

SUMMER 2016

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Regional Training Opportunities Coming This Fall!

By: Janel M. Favero, Communication Specialist

The Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority (MMIA), Montana League of Cities and Towns (MLCT), and Local Government Center (LGC) are once again teaming up to bring you Regional Training/District Meetings during August and September, in local cities near you.

The Upcoming dates and cities are:



- 8/23 – Glasgow
- 8/24 – Glendive
- 8/25 – Billings
- 8/30 – Columbia Falls
- 8/31 – Missoula
- 9/13 – Shelby
- 9/14 – Great Falls
- 9/15 – Lewistown
- 9/21 – Butte
- 9/22 – Helena
- 9/23 – Belgrade

Training is from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm, with lunch provided.

Topics Include:

- MMIA Coverages
- 2016 Legislative Priorities
- Code of Ethics
- Basics of Parliamentary Procedure
- Managing Meetings – How to Work with Difficult Personalities

Visit the Events Calendar on MMIA.net to sign up today! If you have any questions, please contact [Janel Favero](mailto:jfavero@mmia.net) at MMIA at (406) 495-7016 or jfavero@mmia.net. ■

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MMIA and MLCT: Working Cooperatively to Serve You

By: Alan Hulse, MMIA CEO and Tim Burton, MLCT Executive Director

For those who did not attend Regional Training, the Clerks and Elected Officials Institute, or the Executive Academy this year, we wanted to update you on the exciting new initiatives that have been undertaken at the MLCT and MMIA this past year, in an attempt to provide better service to our members.

It all starts with collaboration with strategic partners. In July of 2015, the MLCT and MMIA entered into a series of agreements which help to bolster the abilities of both organizations to better serve our members. In July, the MLCT moved out of their leased space in the Capital One Complex and purchased a 1/7th undivided interest in the MMIA South Building. MLCT will purchase this interest over roughly 18 years interest free. Additionally, the MMIA and MLCT have entered into service agreements wherein the MMIA is providing IT, telephone and Internet support to the League as well as providing accounting, finance and back office support (which includes HR, member service/

“These agreements have brought the MMIA and MLCT under one roof and created a spirit and culture of collaboration and teamwork to a level that never existed before...”

communication and conference planning). These agreements have allowed the MLCT and our members to save significant money, gain access to important resources, and have not increased cost to the MMIA. More importantly, these agreements have brought the MMIA and MLCT under one roof and created a spirit and culture of collaboration and teamwork to a level that never existed before, which enhances service to our member cities and towns.

Some of the benefits we have recognized from this new partnership include, but are not limited to:

- More staff and resources dedicated to planning and executing the MLCT Conference in Bozeman this past year. The conference was very successful with record attendance, and now with a year of experience under our belt we hope to put on great League Conference in Missoula this year.

- Joint participation (with the Local Government Center) in Regional Training/District Meetings.
- MLCT participation in other trainings such as the Executive Academy/ Forum, and Clerks and Elected Officials Institute.
- MLCT has facilitated more direct lines of communication with state agencies and MMIA.
- Enhanced ability to leverage collaborative opportunities with other strategic partners such as MACo, Local Government Center at MSU, and Local Government Services with the Department of Administration.
- Joint legislative meetings creating dialog on important issues for local governments.



These are just some of the major advantages that we have recognized over the past year as the result of our concerted efforts to find better ways to utilize and leverage the resources between our two organizations to add value to the services we provide to you our members. While this is a great start, it is just a beginning. We are committed to continue to explore strategies which will allow our two organizations and others, to enhance the service we provide. Our goal and commitment is to continually challenge ourselves to find effective and efficient solutions to our members needs. ■

Shortcut To Open Enrollment 2016

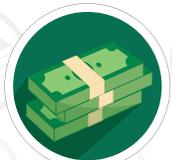
By Randi Miller, *Employee Benefits Member Relations Strategist*

The new fiscal year will be here before you know it! And with that, comes employee benefits and open enrollment questions. As always, the MMIA Employee Benefits program open enrollment period is from May 15th to June 15th. All members enrolled in the program received folders with all necessary information in order to make benefit decisions for the upcoming plan year.

