As our work and home responsibilities continue to expand, our day-to-day routines can become so automatic and hectic that it can seem as though life is living us instead of the other way around. We know that our members’ time is at a premium, and we want to provide invaluable tools for maximizing that time—and the satisfaction that comes with it.

As Executive Director Michael Rhyner points out in his article on page 2, MMRMA’s Annual Meeting, August 21–23 at the Grand Traverse Resort, features presenters that will help attendees develop more effective leadership and life skills.

The 2014 meeting’s theme, MMRMA: A Work of Art, reflects the program’s emphasis on the artistry of living. Three featured speakers will help you rediscover your inner creative genius and start crafting the outcomes you want and deserve, at work and beyond.

**The Art of Innovation**
Author and speaker Jeff Tobe kicks things off at the opening session with his hallmark presentation, “Coloring Outside the Lines.” Tobe will illustrate how to spark innovation in yourself and those around you. He’ll also explain how, by shifting the focus from providing goods and services to focusing on the customer’s experience—from transaction to interaction—you can instill entirely new expectations and deliver service at an exciting new level.

On Friday, Tobe will be back for another session, outlining how to motivate your team members and enhance their commitment to your mission. He’ll share his “Four Pillars of Engagement”: Curiosity, Trust, Accountability, and Communication. Effectively employing these critical components in your daily interactions will ensure that you and your team members are more engaged each day.

**The Art of Influence**
As organizations—and our roles within them—evolve ever more rapidly, we are asked to convey information within and across departments to audiences both inside and outside our organizations. Renowned trainer and coach Diane DiResta will teach you how to become a more effective speaker.

DiResta will help you stretch beyond the basics of reporting facts to the artistry of speaking with conviction. Influencing your audience will be easier than ever once you learn to connect the dots, revealing the message behind the numbers and data.

You’ll soon be commanding your listeners’ attention using DiResta’s proven formula for successful communication.

**MMRMA member employees should consult with their entity’s member representative to determine if they are eligible to attend the Annual Meeting. All participants must officially register to attend.**

*continued on page 4*
Make Time for MMRMA Events, Enjoy Member Benefits

by Michael Rhyner
Executive Director

AT A RECENT MEETING OF MMRMA’s Events Planning Committee, we talked about ways to boost attendance at our functions and more effectively communicate their value.

Attendees at our March Risk Management Workshop gave the program excellent reviews, with nearly all rating the program as “very beneficial.” The committee did preliminary planning for the 2015 March workshop and put the final touches on our upcoming Annual Meeting.

Time is at a Premium
While attendance at our two annual events has been very good, there are growing demands on everyone’s time. Due to retirements, downsizing, and consolidation, the schedules of municipal officials are more jam-packed than ever, which can make it difficult to get away from the office.

In addition, the accelerated turnover among Member Representatives means that those new to their positions may not feel they have the time—or budget—to attend outside conferences. Given these factors, we use a variety of techniques to convey the many benefits of MMRMA membership.

High-Tech Communications
Our website is a convenient vehicle for valuable information such as:
> Risk control materials
> Loss data and underwriting guidelines
> Agendas and supporting material for committee members.

Our quarterly reports, National News Roundup, and bimonthly Risk Journal newsletter are delivered electronically via our website and email. We have also explored using webcams and online learning to provide training and impart information to members.

While electronic forms of communication save time and resources, they are no substitute for group meetings and events. We can’t underestimate the value of relationship building, networking, and the many other benefits of group sessions and hands-on workshops.

Annual Meeting Promotes Leadership Skills
Each August, MMRMA’s Annual Meeting attracts a diverse group of elected and appointed officials and their guests to the Grand Traverse Resort. Our Events Planning Committee consistently brings top national speakers and talented trainers to this event, with sessions designed to sharpen leadership skills and enhance personal and professional development.

Winter Workshop Focuses on Risk Management Topics
The Winter Risk Management Workshop takes a “nuts and bolts” approach, focusing on the latest issues in municipal risk and operations. The workshop’s central location and one-day format enable more employees of member municipalities to attend the specific sessions that will benefit them most.

Seize the Opportunities
Newcomers sometimes see MMRMA as simply an insurance company, when, in fact, membership affords a host of benefits, including the dissemination of practical methods to avoid costly losses. Our efforts go beyond the technical aspects of risk management to help municipal officials become better leaders and managers. And MMRMA events provide a forum for developing personal and professional relationships with peers.

We find that, once individuals begin to participate in our events, they quickly become repeat attendees, taking full advantage of the resources that MMRMA offers.

We are also working to limit the direct cost of our events. We rarely charge registration fees, and most meals are provided at no cost to attendees. Members’ expenses are typically limited to mileage and lodging, and we are considering ways to reduce these expenses as well.

