

SPECTRUM

Agency Update From The Executive Director

Given that it often highlights the rest of the newsletter, the Agency Update is always the last article written for any particular *Spectrum*. Even though we discuss the content beforehand, the *Spectrum's* draft is almost like a birthday present. It's something eagerly anticipated, but not quite known. Like many presents, I took great pleasure in this issue of the *Spectrum*. It emphasizes a myriad of Kansas Human Rights Commission (KHRC) educational offerings, although we are sometimes best known by our regulatory responsibilities.

The Kansas Act Against Discrimination states, "... discrimination threatens not only the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of the state of Kansas but menaces the institutions and foundations of a free democratic state." With such powerful language, we are fortunate the Legislature saw the

wisdom of a two-prong approach to righting the wrongs of discrimination: regulatory efforts and educational initiatives.

The KHRC's regulatory endeavors continue to be effective and efficient, as detailed on page 5. The Commission received almost 3,000 complaints and recovered over \$2.5 million dollars for alleged victims of discrimination over the last three fiscal years.

The KHRC's educational activities are equally successful. The public education program is a proactive effort to reduce tomorrow's incidents of discrimination by educating today. As outlined throughout this issue, the educational program is multi-faceted.

As reported below, the Employment Law Seminar continues to be well-received with nearly 200 attendees in September 2007. Your warm reception has prompted us to move to a



William V. Minner
Executive Director

larger location for the 2008 seminar and to expand the scope of the seminar by partnering with the Kansas Bar Association to offer teleconferences. See page 4 for more information.

On July 1, 2005, Kansas became the only state providing for the filing of profiling complaints with an *independent* agency, the KHRC. An outgrowth of this area is the Commission's efforts to assist law enforcement agencies and citizens in understanding and implementing Kansas' racial and

other profiling law, as detailed on page 3. Racial and Other Profiling Administrator Rick Fischli has trained in excess of 300 law enforcement officers and numerous citizens groups about the law's requirements.

It has been said that "Successes have many fathers, failures have none." Our regulatory efforts and educational initiatives notwithstanding, the KHRC would not be successful without the dedication and support of its Commissioners and employees. Please turn your attention to a few individuals who are deserving of congratulations: Commissioners John Carmichael and Lou Ann Thoms (page 4), and staff members Jeremy Deckard (page 3), Robert Easterling, Laura Gomez, and Jenny McCaslin (page 2). Also, please join me in congratulating former Commissioner David Hanson on the successful completion of his term.

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Date For Employment Law Seminar Set

Attorneys, human resource professionals, and others should mark their calendars as the Kansas Human Rights Commission (KHRC) has set the date for the 2008 version of the KHRC Employment Law Seminar. The one-day conference will take place on Wednesday, September 3, 2008, at the Capitol Plaza Hotel Maner Conference Center.

Last year's conference was attended by more than 190 people.

This one-day event will utilize expert presenters on a variety of topics that deal with employment law. This conference is usually attended by human resource personnel, attorneys, and others who specialize in employment law. The agency anticipates that CLE, PHR, SPHR, and GPHRA credit will be available for those in attendance.

Topics and speakers for the

seminar will be announced in the Summer 2008 edition of the *Spectrum*, which will also include registration information for the conference.

The seminar will cover topics that are timely. Topics that have been covered the last two years include intellectual disabilities, age discrimination in employment, hostile work environment and retaliation, as well as case updates on law issues.

KHRC Commissioners

Errol V. Williams

Chairman
Industry, Topeka

Beth Bradrick, Ph.D.

Labor, Pittsburg

John Carmichael

Legal, Wichita

Clyde Howard

At-Large, Manhattan

Lou Ann Thoms

Real Estate, Topeka

Anthony Villegas, Sr.

Labor, Kansas City

Jerome Williams

Industry, Wichita

By law, the Commission must represent particular areas of the workforce and community. In addition, no more than four Commissioners may belong to one particular political party. The Governor of the State of Kansas appoints all seven Commissioners to serve the Kansas Human Rights Commission.

