

## **Working with Seasoned Workers**

You may have noticed that people are working later in their years. In demographic terms, about 10,000 baby boomers in the United States will turn 65 every day until about the year 2030, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

“Older workers represent a never-before-seen opportunity for employers,” said Mark Schmit, executive director of the Society of Human Resource Managers. “In this knowledge economy the retention of older workers gives employers a competitive edge by allowing them to continue to tap a generation of knowledge and skill.” This knowledge and skill can be shared and passed to younger workers.

These mature workers have also experienced some physical changes that can be easily addressed. Items like:

- Provide step ladders with handrails to assist with balance. When stocking shelves they can feel safer by having the ability to grasp with one hand while working merchandise.

- Slow overexertion by reducing over reaching to a minimum, having their workspace tools easier to access without excessive reaching.

- Computer workstations can have screen setting adjusted for dark text on light background, increase settings for larger text and even internet browsers (some of this is already available in software and just needs to be ‘turned on’).

- Raise lighting levels in stair wells, especially at base and top of stairs.

These ideas will also benefit all workers no matter what their age.

WRA employs Rick Means as a Safety Specialist who is available to members to help draw up safety plans and suggest topics for safety meetings. Contact him at 360-943-9198, Ext. 18 or [rick.means@retailassociationservices.com](mailto:rick.means@retailassociationservices.com)