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Office of the Employer
Advisor officially launched!

Meet Nova Scotia's
Employer Advisor

FOIPOP

Meet the Advisory Council

Upcoming presentations



1869 Upper Water Street
Collins Bank Building
Third Floor, Suite 303
Halifax, Nova Scotia

(o) 902.406.7039
(f) 902.422.9563
Toll free 1.877.515.7039



Newsletter

October 8 2008
Fire Prevention Week

Nova Scotia's first employer advisor

The Office of the Employer Advisor program has been a long time coming to Nova Scotia. Existing in other provinces, EA's provide a unique and important role to employers. Nova Scotia's first EA is Mary Morris – her impressive resume includes certified Occupational Health Nurse in Canada and the USA, a CRSP (Canadian Registered Safety Professional) and CHRP (Certified Human Resources Professional). When asked the attraction of such a role to a well-established consultant, Mary replied, "I was very fortunate to be working with an employer who was very proactive and progressive with their Occupational Health and Safety program, but I was acutely aware that this was not the case with all employers."

Bringing many years of experience with appeals at all levels including human rights, WCAT, internal appeals and Nova Scotia Court of Appeal and presenting at conferences both locally and nationally - her experience will ensure a level of security and trust to employers.

Though not involved in the primary development of the OEA, Mary understood the need for an Employer Advisor program in the province and the challenges facing employers. "Many employers want a health and safety record and program that demonstrates excellence and responsiveness, however they don't necessarily have the resources to navigate the entire system," says Mary. She continues, "I wanted to be part of that program that would enable me to work with all employers, help them and that would provide a wide variety of work challenges."

Programs such as these exist and succeed because there is a need. Employers and employer associations want to be successful and this translates into having a solid workplace health and safety record – even if they can't provide in-house resources for OHS. "Employers have felt for a long time that they have not been represented nor had equal resources to assist them, despite employers paying for the system in which everyone operates," says Mary. "This program represents a change – an opportunity to participate fully as a stakeholder in the system and to advocate for positive changes."

The program is growing with an increase of employers accessing the program each month. The challenge during the pilot phase will be to develop a clear definition of the program. It's an opportunity for employers to provide input as to their needs; to be heard and responded to. Following the pilot period which ends in the summer of 2010, it's fully anticipated that the OEA will become permanent. The next 24 months will be spent growing the program, defining needs and adjusting the program so it provides optimal advocacy, communication and training to employers and employer associations.

FOIPOP

The Halifax Herald Ltd. has launched a court appeal challenging the Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia on its policy of maintaining the confidentiality on certain key employer information. The appeal arose out of an application by the Herald for access to records held by the WCB. Specifically, they are seeking: (1) the names of the 25 companies which have the highest number of injuries, including fatal injuries in the province for the years 2004, 2005 and 2006; (2) size of their work forces during those three years; (3) the numbers and types of accidents reported by the 25 firms during the three years; (4) costs and claims paid out by the WCB Nova Scotia in compensation for workplace injuries at those 25 companies in those three years; and (5) how each firm safety rating compares to their industry's average. The WCB was unable to comply with requests two or five, as it did not have the requested information. However, they did agree to provide the information for requests three and four. Citing an exemption from sections 20 and 21 of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (FOIPOP) they refused to provide the names of companies.

Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME), Nova Scotia has been encouraged to represent employers in the province by taking on the role of intervener in this case. The CME is seeking to have the appeal of the Halifax Herald Ltd., dismissed. On October 23, 2008 all employers are encouraged to attend the appeal at the Halifax Law Courts beginning at 2 p.m.

If you plan to attend contact:
Chris Ipe – 494- 4036
Ann Janega – 422-4477
Mary Morris – 401-8490

ACT — Advocacy Communication Training

Introducing the Employers' Council



Bernadine MacAulay

Legal Counsel, Scotia Investments Ltd.
 Representing CME on the Employer Council
 Chair of the Employer Council
 Fifteen years experience working in the workers compensation and health and safety system. Most recently as advocate for improvements to the system in an effort to benefit employers and employees of Nova Scotia.



Leanne Hachey

Vice-President, Atlantic, Canadian Federation of Independent Business
 Vice-Chair of Employer Council and extremely pleased that employers finally have a resource of their own to deal with WCB issues. It's about time!



Chris Ipe

WCB Specialist, Canada Post
 Representing CME on the Employer Council
 Member of the OEA Finance Committee
 Instrumental in coordinating CME's efforts as "Intervener" in the FOIPOP appeal.



Carol MacCulloch

President, Construction Association of NS (CANS) OEA
 Representing CANS on the Employer Council
 Board of Directors, WCB (employer rep)
 CANS represents over 700 employers providing goods and services in the non-residential construction sector.



Luc Erjavec

Vice President, Atlantic Canada
 Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association
 Representing CRFA on the Employer Council
 Member of the OEA Finance Committee
 Long time advocate for the establishment of an Employer Advisor Program and founding member of the Employer Council.



Kathleen Miles

HR/LR Manager Loblaw Atlantic
 Representing the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors on the Employer's Council for the past two years. Kathleen has worked for Loblaw for the past 13 years.



Shelley James

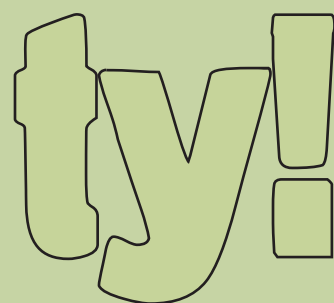
Manager Organizational Health and Safety, Northwood
 Representing NSAHO on the Employer Council
 Shelley has worked in health care for the past 21 years, in various positions and is currently a student at Dalhousie University (Diploma in Disability Management Program). She is pleased to represent health care on the Employer Council.



(L-R) CFIB Vice President Atlantic, Leanne Hachey meets with Employer Advisor, Mary Morris



Three participants at an OEA presentation to CANS (L-R) Michel Boutilier, Ryson Interior Construction Heather Moffatt, CSS, Ryson Interior Construction Peggy Ferguson, President, ISES Inc.



A special thank you to all the OEA's across the country the for their assistance and advice during the initial set-up of OEA Nova Scotia.

And a special mention to Newfoundland & Labrador Employers' Council for their generosity in sharing "ACT"



What's in a name?
 OEA Nova Scotia's

newsletter doesn't have a name!
 Do you have any ideas?

Help us name the newsletter - send the OEA your ideas!

Thank you to CME NS and Ann Janega, VP for their extraordinary support to OEA. CME has gratefully accepted to act as property host during the pilot of the OEA.



Out & About with your EA

October 15 - Presentation to OHS Advisory Council

October 16 - Ride-along with CFIB

October 27 - 31 AWCBC Annual Workers' Compensation Board Conference (OEA Annual Meeting)

November 3 - Safety Services Nova Scotia "Procurement of Safety Services & Trainers"

November 17 - Presentation to Safety Services Nova Scotia "Duty to Accommodate"

November 18 - Infonex Conference "Drug Alcohol & Gambling Addictions"

November 26 - Systems Performance - Advisory Committee Presentation

November 27 - Presentation to Dave's Commercial Cleaning

December - Presentation to CME

Watch for the launch of our website:
www.oenovascotia.ca