In addition to making any plan changes, adding a spouse, or updating an address don't forget to remind employees of the new pharmacy vendor, ProAct. Starting July 1st, all members will need

to notify their pharmacy of the change to their prescription benefits. Temporary ID cards were mailed to employees homes in the open enrollment packets and can also be found on our website at www.mmia.net.

Wellthy Warriors: Watch for wellness screening dates and registration information to distribute to employees. Don't forget to hang the wellness posters provided in your green package and visit our new wellness and screening registration web page at www.getwellthymt.com. ■



Changes coming to the Bob Worthington Risk Management Achievement Awards (BWRMAA)

By: Janel M. Favero, *Communication Specialist*

We are excited to announce changes to the BWRMAA. In the past, MMIA staff put nominees forth on a quarterly basis, and then they voted at the end of the year for one of the candidates from the nominations. We featured a nominee in each quarterly newsletter, and the winner was recognized at the MMIA annual meeting in October, and in the fall newsletter.

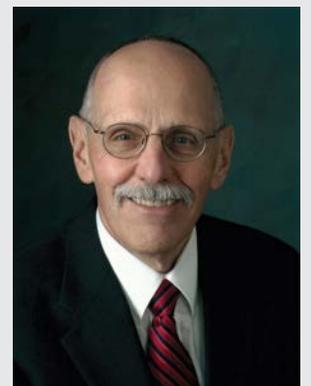
In addition to MMIA staff making nominations, we would now like to open up the nomination process to our members. This change will allow you to share the good things your city/town has been doing in regards to risk management. You are encouraged to submit a nominee for the BWRMAA, and in fact, can do so all year long. In the 2017 Summer newsletter, we will publish all the nominees, and in the fall newsletter, announce the winner.

The spirit of the BWRMAA award is to identify a person/group/department/member that has demonstrated an exceptional effort to manage risk or prevent losses. It will be given for proactive behavior, regardless of results. The selection process will be of a subjective nature; MMIA staff will choose a winner that has demonstrated efforts that positively affect the pool. The award can ac-

knowledge risk management effort within any of our coverage programs: Liability, Workers' Compensation, Property or Employee Benefits.

The winner's actions should demonstrate to all of our membership what we envision as a good example, such as a great safety culture within a department, an innovative return-to-work program, co-operative policies and procedures between departments to reduce risks, an employee team that has made changes in their work processes to reduce potential accidents, etc. Anything that has shown a proactive effort that also furthers the goal of minimizing losses.

You can nominate a candidate today, simply by going to the [MMIA Website](http://www.mmia.net)>Risk Management>BWRMAA, and completing the form. If you have any questions, please contact Janel Favero at (406) 495-7016. ■



Bob Worthington,
MMIA's First CEO

Employment Preference in Initial Hiring

By Angela Simonson, *Human Resource/Employment Practices Specialist*

The state of Montana, which includes local governments, is required to provide preference in employment to veterans, disabled veterans, eligible relatives and persons with disabilities per MCA Title 39, Chapters 29 and 30.

Such preferences are to only be applied in the initial hiring process. Initial hiring is defined in MCA 39-30-103 as, “a personnel action for which applications are solicited from outside the ranks of the current employees.” Hiring limited to current employees is not considered initial hiring.

All applications for employment should include the Employment Preference Questionnaire. This Questionnaire asks applicants if they are claiming preference, and if so, which preference. It also requires the applicant to submit documents showing such preference at the time of application. If you do not have such a questionnaire, you can obtain one from MMIA or your local Job Service.

Applicants must be US citizens and meet the minimum qualifications required for the position in order to qualify for the preference points.

Preference is applied differently depending on whether your hiring process is a scored or non-scored process. According to MCA 39-29-102, when using a scored procedure, the following percentage points must be added to the total possible points that may be granted:

- 5 percentage points if the applicant is a veteran OR
- 10 percentage points if the applicant is a disabled veteran or an eligible relative

Scored Process:

For example: You have ten applicants, all of whom meet minimum qualifications for the position. You score each with the points listed in the chart below.

