

Required office posters available free online

'Voter education guide' created scramble

December is here, and I'm going to clean up some column topics that have been floating in my "idea" folder for some time, in order to start 2013 with an empty folder! So that will help you understand the potpourri of thoughts that you'll find below.

Consider them like the array of holiday gifts you see under a tree in a home, wrapped in a variety of paper, unlike the nicely matched gifts under the trees in the stores this time of year!

It's been some time since we've gone over the signs you are required to have placed in your office, and perhaps the end of the year is a good time to check this out and see if you have all the current ones posted. Some of you may be paying to get these mailed to you, but the truth is that they are all available to you on the internet for free.

In fact, Missouri has a website that makes this process extremely easy and will allow you to get the proper posters you need in a one-stop, one-shop environment. If you go to the website <http://labor.mo.gov/posters/> you can see all the information on the posters, both federal and state, that you are required to post. You can choose to download each for free using the links on that page. Or you can call your state division of workforce business representative (see link about half-way down that page) and get either the state or federal/state poster for free.

I called Steve Dempsey, the Missouri state rapid response coordinator for my area, and he rapidly returned both my emails and calls. He said the agency is happy to distribute these posters you see on the website and that the agency's

only request is that folks be patient if they call for a poster, because each regional representative has a large territory to cover, and these posters cannot be mailed.

He also worried that all of you would call at once and overwhelm the agency with your requests for these posters, so if you find they are out, be patient with them. After all, this is a free service. Your tax dollars are at work here.

The second thing I want to write about relates to an incident that happened across the state in November. The weeks leading up to the election were just overwhelming for your hotline attorney. I was averaging several calls

a day relating to political ads.

I think, as we got toward the end of October, there were a few days I had four calls a day from papers concerned about language in a political ad. Spending the equivalent of about an hour a day just dealing with political ads was surprising to me.

Then, the last weekend before election day, a number of papers contacted me about a flier that had been delivered for insertion. The flier claimed to be a "voter education guide." It had no "paid for by" attribution.

While one might argue that the "education" material inside the guide was very one-sided, it was clear on the back page that it was advocating for ballots to be cast a certain way on the constitutional issues, so it clearly was a piece for which attribution was needed.

When the calls came in, my response to the callers was that the insertion could create issues for the newspaper with the Missouri Ethics Commission, if a complaint were issued. Clearly, it was

in violation of state law. The newspaper could be subject to a fine.

To make a long story short, let me just say that many papers said "no" to the advertiser. Jon Rust, and Rust Communications, went a step further and worked with the advertiser to get the fliers labeled with the appropriate language. Only his inserts, apparently, got labeled correctly. Somehow the advertiser didn't get other inserts labeled correctly. At the last minute the Missouri Ethics Commission worked with Missouri Press on a work-around that would protect you, our members, from liability, and for that we were grateful.

However, one thing Jon Rust said to me has resonated deeply. "We try to work with our advertisers to let them get the ads in the paper," he said. His words, and his attitude, are so right.

My job is to tell you where the legal concerns are. I encourage you to take that next step and work with your advertisers to "get it right." While I often tell you that what you run has no potential to create liability for you, and so it is fine to run whatever your advertiser brings you, when you are faced with a situation where there is liability to you, also, it is indeed in your best interest to work with the advertiser to "get it right," rather than just tell the advertiser it cannot run as is. Thanks, Jon, for reminding us all of a good lesson.

Happy holidays to all!

As a final note, let me add that The Maneke Law Group is moving its offices at the end of December. Bear with me because the week between Christmas and New Year's is going to be chaotic. And if you start to mail me something, give us a call for the new address.

The phone number, fax number and email address will not change. We're taking up residence on the Country Club Plaza, and I'm looking forward to being in a beautiful new space. Next time you are in K.C. shopping on the Plaza, you'll have to come see me!



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*Maneke Law
office moving
to Plaza in
Kansas City*