Two New Members Added To The KHRC Staff

Easterling Promoted To Intake Supervisor

The Kansas Human Rights Commission has promoted Robert Easterling to Intake Supervisor, and filled two positions with new hires.

Easterling, Topeka, has been employed with the Commission since February 2005. He was originally hired as an Intake Specialist and was promoted to Intake Supervisor in September 2007. He earned his Masters Degree in Administration of Justice from the University of Louisville and his Bachelor of Arts from Kansas University. He and his wife Sharon reside in Topeka.

“On behalf of the Commission, I congratulate Robert Easterling for his appointment to his position of Intake Manager. Robert plays a very important role in the work of the Commission,” said William V. Minner, Executive Director. “We know that the intake area is most important, because the investigation of complaints starts at the intake level. It is very important to have dedicated employees intact to ensure that the investigation starts out on the right track.”

Two new hires filled the vacancies in the agency’s Intake Unit, where the majority of discrimination cases filed with the agency originate.

Laura Gomez, Topeka, was hired in October. She previously was employed as an Intake Coordinator with the Family Service Guidance Center. She is a



Robert Easterling
KHRC Intake Supervisor

graduate of Topeka High School, and has a four-year old daughter Marianna.

Jenny McCaslin, originally from Tribune, was hired in November. She is currently a student at Washburn University working towards a degree in Psychology and Social Work. She was previously employed with the Topeka City of Character.

“We are excited about the addition of these two individuals,” said Robert Easterling, Intake Supervisor. “They bring enthusiasm and a desire to do what is right, not only, with the work that they do but also with an understanding of the purpose of our agency.”

These three positions require an attention to detail to ensure timeliness and accuracy in acquiring the necessary information regarding harassment and discrimination allegations in employment, public accommodation, housing, and profiling. The agency had 6,115 public contacts in the period of July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007.



LEFT: Kansas Human Rights Commission New Hires Intake Specialists Laura Gomez (L) and Jenny McCaslin (R)

Deckard Honored For Training Efforts By The KHRA

The Kansas Human Relations Association (KHRA) named Jeremy Deckard, Kansas Human Rights Commission (KHRC) Public Information Officer, as their 2007 Member of the Year.

Deckard was recognized for the award at the 2007 League of Kansas Municipalities Annual Conference in October. He was also recognized in the October 2007 Volume of the Kansas Government Journal.

Deckard has been an active member of the KHRA since February 2005. Jeremy provided training at the LKM Annual Conference and has pro-

vided training for several of its members cities. Jeremy is a strong supporter of the KHRA, regularly attending meetings, providing input, and updating KHRA members on training opportunities.

The mission of the KHRA is "to promote ways in which people in communities learn to get along and to safeguard equal opportunity for all." Jeremy was elected KHRA member of the year because his beliefs and, more importantly, his actions, epitomize the KHRA's purpose. Deckard carries the message of anti-discrimination and diversity to a wide-ranging

audience throughout the four corners of Kansas. Requests for return engagements are a testament to his effectiveness as a trainer.

"Our Public Information Officer is doing outstanding work in education and bringing all of the current issues and laws that govern human and civil rights to state agencies, businesses, and local school districts, which are so important to the Commission's work," said Williams V. Minner, Executive Director. "I applaud Mr. Deckard for his training efforts and in receiving this award."



Jeremy Deckard
2007 KHRA Member of the Year

KHRC Providing Profiling Outreach Across Kansas

The Kansas Human Rights Commission and Racial and Other Profiling Administrator Rick Fischli have been providing educational and outreach opportunities to assist law enforcement agencies and citizens in understanding the state's racial and other profiling law.

"Outreach is a very important component of racial profiling. Mr. Fischli, who also has experience and background in police work, has done an excellent job of making himself available to answer questions, interact with, and provide training to various police departments and law enforcement agencies throughout Kansas," said William V. Minner, Executive Director. "With this emphasis one would hope that this type of outreach would help these agencies be sensitive to this issue and minimize complaints alleging racial profiling."

