

Weather Corner



National Weather Service
Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 25. West wind between 5 and 15 mph.
Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 47. Windy, with a north wind 15 to 20 mph increasing to between 25 and 30 mph. Winds could gust as high as 40 mph.
Saturday Night: Clear, with a low around 23. Northwest wind between 10 and 15 mph.
Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 57. West wind between 10 and 15 mph.
Sunday Night: Partly cloudy and blustery, with a low around 26.
M.L.King Day: Mostly sunny, with a high near 53.
Monday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 24.
Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 59.
Tuesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 23.
Wednesday: Sunny, with a high near 56.
Wednesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 20.
Thursday: A slight chance of rain and snow. Partly cloudy, with a high near 43. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.
Thursday: High, 00; Low 00
Precip: Thursday trace
Month: 0.09 inches
Year: 0.09 inches
Normal: 0.48 inches
(K-State Experiment Station)

Know what it takes to keep employees from jumping ship

You know, those front-line employees who will jump ship in a heartbeat for a quarter-an-hour raise, or the seasoned employee who is lured away by a competitor. No one can fault a person for improving his station in life. Ironically, pay is not the lone motivator in staying or going. There's more to it.

Turnover is expensive, usually costing about 1.5 times the annual salary of the employee. Think about the disruption, loss of productivity and training time for the trainee, the company trainer(s) and co-workers.

Funny thing, employers do a pretty fair job of tracking performance and policy to justify necessary termination, but when an employee quits, they do a much poorer job of finding out why. Most employers don't conduct exit interviews. If they did, they'd know why their employee left.

According to workforce sources, employees tend to leave for the following reasons: limited advancement opportunities, lack of recognition, inadequate salary/benefits, unhappiness with management, boredom with the job, increased work load and inadequate training.

I've seen other studies that say employees are willing to work for less money if – and that is a big "if" – they feel like part of the solution. This means to me that you don't just give an employee a job and walk away. Employees need encouragement, opportunity for feedback, clear directions, shared goals and frequent updates about how their role impacts the company as a whole. Why is their role critical to success? Employees crave this type of communication. It feeds their worker ego and boosts their morale.



Susan Nickerson

• Smarter Workplace

The company that pays a masseuse for neck and shoulder massages to stressed 50-plus hour-per-week employees is onto something. The same company pays a "concierge" to run errands for employees who put in those long hours.

Appreciation lunches, award programs and incorporating fun into the culture of the company are all winning ideas. An employee task force can go a long way toward identifying, planning and executing what the workforce values. It might be an updated restroom or popcorn during break time on Fridays.

Employee loyalty can be attained in a number of ways. Appreciating workers for what they do and expressing the difference they make is a great motivator. Saying "Thank you" and "You did a good job" once in a while goes a long way.

Flexibility in working hours is another huge carrot. It can be used to retain older workers nearing retirement and can also attract today's youth. Finding a way to make this important priority a reality for your workforce can help you stay viable into the future.

Other benefit-related ideas that work to ensure satisfaction include retirement plans, health and dental insurance, vacation pay, day care services or vouchers, transportation and housing. Tuition reimbursement programs are fairly common.

Workforce industry surveys list the most effective retention tools

as: clear communication and expectations about interaction between supervisors and employees; recruiting the right job candidate in the first place; planning effective interviews that confirm that the prospect meets the criteria; selecting the right candidate; training and improving employees; rewarding employees; and providing a top-notch new-employee orientation that gets the worker started out on the right foot.

Supervisors have a key role to play as a conduit between management and employees to see that goals are maximized and that communication is flowing in both directions. The secret is out on the critical role of supervisors in employee loyalty and satisfaction: People don't quit their jobs, they quit their supervisors!

The good news is that there is excellent training available right here in Kansas. Our universities, community and technical colleges can offer customized training programs for supervision, team building and winning company communication techniques. State and federal training grants can help pay for supervisor training for projects that qualify.

There is no magic in developing and maintaining company loyalty. It takes a common-sense approach and a commitment from the top down that employees are valued. Good communication is a must. It is the key.

Company officials complain that some employees who receive significant training leave. But which is worse: a trained employee who leaves or an untrained employee who stays?

Susan Nickerson is west regional director for Kansas Works, the state workforce development agency.

Selden bindery a real '8 Wonder'

From "BINDERY," Page 3

March and April, he said, which is when they generally bind the newspapers. The men receive newspapers from the area and bind a year's worth for several of the county courthouses.

Right now, the biggest contract is for law books which are shipped out to New Jersey.

The men said they haven't really ever stopped to just figure out how many books they bind in a year.

Before their Dad died, said Chris, they had their busiest three months and probably did 10,000 books.

The men also do public service four-fold poster holders. The posters on binge drinking, inhalants, club drugs, smoking and other topics are attached to large black four-fold boards, then sold to police and others.

The business has two full-time employees and three part-time, said Chris.

In the middle of December the men received a phone call notifying them that the business had been nominated for the Kansas Sampler Foundation's "8 Wonders of Kansas Commerce" award. The business was among the top 104 nominations and then the 24 finalists.

Don said the foundation wanted to make sure they were accessible to visitors, which they are. The men called Judy Rogers, with Golden Plains School, and asked her to come take a few pictures of the operation to be sent in.

Now, said Don, people have until Tuesday, Feb. 17, to vote for the bookbindery to put the business in the top eight. People can vote by calling (620) 585-2374 or online at 8wonders.org, he said.

He said people can't get on the website and vote just for them. Voters have to pick eight businesses.

Irrigation conference to cover latest innovations

The Central Plains Irrigation Conference and Exposition is scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 24-25, at the City Limits Convention Center in Colby.

Speakers from industry, universities and government agencies

will give presentations on the latest irrigation equipment and water management practices. The event is being organized by Kansas State University Research and Extension.

The conference is designed for irrigators, irrigation managers,

crop consultants, agri-business professionals, and state and federal employees involved in water management. The organizers have applied for continuing education credits for crop consultant advisors.

Two general sessions with fea-

ture Mark Lawson of Monsanto and Robert Johnson of Sunflower Electric Power Corp.

Registrations go to Donna Lamm, 760 N. Thompson, Colby, Kan., 67701. Information is available by calling Lamm at (785) 462-7574.

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