Applicant	Total Application Points	Preference Status	Grand Total
Bill	6	Disabled Veteran	6.6
Susan	5	Veteran	5.25
Charlie	6	N/A	6
Christine	5	Disabled Individual	5
Mary	6	N/A	6
Dan	5	Disabled Veteran	5.5

You decide to interview your top 4—you would select Bill, Charlie, Mary and Dan based on the Grand Total after the preference points were added. You would then do the same calculation with Total Interview Points to arrive at your overall scores.



Non-Scored Process

If a scoring procedure is not used, then MCA 39-30-201 states that the employer shall provide preference in the following order over any applicant that does not have preference eligibility, and that has substantially equal qualifications:

- Disabled Veteran
- Person with a Disability
- Veteran
- Eligible relative as defined in MCA 39-29-101
- Eligible spouse as defined in MCA 39-30-103

For example, using the chart as reference for preferences claimed—you decide to select your top four for interviews. You would select Bill and Dan (Disabled Veterans), Christine (Disabled Individual), and Susan (Veteran).

State law does not dictate whether an organization is required to use a scored or non-scored process. Refer to your city/town's recruitment/selection policies to determine which process you may be required to use. In most cases, if your policies do not address selection methods, you are able to choose which process will work best for you. You must make this determination prior to collecting any applications.

It is important that you consult with your City/Town Attorney to ensure that you are applying Montana Employment Preferences correctly. MMIA is here to offer guidance, feel free to contact me with questions asimonson@mmia.net or (406) 495-7017. ■

Employee Spotlight:

Linda Moots -Celebrating 25 Years With MMIA

The MMIA would like to spotlight Linda Moots, Information Systems and Data Coordinator, as she celebrates 25 years with MMIA.

Linda first started working with workers' compensation rules and regulations at the Employment Relations Division in the 70s. In 1988, Linda began working at Gates McDonald Corporation when it was the third party administrator (TPA) for MMIA, and when the second TPA, RSKCo (Alexsis) took over, she moved with the contract. In July 1999, the MMIA Board decided to bring the risk management and claims in house, and she joined MMIA.

"In September 1988, I started as a receptionist/bill payer. Within a short time, I started adjusting workers' compensation claims. I was the jack of all trades at Gates McDonald: file clerk, claims examiner, bill payer, receptionist, report writer, you name it; I did it. We had an office of five people, two who were traveling."

At Alexsis, Linda was a half time medical only examiner and a half time data coordinator, which is where she got started in IT. She did a lot of work with both transitions from Gates to Alexsis, and Alexsis to MMIA with conversion of the data, and setting up the work flow – Linda was instrumental in the actual migration of the data from system to system.

"I did a lot of different things when I was with Alexsis – traveling, training, beta testing, working with developers, financial adjustments on claims, report building, to name a few duties. Alexsis Management sent me all over the country where I would help them balance their financial data in the claim system with their books, help them get caught up in data entry, fill in where they were short staffed, and do whatever was necessary. Exciting highlights while working at Alexsis were the month spent in Livonia Michigan working as a beta tester for a new Risk Management Information System (RMIS) they were building, and then spending a month prior to that in Chicago Illinois in a Think Tank to assist with ideas for the build of the new RMIS." Because of her extensive travel and experience observing other companies and their business processes, Linda was able to bring work-flow knowledge back to the office, and collaborate with corporate and local management and staff on creating efficiencies.

Once Linda came in house, she started out as a medical only worker's compensation examiner and internal IT support, which involved working with and assisting local vendors in building and supporting the MMIA network infrastructure; this lead to deeper involvement into the world of IT, and she be-

came the official front-line for support of MMIA staff. Growth and advancement in IT grew from there. In January 2001, she was promoted to network and software manager, where, for a long time, she was a one-person shop. MMIA eventually hired on a part time IT tech, which is when she began supervising staff. MMIA concluded an internal reorganization in October 2015. As a result Linda took on a new title.

Linda was very active in the MMIA Risk Management Information Systems User Groups, both Regionally and Nationally. These groups required interaction with software developers towards enhancing the product to ensure better usability for MMIA and other Pools using the product.

