

Arkansas Business Navigator Podcast Episode 21: Proposed Department of Labor Rule Affecting You, SBA Disaster Preparedness Resources, HR Workshop November 7 Save the Date



[Brandon] Hello and welcome to the Arkansas Business Navigator Podcast, the show that reviews U.S. Small Business Administration and Arkansas Business Navigator resources available to support small business owners and entrepreneurs in the Natural state. I'm your host, Brandon Mathews, and in today's episode we have an update from the SBA Office of Advocacy regarding U.S. Department of Labor proposed changes for salaried workers; a review of national disaster resources from SBA; and a round up events were hosting at University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, aka UADA which, which includes a save the date for a big workshop opportunity about Human Resources, but we'll get to that later. Let's dive in.

[Intro Music]

[Brandon Mathews] Our first story is about a proposed rule change coming from the U.S. Department of Labor on August 30, 2023 which proposes increasing the minimum salary for the "white collar" overtime exemption from the current rate of \$35,568 to \$55,068 annually. Want that in hour wages? That's more than a \$9 dollar increase, taking the current rate of \$17.10 to \$26.48. So, what exactly does that mean to you as an Arkansas small business owner? Here's an example. Currently, Mark the mid-level manager at your restaurant has a salary of \$45,000 annually. Under the current rule, Mark earns more than the current threshold of roughly \$35,500 making him exempt from overtime pay. And for arguments sake, let's assume Marks job duties all qualify for the exemption too. Now, under the proposed change, Mark would have to have a salary of at least \$55,068 annually to be exempt from overtime pay. He's about \$10,000 short. Your options? Either pay Mark overtime or increase his salary to meet the threshold. Now I know what you are thinking, that's a lot of money we're talking about. My margins are thin already. Well, the good news is that you have now through November 7, 2023 to weigh in during the public comments period. This is your time to make your voice and concerns known. Check our show notes for a link to the rule change FAQ and where to submit comments on the proposed rule.

[Transition Music] If you were in Central Arkansas, you still remember the tornadoes and storms that devastated sections of Pulaski, Lonoke, and Cross Counties in March. SBA has been busy responding to federal disaster loans for businesses, private nonprofits, homeowners, and renters in the affected areas. Not only is the SBA there to support small business owners after a disaster occurs, they have tools and resources to help before disaster strikes.

SBA marks September as National Disaster Preparedness Month and encourages small business community to prepare for the next disaster. According to SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas

Guzman, “SBA is helping businesses across the country create emergency response plans so they can limit damage and disruption—building resiliency for our neighborhoods and our economy.” Listeners, SBA outlines three critical steps to make your business more resilient when the next disaster strikes.

Step 1: Assess Risk

Every business has unique vulnerabilities and weaknesses. Knowing what type of disasters will most likely affect your business can help you return to operations faster. A back-to-business self-assessment can help assess risks for common hazards such as hurricanes, wildfires, flooding, or even cyberattacks.

Step 2: Create a Plan

The response plan is the roadmap to recovery and should be tailored to the business’s specific needs and operations. It should address immediate priorities and be easy to access.

Every disaster is different and SBA has developed resource and safety tips for hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, floods, hail, and yes, even cyber security threats

Step 3: Practice and Test Your Plan with Employees

Potential disasters don’t care about geographical boundaries, gender of the owner, how much money you have, or what your business offers. So make sure you and your employees know the plan and how to execute it.

In short, hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

[Transition Music] Alright listeners, there are a number of events happening around the state to support your business. We have partnered with American Business Engine to host two separate workshops on Digital Marketing that will include topics such as Google Business Profile, Wix website designs, and online marketing tool Canva. The first workshop will take place at the Spring River Innovation Hub in Cherokee Village on October 2. The second workshop will take place at the UA Cossatot Weyerhaeuser Room in De Queen on October 23. Both workshops will be from 10:00am – 12:00pm. Attendance is free, but please register. Now I hear you, you can’t make it there in person those days. You’re in luck! Both workshops will be available online via Zoom, but you must register to get the Zoom link. Online participants will be able to get the whole presentation and ask questions. Go to arbusinessnavigator.com/events and search “Digital Marketing.”

Are you getting ready to hire your first employee? Do you have questions about what you can or cannot do in terms of human resource requirements? Save the date for November 7 as we host Owner and Senior Certified Professional, Glenda Caton of Caton Consulting, LLC to lead a hands-on workshop covering five key HR topics. They are Contract vs Employee, Getting Ready to Hire Your First Employee, Employee Compensation & Benefits, Company Policies, and Disciplinary Action. Final details including the registration link will be available soon, but if you are

interested in attending this event at UADA's Little Rock State Offices, send me an email at bmathews@uada.edu. That B M A T H E W S @uada.edu.

Lastly, Arkansas Business Navigator is hosting the first ever Arkansas Latino Business Awards today at the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock. This inaugural awards ceremony is well overdue to highlight, showcase, and celebrate the incredibly strong and vibrant Latino-owned businesses across Arkansas. Congratulations to everyone who was a part of making this event a success. Good luck to all of the finalists for awards such as Small Business of the Year, Woman-owned Small Business of the Year, Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Community Organization of the Year, Community Champion Award, and Food Truck of the Year. I can't wait to see the winners.

[Outro Music]

[Brandon] Thanks for listening to the podcast. Consider subscribing to get notified when new episodes drop. If you found the information useful, we'd really appreciate it if you could leave a review on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you listen. If you want to ask a question and have it answered on the show, go uaex.uada.edu/abn-podcast and complete the form. The Arkansas Business Navigator Podcast is produced by Brandon L. Mathews and Kamelle Gomez. Our music was created by Music Unlimited from Pixabay. The Arkansas Business Navigator is a program of the Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center hosted by UA Little Rock and is funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions, and/or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. To learn more about Arkansas Business Navigator or how to access free resources, go to arbusinessnavigator.com.