Fischli has provided training for more than 300 law en-

forcement officers across the state. This outreach includes formal classes for law enforcement groups and one-on-one educational opportunities with individual Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police. Fischli has also conducted and participated in learning opportunities for citizen groups.

"The law generally has become known for allowing citizens to file complaints with either the local law enforcement agency or the KHRC when they feel they have been targeted for enforcement due to their race or ethnicity," said Fischli. "Two other less known but very important requirements are that all certified officers receive training annually on the subject, and that local and state law enforcement agencies provide citizen outreach on the topic of racial profiling."

The intent of these provisions was to provide practical, culturally sensitive training to

officers, and encourage dialog between police agencies/officers and the citizens that they serve. Fischli states that the training he has provided law enforcement officers has evolved, starting out as a basic overview, but recently including scenarios and feedback on enforcement strategies used by the individual department.

"Many agencies already had formal or informal groups that give them citizen feedback, but the law attempts to bring those that do not, up to a minimal level of communication," said Fischli.

Agencies have also been offered a combination of diversity courses, conducted by Public Information Officer Jeremy Deckard, in conjunction with the profiling training.

Fischli and Deckard conducted one of these programs with the Park City Police Department. Supervisors from the City, as well as members from other area law enforcement

agencies, were invited to participate.

"On behalf of the members of the Park City Police Department I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Kansas Human Rights Commission for providing the recent training to the officers and city personnel of Park City," said William R. Edwards, Chief of Police, Park City. "The training consisting of lecture and videos was well organized, and concise. Attitudes, personal experiences, perceptions, beliefs and values concerning race, gender, ethnicity, and culture, were all discussed during the lecture portions of the classes. The overall message delivered helps us all to understand that biases exist, and people are unique in the way they look and act."

Government entities and citizens' groups interested in participating in the above training should contact Rick Fischli at (785)-296-3206 or (888)-793-6874.

John Carmichael Appointed To Commission

Commissioner Thoms Re-Appointed By Governor

To ensure equality of opportunity for all Kansans, Governor Kathleen Sebelius appointed John Carmichael to the Kansas Human Rights Commission.

Carmichael, Wichita, graduated from the University of Kansas in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in political science before going on to earn a bachelor's degree in administration of justice from Wichita

State University in 1980. Carmichael earned his law degree from the University of Kansas School of Law in 1982. Carmichael is a litigation partner at Wilson, Lee, Gurney, Carmichael & Hess.

The Governor also re-appointed Commissioner Lou Ann Thoms.

Thoms was first appointed to the Kansas Human Rights Commission by Governor John

Carlin in July 1982 and served two terms through July 1990.

In July 2002, Commissioner Thoms was appointed to the Commission by Governor Bill Graves.

Commissioner Thoms holds a Real Estate Broker's License and currently works in real estate sales with the Coldwell Banker/Griffith and Blair.



John Carmichael
KHRC Commissioner
Wichita, KS

Training Efforts Increased Through Partnership With The KBA

In October 2007, the Kansas Human Rights Commission (KHRC) partnered with the Kansas Bar Association (KBA) in an effort to increase educational opportunities for attorneys and others.

The two agencies jointly provided four "Super CLE Telephone Seminars." These phone seminars allow attorneys to earn continuing education credit from the comforts of their office. The Kansas Bar Association has been offering CLE classes through phone conferences for several years.

"The KBA has been providing phone CLEs since the fall of 2002 and they have become increasingly popular as a method for disseminating specialized information and even some more general information. They are convenient and

relatively inexpensive to produce," said Kathy Slawson, KBA CLE Program Planner. "Presenters, while occasionally uncomfortable by the lack of participant feedback during the presentation, enjoy the convenience of working from their own desks."

The two agencies provided one seminar as a trial run before providing the four classes in October.

"We really enjoyed partnering with the KHRC on this project," Slawson said. "It was extremely beneficial to attorneys all over the state."

"These seminars are a new approach for the Commission. Education is an important component of the Commission's work. This is a way to provide training and information to the legal community on civil rights

laws that are administered through the Kansas Human Rights Commission," said William V. Minner, Executive Director. "The Commission appreciates the participation and cooperation of the Kansas Bar Association to make this training available to the legal community and others."