When asked what she likes about her career, she responded, "I like the challenge. I like getting into the nuts and bolts of why things aren't working, and to be able to fix them or identify what needs to be fixed. Both MMIA and IT are ever-changing industries. Because of my background in claims, I carry an advantage of understanding some of the needs for MMIA end users. I have in my background experience working with insureds, claimants, attorneys, carriers. I knew the law (which is a lot different now!). I knew about writing Administrative Rules for Montana, and teaching to the intent of those laws and rules. My experiences made life a whole lot easier with MMIA because I had that background. As I progressed into the IT industry, I was able to better understand and communicate recommendations related to work-flow within software solutions to assist with creating effective and efficient work-flow – I pick up what they put down a whole lot easier." Linda believes if you're going to do it, it should be done right!

Linda and her husband have been married 32 years. They have three children (two boys and a girl) nine grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren with the fifth on the way!

When Linda isn't working, she enjoys driving her ATV, camping, and traveling (to see the kids). Linda loves her dogs, and misses owning horses. Linda likes to crochet and knit.

Please join us in wishing a happy 25 years to Linda – we very much appreciate everything she does for our staff, and our members! ■



Improving Workplace Safety – MMIA and the Safety & Health Bureau

By Britani Laughery, *Internal Operations Manager*

Several of the MMIA members have received a visit from the Montana Department of Labor & Industry – Safety & Health Bureau (SHB) in the last year. The SHB has presented on their activities at both the MLCT Conference last October, and most recently during the Clerks & Elected Officials Institute in May. To educate those members that may have missed the presentations, we've reached out to the SHB for an overview to share with our membership.

Safety & Health Bureau

The SHB is dedicated to help improve safety and health in the workplace in Montana. The SHB is composed for four sections: Compliance, Consultation, Mine and Education & Outreach.

Compliance Section

The Compliance Section has jurisdiction over public sector employment safety, which includes State Agency, County, City/Town, University and School District workers. They have been operating since July 2015. Their goal is to ensure that each public employer provides a safe work environment for their employees and adhere to the requirements of the Montana Safety Culture Act (MSCA) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. The Compliance Section performs workplace inspections, accident investigations and responds to safety complaints. They will issue a compliance report that identifies any violations of the MSCA, OSHA regulations or safety hazards found during an inspection along with recommendations for mitigation of the violations/correction of the hazards. If necessary, they have authority to issue a temporary stop work order and levy penalties. The authority to inspect comes from MCA 50-71-118.

Consultation Section

The Consultation Section provides on-site consultation services to both private and public sector employers, including cities and towns. Their goal is to help identify and correct safety and health hazards to reduce potential accidents and injuries. Consultation services are confidential, conducted free of charge and may include any of the following:

- Walk-through survey: safety and/or health;
- Safety and health program assessment;
- Industrial hygiene sampling (i.e. noise, dust, volatile organic compounds, etc.);
- Technical assistance; and,
- Training

They will issue a consultation report that identifies any violations of the MSCA, OSHA regulations or safety hazards found during the walk-through along with recommendations for mitigation of the violations/correction of the hazards. It is important to

note that although the consultation is set up per employer request and conducted free of charge, employers that engage the consultative services must complete the recommendations provided. To set up a consultation, call the Consultation Program at (406) 494-0324, or submit an Online request at www.montanasafety.com



Mine Section

The Mine Section provides scheduled mine safety training and is responsible for workplace safety and health compliance in coal mines and sand and gravel operations. For information on the mine safety training visit: <http://tinyurl.com/zf3dxsm>

Education & Outreach Section

The Education and Outreach Section provides free safety training throughout the State of Montana via SafetyFest. There are four events throughout the year, rotated throughout the state. These events are free for participants and cover a wide variety of safety and health topics including OSHA 10-Hour Training and OSHA 30-Hour Training courses for General Industry, and Construction. For more information about SafetyFest visit safetyfestmt.com

MMIA Risk Management Services

The MMIA offers risk management services to our members. These services are not specifically directed at regulatory compliance like the services of the SHB, but there is overlap between risk management and compliance. MMIA services include:

- Development and review of safety and health programs;
- Development and review of effective hiring practices to promote safety;
- Creation of an effective safety committee;
- Assistance with job safety analyses;
- Assistance with communicating your safety message to your employees;
- Development and review of accident investigation processes;
- Identification of workplace hazards and appropriate controls;
- Training; and,
- Ergonomic Assessments

Our risk managers can also act as a resource for you to help iden-

Continued on next page...

