64th Annual Conference of the Association of Labor Relations Agencies

Minneapolis, Minnesota

July 18 – 21, 2015

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 2015

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.: Workshop

ALRA Academy

This workshop will provide newer members of ALRA and first time attendees with touchstone information about the ALRA organization, its benefits and value for members. It will also provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on the principle of neutrality and how it translates in practical terms for members and staff of labour relations and mediation agencies. This workshop offers a forum for comparative analysis of US and Canadian labour law frameworks and an opportunity to learn from practices in various jurisdictions relating to mediation and adjudication of labour disputes.

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.: Welcome Reception

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2015

8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.: Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.: Concurrent Roundtable Discussions

Join a group of member agency practitioners facing similar challenges: exchange views and share practical advice.

1. Mediators’ Roundtable

In this Roundtable, experienced mediators will facilitate discussion around the following topics:


b. Mediation Transformed – Telephonic and Internet Based Mediation – Does Lowering Cost and Burden of Negotiation/Mediation Necessarily Reduce Process Effectiveness?

c. Professional Development for Mediators – What do Agencies need to provide in order to insure the continued effectiveness of their mediation staff?
d. Career Cases – When does the mediator or the Agency say “stop” to the mediation process? The ethical dilemmas associated with recessing or stopping mediation on the motion of the mediator or the Agency will be discussed.

2. Board and Commission Members’ Roundtable

Board and Commission members will discuss the impact that change in government policy direction has on the agencies’ ability to ensure stable and predictable dispute resolution approaches and services. How can decision-makers and adjudicators effectively use their past and best practices to set the future?

The group will also explore what best practices exist within the agencies for the training and support of newly appointed Board members.

3. General Counsel Roundtable

It is often difficult to manage change, whether in the area of labor relations, administrative law or in any other domain. In this round table, facilitators will draw on the observations of counsel to explore legislative changes, jurisprudence, and other areas and how to manage them.

The discussion will focus on change in the following four different areas to assess their impact and possible opportunities or best practices to approach them:

1) Demographic change and how it is being managed for the present and future. (For example, there is a significant shift in the railroad industry’s workforce which may result in almost 70% of the workforce having less than 10 years of seniority by 2020). What do these statistics tell us about work of the future, the potential consequences and risks?

2) Political changes, such as changes in administration or control of legislatures. How do these changes affect the work of labor relations boards?

3) Legislative change in Canada and the United States and its impact on the work of neutrals. Recent changes in Federal labor relations statutes in Canada have had a significant impact on labour relations and are worth noting.

4) Recent jurisprudence in Canada and the United States, which at the present time may indeed seem contradictory in direction and scope.

By examining the above areas and inviting participants to address other changes through the questions above, it is hoped that a round table dialogue will contribute to understanding of current and future trends.
4. Administrators’ Roundtable

Those responsible for the administration of labor relations agencies can take this opportunity to share challenges and best practices focused upon communicating results and success stories to the clientele and the public generally. Administrators will also be able to focus their discussion on latest developments and initiatives involving implementation of new technologies from those who have taken steps to implement new case management systems, e-filing modules or e-case files.

11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. Brunch

Minnesota Labor History presented by Peter Rachleff, Professor of History, Macalester College, Saint Paul, Minnesota

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.: Plenary

A year in review – Highlights of key developments or initiatives having a significant impact on labour relations

A panel of representatives from various jurisdictions, will discuss current developments and trends emanating from the State and Federal levels as well as recent developments in Canadian law that are worth noting and observing as precursors or indicators of a broader shift in labor policy.

3:30 p.m.: Organized activities

EXPLORE THE TWIN CITIES

MONDAY, JULY 20, 2015

ADVOCATES DAY

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND THE CHANGING WORKFORCE:
NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Please refer to separate Program
Tuesday, July 21, 2015

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.: Professional Development for Delegates - Concurrent Workshops

(Health Break at 10:15)

Mediator Training Program

Best Practices in Mediation: If This Were Easy, Everyone Would Be Doing It!

Experienced Mediators from FMCS Canada and the FMCS US have developed a highly interactive Professional Development session designed to address the “nut and bolts” of the mediation process as well as the complex problems practitioners confront.

Utilizing short presentations, participant discussion and exercises designed to focus on mediator skill building; the session will include the following elements:

- Pre-mediation: making initial contact count and connecting with the parties
- Opening the mediation: setting the stage for success
- Tools and strategies to manage mediation challenges during the process
- The top 10 mediator mantras

Adjudicator Training Program

Navigating the Increasing Challenges to the Adjudication Process

This session will be devoted to the adjudicators and focus on how agencies are meeting the increasing challenges to the adjudication process.

- Managing the Hearing Process: Hear how agencies are managing the hearing process in an environment of increasingly complex hearings - from filing to final decision in such a way that helps move the case to decision in the most orderly, efficient and effective manner: includes production and pre-hearing processes.

- Dealing with Challenging Clientele: Agencies find themselves more often dealing with challenging clientele - from the increase in self represented litigants, litigants with mental health issues, challenging advocates and advocates with little to no experience in labor law or your agency’s processes.

- Decision Writing: What are agencies doing to issue clear, sound decisions?

11:45 a.m. Luncheon

Ethical Considerations in Mediated Settlements – A View from the Bench

1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Plenary

Ethics and Basics

Through the use of case scenarios, participate in discussions and reflection regarding questions of public perception, potential biases and ethical considerations that mediators, adjudicators and practitioners may face in their professional and social interactions.

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Annual Business Meeting