Preview: 2015 MMRMA Risk Management Workshop

IT’S FEBRUARY IN MICHIGAN, and we at MMRMA are filled with anticipation for many good things to come: spring, warmer weather, and, of course, our Risk Management Workshop.

This year’s event, which will take place March 5–6 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Lansing, promises to be packed, as always, with information and inspiration. At meals and between sessions, member attendees will enjoy several opportunities to meet and catch up with their colleagues from across the state.

Kicking Things Off
Our opening session will feature a legislative update from Emmy-winning correspondent Tim Skubick. A Lansing fixture and longtime host of public TV’s Off the Record, Skubick has his finger on the pulse of the Capitol, and he’ll be sure to share the inside scoop about the legislature and other developments that will shape the future of the state we all call home.

Get the latest on legislative issues from Emmy-winning correspondent Tim Skubick, learn about crisis communications from one of Michigan’s top media advisors, and get tips on business networking from attorney Stefanie Schaeffer, Season Six winner of NBC’s The Apprentice.

Expert Media Tips
The Michigan-based public relations firm Truscott Rossman has a reputation for getting results for its many A-list clients. CEO and co-founder Kelly Rossman-McKinney, APR, has years of experience in crisis management and media relations.

In her blog, she sets out her basic rules of crisis communications:
2. Acknowledge the situation.
3. Apologize for the situation, the harm, the inconvenience. Say you are sorry about what happened.
4. Act to fix the situation.

Rossman-McKinney will present two general sessions at this year’s Risk Management Workshop. Attendees will benefit from her expert knowledge and in-the-trenches experience as they learn practicable tips for responding to a media crisis and managing litigation communication.

Special Guest Speaker
Attorney Stefanie Schaeffer knows the value of forging connections, and she has done so in the dynamic worlds of business, television, and law. Winner of Season Six of NBC’s The Apprentice, Schaeffer will discuss business networking and share insights gleaned from her TV adventures and her varied career.

Schaeffer knows only too well that success is earned. She took a pay cut to work for Donald Trump and started near the bottom of his organization. “It’s about jumping in and being a team player and not going into it feeling it’s an entitlement,” she says.

Training that Matters
Our signature breakout sessions will include a presentation on workplace violence/active shooter situations. Presenters from Incident Management Team, Inc., will discuss how to assess risk, manage incidents, and develop safety practices relating to such scenarios in the workplace.

Attorney Jim Mellon of the firm Mellon Pries will give an update on the latest issues related to Michigan’s no-fault insurance law.

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Recap of Major Changes

The new law takes effect on July 1, 2015. It:

> Requires public bodies to have a written summary of FOIA procedures available for free to the public, either in print or online.

> Mandates that copying charges and fees must not be excessive.

> Prescribes how to calculate labor rates for time spent searching for, inspecting, copying, and redacting records.

> Allows public bodies to include fringe benefits costs in their labor charges.

> Permits government agencies to require payment in full from individuals who have previously requested records and then not paid the associated costs.

> Penalizes government agencies for late responses by reducing the fees they can charge.

> Mandates that public bodies provide records electronically if they have the capability to do so.

> Imposes fines of up to $7,500 for government agencies who ignore the law.

The latest version of Michigan’s FOIA law takes effect on July 1, 2015.
Best Practices Reviews Lead to Improved Risk Management

by Allen Smolen
Risk Control Consultant

OVER THE PAST YEAR, MMRMA’s Risk Control staff have been contacting members and conducting Best Practices Reviews. Such reviews are designed to help member entities identify areas of risk exposure in virtually all essential municipal departments and their functions.

How Reviews are Conducted
Each department is asked to provide details about the policies, procedures, practices, and protocols that have been beneficial to the department, the MMRMA member entity and, most importantly, to the citizens they serve.

The Risk Control Consultants who conduct the reviews are considered experts in their fields. They can help identify directives and policies that may be outdated or missing and can help members and departments develop, update and implement these required protocols.

“MMRMA developed this program to help members mitigate potential loss exposures and avoid claims,” says Cara Kowal, Manager of Risk Management Services. “Identifying industry best practices and helping members put them into action protects member communities, their citizens, and the MMRMA membership as a whole.”

The aim is to identify effective ways of controlling risk that can be implemented by multiple member entities.

Best Practices Programs May Qualify for RAP Grants
In many of the areas identified for risk reduction efforts, member employees are encouraged to consider MMRMA’s Risk Avoidance Program (RAP), where suggested solutions may qualify for grants to help mitigate risk exposures. RAP grants have actively supported members’ risk management initiatives since 1997.

Some recommendations arising from the Best Practices initiative have led to RAP grants that have enabled members to purchase risk reduction equipment such as Tasers for law enforcement, backup generators for sewer lift stations, security devices/systems, and high-visibility vehicle markings for emergency vehicles. Other grants have helped members fund advanced training and certification opportunities.

Information about RAP grants, including application and review procedures and a list of past RAP awards, is posted at mmrma.org. We encourage members to request logins and subscribe to automatic email notices about the many risk management training opportunities MMRMA offers throughout the state each year, most at no cost to member attendees.

Website users can also access important documents through their login accounts.

Members Recognize Value
From the tip of the Upper Peninsula to the Ohio/Indiana borders, with large and small municipal members alike, reviews by MMRMA’s Risk Control Consultants have been well received and appreciated. We look forward to more successful member visits as we complete this initiative in the coming months.

As MMRMA gathers more information relating to best practices, we expect to develop new resources and training to help members achieve high levels of excellence within their communities.

Best Practices Training
For members who have registered for the Risk Management Workshop in Lansing this March, several training topics relate to the Best Practice Review initiative. MMRMA’s Risk Control staff will be available at the workshop to answer any questions about Best Practice Reviews, RAP grants, or other risk control issues.

While at the workshop, visit the MMRMA Loss Control and Technology Center to learn about upcoming training, pick up new resources, and network with other members and MMRMA staff.

Workshop Attendees: Come to the Loss Control and Technology Center to learn about upcoming training, resources, and to network with members and MMRMA staff.
Another breakout session will feature a discussion of climate change by Josh Darr. A vice president at JLT Re, Josh has both the education (bachelor’s and master’s degrees in atmospheric sciences) and the experience to provide a clear and enlightening overview of this timely and important topic.

Team Players
As in previous years, our experienced staff and service providers will round out the breakout sessions with presentations on RAP Grants, Best Practices (see page 3), risks involved with special events, and more.

Still Time to Register
Go to mmrma.org for a complete workshop schedule and registration details. If you have specific questions or requests, please email MMRMA’s Event Planner Denise McGinn at association93@aol.com. We’ll see you there!

Updated Training Schedule at mmrma.org

MMRMA’S website makes it easy to keep updated on the schedule of risk management training courses offered in various locations throughout the state. In addition to Featured Training on the home page, you can view a month-by-month schedule from the Training Calendar tab. You’ll find detailed descriptions and registration information here.

Click the Training Catalog for an alphabetical list by subject area, with short descriptions of the course topics and target audience.

You’ll find many other risk management resources at mmrma.org, so bookmark the site and check back often!