Four speakers from the KHRC 2007 Employment Law Seminar agreed to repeat these classes for the phone seminar attendees. There was a total of 43 participants in these seminars, including out-of-state participants from Arizona, Delaware, Missouri, and Oklahoma.

One class that was offered addressed the Family Medical Leave Act. The phone seminars took place over the lunch hour from 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. Others who might be interested in

the telephone conferences are human resource professionals, legal assistants, and paralegals.

"Not only do the lunch hour CLE seminars offer the convenience of picking up CLE credit without having to attend an all day seminar, and miss a day of work, they also allow someone such as myself, whose main practice may be in another area, to acquire knowledge of other employment law matters that can be beneficial in my day-to-day work," said Clint Goos, Assistant General Counsel of the Kansas Corporation Commission.

In 2007, the KBA provided 120 regular telephone CLEs, 21 Casemaker sessions and 32 Annual Meeting sessions for a total of 173 programs which served approximately 3,200 individuals during the year.

The Spectrum is a publication of the Kansas Human Rights Commission. Free Subscriptions are available. If you would like to be placed on our mailing list, please contact the Topeka office. All comments and suggestions are appreciated, and should be addressed to the editor, Jeremy Deckard: (785) 296-3206 or jeremy.deckard@khrc.state.ks.us. Copies of the Spectrum are available in PDF Format at our website of www.khrc.net. The Spectrum can also be distributed via email in PDF format. If you would like to receive a copy of the Spectrum via e-mail please contact Jeremy Deckard.

Agency Briefs

NAHRW/IAOHRA Conference

In September 2007, members of the Kansas Human Rights Commission attended the first ever joint conference hosted by the National Association of Human Rights Workers and the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies, in Atlanta, Georgia. The theme for this conference was "On the Road to Civil Rights: A Revival of Heart, Mind and Soul." Commissioners Lou Ann Thoms and Clyde Howard, as well as, Executive Director William V. Minner and Public Information Officer Jeremy Deckard represented the KHRC at the conference.

Training Update

During the first half of FY 2008, the Kansas Human Rights Commission Public Information Program conducted 121.5 hours of training and trained 3,476 Kansas citizens over the topics of sexual harassment, diversity, profiling, and the organization of the KHRC.

EEOC Training

Seventeen members of the KHRC Investigative Staff attended a two-day training course for on Race, Color, and Religious Discrimination sponsored by the EEOC Training Institute. This training took place during the month of October in Phoenix, Arizona.

Comparing The Numbers....

Total Complaints Decrease In FY 2007; Recoveries Over \$500,000

The Kansas Human Rights Commission is constantly striving to provide the public with information concerning the agency's progress.

In fiscal year 2007, the total number of complaints filed with the agency decreased while recoveries that were made for complainants

exceeded \$500,000.

Over the last three fiscal years 2,942 total complaints have been filed with the agency, while monetary recoveries have totaled \$2,513,694.

The monetary recoveries total does not include the value of positions or jobs that may have been obtained by

the Commission for complainants, nor does it include other non-monetary remedies.

If an individual feels that they have been discriminated against in the areas of employment, public accommodations, housing, or racial and other profiling, they should contact the KHRC and speak with an intake specialist.

TOTAL COMPLAINTS FILED FY 2004-FY 2006

FISCAL YEAR	COMPLAINTS
2007	821
2006	1,076
2005	1,045
THREE YEAR TOTAL	2,942

MONETARY RECOVERIES MADE FY 2004-FY 2006

FISCAL YEAR	RECOVERIES
2007	\$581,018.00
2006	\$927,284.00
2005	\$1,005,392.00
THREE YEAR TOTAL	\$2,513,694.00



2007 KHRC Employment Law Seminar Sells-Out
Attendees of the 2007 KHRC Employment Law Seminar listen during one of the breakout sessions.

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Eternal Vigilance is the
Price of Freedom

"Dreams are the
touchstones of our
character."

—Henry David Thoreau

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