

PARTICIPATOR

February 2016

REALITY SETS IN - IT'S FEBRUARY!

Growing up near the international boundary, it seemed that our Canadian friends celebrated more national holidays than we did. I don't know if that was ever technically true but it seemed that way. A case in point was "Boxing Day", the day after Christmas, which traditionally included presentation of gifts to those who had been of service in the prior year. We have, unfortunately, developed some different traditions on the southern side of the border. For example, a resident who slipped and fell on the steps outside your public building on December 26th may be more likely to present you with a summons and complaint than a nice fruit basket.

If there's snow on the ground or on the way, it's likely that an article from NDIRF discussing winter safety issues will appear on this page. That's because, every winter season, we experience a spike in the number of claims from injured persons alleging improper maintenance of public walkways, buildings or grounds as the cause of their misfortune.



Santa Claus may or may not have become the first risk manager by adopting a policy of making a list and checking it twice but, in any event, it's a good habit for whoever is responsible for building maintenance to adopt. Certainly, if snow and ice clean-up procedures that are in place are ineffective – or if there are none at all – the NDIRF will sooner or later find out who's been naughty or nice when slip and fall injury claims are reported.

NDIRF members can go a long way toward reducing the chances of injury to the public – and, therefore, avoid the economic and personal costs of these accidents – by providing policies and procedures for winter maintenance of their infrastructure, including snow removal equipment. Specific responsibilities should also be delegated to ensure the policies and procedures are being followed.

Detailed guidance covering snow and ice abatement methods and safety procedures has been featured several times in the NDIRF *Participator* in past years – if your entity has filed the back issues of this newsletter in your Member Information binder, they can be reviewed for policy comparison or development. Back issue are also available on our website. NDIRF's Risk Services department is always, of course, also available to be contacted if you have questions in this regard. Working together, we can bend the loss curve for these types of claims – to the benefit of all. ■

INSIDE ...

**Financial Insight
From the CEO
Expanded Training**

NDIRF

MEET YOUR BOARD

Mike Lautenschlager was appointed to the NDIRF Board of Directors effective October 1, 2015, representing the “Schools” category of membership. Mr. Lautenschlager is a school board member of the Lewis and Clark School District in Berthold, ND, having served on the board for over fifteen years, including service as the school board president. He is also a member of the North Dakota School Boards Association’s board of directors, serving as the Northwest District director, and the National School Boards Association’s Federal Relations Network.



Mike was born in Minot, ND, and raised in Berthold, where he is involved in the construction and agriculture businesses. In his limited spare time, Mike enjoys family activities with wife Ginger and sons Mason, Payton and Braydon, along with golf, fishing and engaging in community volunteer work.

Mr. Lautenschlager describes his interest in the NDIRF as having come about due to reorganization litigation involving the school district, where the NDIRF “made dealing with these lawsuits very trouble free.” ■

NEW AT NDIRF



The NDIRF is pleased to announce that Brenda Bock has joined the company as an Administrative Technical Assistant. Brenda graduated from North Dakota State University with a degree in Agriculture and Applied Science and Veterinary Technology. She previously was employed with Farmers Insurance as a customer service representative and a property/casualty producer. She also served in the North Dakota House of Representatives.

Brenda has three children and enjoys spending her spare time in the outdoors and reading. ■

RISK SERVICES

EXPANDED ONLINE MEMBER TRAINING CENTER

Over the past few months, we have seen a fantastic response to our Video of the Month program. While we have heard many great things about the Video of the Month selections, we have also received many inquiries from our membership requesting an entire video catalogue, not just one video per month. The NDIRF is proud to announce a new online training center featuring an entire catalogue of videos, available free of charge for all NDIRF members. In the coming weeks, the NDIRF will roll out a new online training center in partnership with a national leader in local government training, LocalGovU. Our new training center will feature videos with

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RISK SERVICES

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topics from a variety of categories, including human resources, health and wellness, firefighting, management, customer service, water/waste management, productivity, grant writing, safety and environment, and roadway and highway safety.

