* article reported that an air conditioning malfunction froze computer records at the Industrial Commission in early December. It's too early to say if records have been lost and staff is working hard to retrieve the information. Medical records and forms are among the records missing. Duplicate paper copies of the lost computer files are available at the IC as backup. Cases scheduled to be heard in January will not be affected by the computer problems. There may be complications for later cases if problems with the computer system are not alleviated in a timely fashion.

### Senator Marc Basnight Shares Part of Senate's Agenda

At the annual NCFREE (*North Carolina Forum for Research and Economic Education*) meeting Sen. Basnight, Speaker Pro Tem, shared the Senate's legislative agenda, which included Global Warming and Small Business Health Insurance. In 2006, the General Assembly approved a Small Business Health Insurance Tax Credit of \$250 for companies with fewer than 25 employees. The credit was enacted in lieu of more comprehensive legislation that would have been more costly. There is continued interest among some of the Senate leadership in addressing the issue again.

### Commission Begins Study of North Carolina's Tax System

Twenty-eight brave souls have been appointed to the State and Local Fiscal Modernization Study Commission, which met for the first time in November. There have been complaints from policy makers for years that the current state and local tax structures are antiquated and need to be remodeled. Previous attempts to make sweeping changes to tax collections have been met with stiff opposition in the early stages.

Sen. David Hoyle (D-Gaston) is co-chair of the commission along with Rep. Becky Carney (D-Mecklenburg) and Rep. Jeff Barnhart (R-Cabarrus). It is anticipated they will report recommendations to the General Assembly in 2008.

### New Laws Becoming Effective January 1, 2007

- HB2174 Raise Minimum Wage – This law raises the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15
- HB2170 Bill Lee Changes – This law changes the amount of incentives given to different counties and industries

To learn more about ECNC or to become actively involved with our public policy efforts on behalf of North Carolina employers, visit our website at [www.ecnc.us](http://www.ecnc.us) or contact Jennifer Edwards at [jedwards@ecnc.us](mailto:jedwards@ecnc.us).