Workers' Compensation—Police & Fire Personnel Exceptions

By Ann Komac, *Claims Manager*

There is some confusion on what the obligation of a city or town is when a paid police officer or firefighter is injured in the course and scope of their employment and is off work as a result of the injury. Montana statute mandates what an employer's responsibility is and clearly specifies certain paid police and fire department personnel receive full salary for the first year they are off on a lost time workers' compensation claim.

Below is the statute which addresses paid firefighters:

7-33-4133. Payment of partial salary to firefighter injured in performance of duty.

- (1) A member of a fire department of a first-class or second-class municipality who is injured in the performance of duty must be paid by the municipality the difference between the member's net salary, following adjustments for income taxes and pension contributions, and the amount received from workers' compensation until the disability has ceased, as determined by workers' compensation, or for a period not to exceed 1 year, whichever occurs first.*
- (2) To qualify for the partial salary payment provided for in subsection (1), the firefighter must require medical or other remedial treatment and must be incapable of performing the fire-fighter's duties as a result of the injury.*

Class one and two cities must have paid fire departments, and must pay fire fighters their full salary for the first year they are off on a lost time claim. If they happen to have a paid fire department, class three cities do not have this requirement for fire fighters. Members need to assure that they are paying the difference between the temporary total disability payment being paid to the employee by the MMIA and the employee's net salary.



Requirements for law enforcement are slightly different and below is the statute addressing these individuals:

7-32-4132. Payment of partial salary amount of officer injured in performance of duty.

- (1) A member of a municipal law enforcement agency of a municipality contracting for retirement coverage pursuant to 19-9-207 who is injured in the performance of the member's duties and who requires medical or other remedial treatment for injuries that render the member unable to perform the member's duties must be paid by the municipality the difference between the member's net salary, following adjustments for income taxes and pension contributions, and the amount received from workers' compensation until the disability has ceased, as determined by workers' compensation, or for a period not to exceed 1 year, whichever occurs first.*
- (2) To qualify for the partial salary payment provided for in subsection (1), the member of the law enforcement agency must be unable to perform the member's duties as a result of the injury.*

Improving Workplace Safety – MMIA and the Safety & Health Bureau (cont'd)

tify solutions to deficiencies identified by the SHB Compliance or Consultation Sections. For more information on MMIA's risk management services, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/zqme946> or contact Thomas Danenhower at 406-495-7025.

Improving Workplace Safety

Implementing written safety and health programs, pro-actively addressing safety and health issues, and consistently enforcing the safety message through training and awareness may reduce workplace injuries and lead to reduced workers' compensation costs. This is a win for you as an individual member as well as a win for the entire membership since MMIA pools our losses. We urge you to take a proactive approach to workplace safety and utilize the risk management services of MMIA and the services of the SHB. ■

If a police officer is paid no matter the city class, and the city has elected to join the police retirement–statewide plan, they must be paid their full net salary for the first year they are off on a lost time claim – this includes class three cities.

MMIA members affected by these statutes can continue to pay the firefighter or officer's salary and request that they sign over the bi-weekly wage loss checks from the MMIA to the city. The MMIA can provide a monthly report to its members listing payments made to individuals who qualify for this benefit to assist in ensuring wage loss checks are being signed over.

If you need more information, have questions about this part of the workers' compensation statute, or want to receive monthly reports, please contact Ann Komac at (406) 495-7011 or akomac@mmia.net. ■



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Calendar of Events

June

24: MMIA Board of Directors Meeting, Helena

July

4: Fourth of July

21-22: GEM Board Meeting, Big Sky MT

August

19: MMIA Board of Directors Meeting, Helena

September

5: Labor Day, Holiday

October

5: MMIA Board of Directors Meeting, Missoula

5-7: MLCT Conference, Missoula

7: MMIA Annual Meeting, Missoula

**CHECK OUT THE FRONT PAGE FOR ALL
UPCOMING REGIONAL TRAINING DATES**