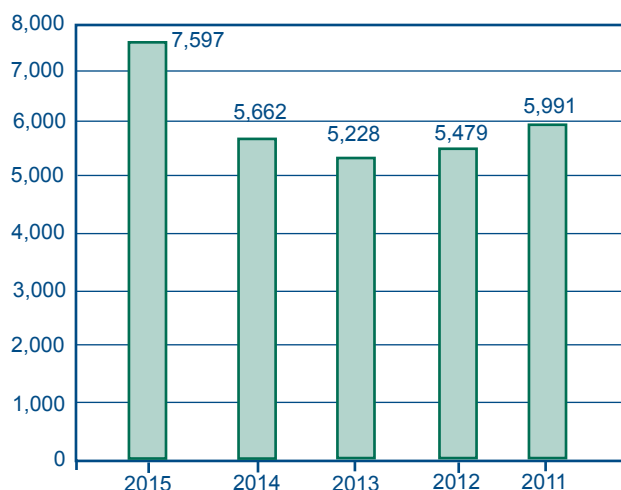
The NDIRF and LocalGovU have also partnered together to offer an extensive catalogue of law enforcement courses approved by the North Dakota Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board for continuing education credit. The law enforcement courses will be available for purchase in a bundle format at a deeply discounted rate.

In addition to the courses, our new training center will also give NDIRF members an easy way to assign courses to employees and document the completion of those courses within one easy-to-use system. Once the new training system is available, we would ask each NDIRF member to assign one individual as the training center administrator for their entity. Each administrator can organize their individual account to best suit the needs of their entity. The organization of the account can include grouping users by department or job function along with assigning administrator rights to department heads to allow them to customize the training center to their unique needs.

The link to the new training center will be posted on our website, www.ndirf.com, under the Member Info tab. Information regarding administrator signup will also be posted under the Member Info tab. Please look for additional information about the expanded training center in the coming weeks, both in communication from the NDIRF and on our website. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact NDIRF Risk Services Manager, Brennan Quintus, with any questions or concerns. Brennan can be reached by phone at 701-751-9105 or by email at Brennan.Quintus@NDIRF.com. ■

FINANCIAL INSIGHTS

LOSSES PAID (in thousands)



This graph represents losses paid by NDIRF over the past 5 years, including payments made to adjusters and attorneys assisting in the claims settlement process. The past 5 years are the highest paid loss years in NDIRF history, with 2015 being the highest. Since its inception in 1986 NDIRF has paid losses in excess of \$102 million. ■

FROM THE CEO

Over the past year, you have seen a number of announcements regarding staff changes at the NDIRF due to retirements. This month continues the theme, as you will notice we are pleased to welcome Brenda Bock to the NDIRF. Brenda takes over for the retiring Judy Vollmers. Judy had been a part of the NDIRF team for nearly twenty years – she will be missed by all of us staff members and by the many members and agents with whom she engaged over the years. I know you join me in thanking Judy for her many contributions and wishing her “all the best” in retirement.

On a less positive note, unfortunately, I need to inform NDIRF members that 2015 was not a very good year for the NDIRF financially due to high claim losses and mediocre financial market performance. We are awaiting final information from the NDIRF’s actuaries regarding certain reserve recommendations but we know that it will not change the basic situation. We will be communicating with you further in the near future with regard to the specific numbers. ■



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HR in the Fast Lane

The 4th Human Resource Conference for Local Governments will be held on April 13th and 14, 2016 at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck.

Start the HR race with an inspiring keynote presentation by Brenda Hamilton-Clark, *Your Future's So Bright... You Gotta Wear Shades! Six Keys to Radiant People Skills*. She will help you learn how radiant your people skills can be. This fun, interactive program is designed to heighten your awareness of what traits and behaviors make people truly shine when it comes to interacting with others. You will learn what comprises 93% of our communications and determine if you are living with Mojo or Nojo. We'll even explore what the Glazed Donut study might teach us about being a happier, more vibrant person. Join us for this engaging people skills session, and leave prepared to bedazzle your friends, family, colleagues, and the public!

The second plenary sessions will focus on how to implement *Brain Boosters in the Work Place*. Terry Eckmann will explain how neuroscientists around the world are involved in cutting edge research that supports the many positive effects of exercise on the brain. Throughout the lifespan, exercise can enhance cognition, facilitate learning, and improve work productivity. Connect key current research to improving your brain health and workplace productivity.

An additional 18 breakout sessions will be offered to address key emerging HR issues including new Fair Labor Standards Act regulations, Family Medical Leave, Drug Free Work place policies/procedures. In addition, there will be a number of fun sessions on improving work place culture and leadership.

Finally, *The Keeping it Legal* presentation will focus on human resource issues from the perspective of the employee. ND Commission of Labor and Human Rights, Troy Siebel, will review emerging legal issues and outline potential challenges for local governments. To see the full agenda and to register, go to:

<http://www.ndaco.org/hrconference>. ■

Mark Your CALENDAR

May 2016

- 11: NDIRF Annual Meeting
Ramkota Inn, Bismarck
- 11: NDIRF Board of Directors Meeting
NDIRF offices, Bismarck