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City of Charleston Hosts Inclusion in the Workplace Summit

Charleston, S.C.—Federal law prohibits private employers, State and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job hiring, advancement, compensation and other privileges of employment in Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The ADA covers all employers with 15 or more employees.

Yet, national unemployment rates among persons with a disability are higher than for persons with no disability across the board, whether comparing by race, age, gender or education level.

The City of Charleston is hosting an Inclusion Summit Feb. 24, from 9 to 11:30 a.m. at the Dock Street Theatre (135 Church Street), to address “Inclusion in the Workplace.”

Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg will open the event and discuss his focus on improving the quality of life for all of the citizens of Charleston, including those with a disability.

Area businesses are invited to attend to learn more about what it means to employ persons with a disability, including legal requirements and benefits to the workplace.

The summit, sponsored by Bi-lo, Hyatt, Palmetto Goodwill and Vocational Rehabilitation, will feature David H. Zoellner, managing attorney for Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc. (P&A) as the keynote speaker, addressing the legal requirements for inclusion as well as examples of initiating employment of people with disabilities.

After the keynote, a panel of local experts in inclusionary employment practices will discuss their best practices and experiences hiring persons with a disability. Panelists include Robert Miller, co-owner of Kickin’ Chicken; Maureen King, recruiting and training at Harris Teeter; Peggy Frazier, vice president of global talent acquisition and diversity for Blackbaud and Kevin Owens, talent acquisition at Verizon.

Not hiring a qualified person with a disability is discriminatory,” said Janet Schumacher, Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator for the city of Charleston. “We hope to dispel myths about barriers to inclusion and show area businesses that the accommodations needed to hire a person with a disability are usually noninvasive and low-cost. Companies have found that employees with disabilities are not only dedicated, but they also tend to bring out the best in other employees.”

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