

Examine your courage, Taylor exhorts HR

BY STEVE BATES

Invoking the spirit of Americans who have demonstrated unusual courage, Johnny C. Taylor Jr., J.D., SPHR, SHRM Board Chair, urged HR professionals Sunday to emulate these heroes in their own jobs.

In an inspirational address during the opening general session of SHRM's Annual Conference and Exposition in San Diego, Taylor honored people who changed the world, such as Rosa Parks, a black woman who refused to give up her seat to a white person on a city bus nearly 50 years ago. But Taylor singled out some lesser-known heroes as well.

A general suddenly charged with directing the Coalition Information Service for military action in Afghanistan who was targeted by terrorists. An HR professional who calmed co-workers' fears in the World Trade Center and helped them exit their burning building after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

Echoing the general session's theme, "a whole new world of HR," Taylor declared that "there is a whole new world for HR professionals. But this is not a world that is being imposed upon us. It is a world that we are making.

"We have decided to advance the profession. We have chosen to make our function an essential part of the fabric of our organizations. We have taken what was a backroom function and made it into a strategic capability of greater and greater importance."

To build this new world, it takes "skill, determination and courage."

CEOs know that HR professionals need ability and experience for the day-to-day matters that they are regularly called on to handle, Taylor said. But executives "also think HR people need something else," he stated. "Every answer can't be found in a book. Some decisions must be made from the heart. And that takes courage."



PHOTO BY DAVID HATHCOX

SHRM Board of Directors Chair Johnny C. Taylor Jr., J.D., SPHR, kicks off the opening general session at SHRM's Annual Conference and Exposition. Taylor noted the efforts of HR professionals who go above and beyond the call of duty.

Like the courage of Rosa Parks on that bus in Montgomery, Ala. Like the courage Maj. Gen. John Hawkins dis-

played when, while riding to the airport in Kabul, the Army human resources official was ambushed by insurgents and survived by crawling under barbed wire. And like the incredible courage amid the chaos of Sept. 11, when Alayne Gentul, senior vice president and director of human resources for Fiduciary Trust International, found the strength to help about 40 staffers to safety—but perished in the process.

"Few of us will have to stand up to oppression the way Rosa Parks did, or dodge terrorist attacks like Gen. John Hawkins, or give our lives, like Alayne Gentul, to help save the lives of others," Taylor noted.

However, "most of us will have our integrity tested, and our beliefs challenged," in the course of our HR careers, he said. "We can choose what kind of HR professionals we want to be—timid or courageous. We can either lead, follow or get out of the way.

"So I'll ask you again: Are you ready to do the courageous thing?" Taylor said. "Yes, I know that you are."

Following Taylor's remarks, SHRM President and CEO Susan R. Meisinger, SPHR, noted that CEOs view HR issues as extremely important but added that, in several categories of competencies, CEOs rate the HR profession "dead last." It will take courage for HR to take the next step, she said.

It is great—in fact, it is essential—to be an expert on the Family and Medical Leave Act, all sorts of compensation issues and preventing harassment in the workplace. "Our HR competency should be a given," Meisinger said.

"But if we take the steps to become truly knowledgeable about our industry, our company and the future outlook for both, we are in a whole new world," she said. "All it takes is a little courage—and maybe a little help from your partner, SHRM." ■

Steve Bates is managing editor of HR News.

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Exhibit Hall updates

- Employment Background Investigations Inc. is in booths 2412 & 2414.
- Carlson Marketing Group is in booth 2750.

The following listings correct information in the Exhibitor Directory:

- Perspectives, Ltd.
Booth: 3444
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Applications accepted now for dot-jobs sites

BY STEVE BATES

Organizations can now apply for web page addresses featuring the jobs Internet domain, creating a simpler, easier and universally recognized method for applicants to find job listings. The announcement was made Sunday by SHRM President and CEO Susan R. Meisinger, SPHR, during the opening general session of SHRM's Annual Conference and Exposition in San Diego.

In April, SHRM and its Cleveland-based partner, Employ Media LLC, were granted permission by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to create the new top-level Internet domain. Organizations that are approved for jobs web sites will be able to set up web pages with their company name followed by jobs, saving job-seekers the time and trouble of going to a company site and hunting for job listings.

Sunday's announcement marked the opening of the application period. Representatives for SHRM and Employ Media said that some organizations that file timely applications can expect to have their jobs web addresses approved for operation in August. They suggested that organizations apply early—particularly if there is the possibility that more than one application could be filed for a specific web address. However, the representatives added that only an organization with a legitimate claim to a particular jobs web address will be granted approval to use it.

The new jobs domain recognizes the importance of—and demand for—a streamlined method for recruiters and talented workers to connect.

"SHRM is about to roll out a truly revo-

lutionary development in recruiting," said Meisinger on Sunday. "We believe this may help cut the amount of time a position is open, and potentially help cut cost per hire.

"It's simple. It's affordable. It's brilliant," said Meisinger.

Organizations can go to the Employ Media web site, www.employmedia.com, to apply for a jobs web page. SHRM was planning to make computers available to Annual Conference attendees at the SHRM booth in the HRM Marketplace Exposition hall so they can get a jump on the application process while in San Diego.

The application process was designed to be fairly simple and inexpensive, said officials with SHRM and Employ Media. Applicants will be asked to select from a list of participating Internet site registration companies. Employ Media serves as the "wholesaler" of the jobs operation, while SHRM's role is largely to ensure that the service meets the best interests of the recruiting community.

The jobs pages are long overdue, says Tom Embrescia, CEO of Employ Media. Gary Rubin, SHRM's chief publishing officer, agrees.

"This new top-level Internet domain will make it easier for employers to find great employees," says Rubin. "This gives us the opportunity to provide some clarity to the space."

For an applicant to qualify for a jobs address, it must provide proof of its status as an organization that employs people. For more information, see www.employmedia.com or www.shrm.org. ■

Steve Bates is managing editor of HR News.

Correction

The Business Center on the ground level of the Convention Center does not offer an Internet café, as stated in Sunday's *SHRM Conference Daily*.

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www.shrm.org