We must all make choices about where to spend our valuable time. If you are a new Member Representative, I strongly encourage you to make MMRMA events a priority—and to encourage other employees to attend. The benefits will extend beyond you to your colleagues and constituents as well.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Municipal employees are working against the clock to keep up with increasing demands in the face of diminishing resources.
Changes Proposed to Freedom of Information and Open Meetings Acts

by Michael Ellis
Director of Claims

AS MMRMA MEMBERS KNOW all too well, public administrators are struggling to maintain services with diminishing resources. Meanwhile, the public continues to ask for more transparency in government, a demand that comes with a price tag.

Currently, the Michigan legislature is involved in a policy debate over how to foot the bill, and is considering changes to the state’s so-called Sunshine laws: the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Open Meetings Act (OMA).

Freedom of Information Act
The original FOIA statute envisioned a cost-neutral system in which the requesting party paid the costs related to responding to an FOIA request. However, proposed legislation seems to be shifting to set limits on what local governments can charge for responding to information requests, regardless of the actual costs involved.

The Michigan House of Representatives worked on FOIA reform provisions for 14 months, and on March 6, 2014, passed the sixth version of HB 4001, originally authored by Rep. Mike Shirkey of District 65 (Eaton Rapids and Springport area). The bill now rests in the Senate Government Operations Committee for further consideration.

Regrettably, many of the proposed reforms are not friendly to municipalities. They include:

> Significant limitations on cost recovery
> Mandatory use of free information on the organization’s website, when feasible
> Mandatory, published FOIA procedures and fees
> Provisions for substantial actual and punitive damages for violations of the proposed new law.

Open Meetings Act
At the same time, revisions to the Open Meetings Act (OMA) are also up for discussion. The House is pushing along HB 5193 and 5194, introduced by Rep. Tom McMillin of District 45 (Rochester Hills area). HB 5193 would bar closed sessions for discussions of “anticipated” litigation (as opposed to actual “pending” litigation).

HB 5194 would bar reenactments of open meetings deemed in violation of the current OMA. The bill also contains language stating: “Reenactment of a decision under this subsection is not a defense to a criminal... or civil action.”

In other words, an action taken by a body that violates the OMA cannot be absolved by repeating it in a properly constituted meeting.

These OMA bills have successfully passed the House. On May 20, HB 5193 was substantively amended to include this definition: “Pending litigation means an ongoing formal adversarial proceeding that has been initiated in a court or tribunal and in which a judge, arbitrator, or similar third party or body would be expected, in the absence of a settlement, to ultimately render a decision in the case.”

The bills are now before the Senate Government Operations Committee.

Voting Procedures
Another bill, HB 4363, passed the House on May 16, 2013. It requires that members of public decision-making bodies, such as boards and commissions, be physically present to vote, as opposed to being present by means of telecommunication technology.

This bill is sponsored by Rep. Amanda Price of District 89 (Grand Haven area) and now awaits a hearing before the Senate Committee on Government Operations.

Watching and Waiting
All of these proposed changes currently rest before the legislature, quite possibly awaiting the notorious “lame duck” session that follows the general election in November. A lame duck session is a frantic two- to four-week period in which such controversial legislation often finds its way to adoption.

As public administrators struggle to do more with less, these bills, if passed, would put even more pressure on an already vulnerable system. MMRMA will continue to inform members about the progress of these legislative initiatives.
Annual Meeting Preview, continued from page 1

The Art of Transformation
Billy Riggs started his career in public speaking at age 18 and has never looked back. Since then, he's been dubbed "The Dr. Phil of Magic." His exciting, dynamic presentation promises to get you thinking and, more importantly, get motivated to take action in the areas you need it most.

Riggs will use his signature blend of illusions and humor to help you boost your attitude, transform your habits, and improve your life.

The Art of Networking
Each of our speakers has a well-earned reputation, and attendees will reap the benefits of their knowledge and expertise.

What's more, you'll have plenty of opportunities to discuss key talking points with fellow MMRMA member employees and create a ripple effect, sharing your own insights and reaping the benefits of others' takeaways from the training.

Register now at mmrma.org. The deadline is July 31. We look forward to seeing you in August!

Online Access to MMRMA Event Resources

Want to share what you've learned at an MMRMA event with a colleague? Can't make an event but want to access training materials? Log in to mmrma.org to tap into a rich library of handouts, PowerPoint documents, and other training materials.

MMRMA's online training library allows more people within our membership to take advantage of these programs, and enables those who did attend to refresh their understanding of the material.

In March, we were pleased to host one of our most well-reviewed presenters, Michael Bazzell. He enlightened the audience with a disconcerting—yet highly useful—discussion about the common practices of cyber criminals and ways to protect against their tactics. Bazzell shared an article and interview that provide a good overview of the material in his presentation. This is but one example of the many items users can find on our site.

To download any of these useful resources, log in to your account at mmrma.org. Click on the Members Only file cabinet icon at the top right of the home page underneath your name, then scroll down to the Workshop Materials link and click to expand the Documents section.

For questions or comments about our website, contact Communications Specialist Tamara Christie at 734-245-7731 or tchristie@mmrma.org.