MCIT BULLETIN

MCIT MISSION:
Providing Minnesota counties and associated members cost-effective coverage with comprehensive and quality risk management services.

Randy Schreifels, board secretary-treasurer; Ron Antony; board chair; Don Wachal, board vice chair

Board Returns Incumbents to Leadership Positions

The MCIT Board of Directors unanimously returned board officers to their positions for 2024, as well as assigned members to committees (see accompanying article), during its Jan. 12 meeting.

Yellow Medicine County Commissioner Ron Antony serves as the board chair, Jackson County Commissioner Don Wachal is the vice chair, and Stearns County Auditor-treasurer Randy Schreifels is the secretary-treasurer.

Antony said, "Minnesota local governments are facing key challenges in 2024, such as securing data against cyberattacks and managing law enforcement responsibilities, and MCIT is challenged with securing cost-effective financial support from reinsurers in a global market responding to changing weather patterns and war-related conflict.

"To confront these challenges, MCIT's goal is to aid members through training; risk management development; and identifying new and evolving risks.

As always, the board's goal is to provide the best services possible to its members while keeping the fiscal integrity at a high level in this organization."

Board Meeting Schedule

Generally, the MCIT Board of Directors will hold its regular meetings on the second Friday of the month with the exceptions of March (meeting March 7), September (meeting Sept. 20) and December (meeting Dec. 9). The Claims Committee meets following board meetings at 1 p.m.

MCIT Board of Directors and Claims Committee meeting agendas are posted to *MCIT.org* under the About tab. Approved board minutes are also posted on the website.

Members are encouraged to contact MCIT Executive Director Gerd Clabaugh (*gclabaugh@mcit.org* or **1.866.547.6516, ext. 6407**) with questions regarding board or committee meetings or other board issues.

Board Committees Focus on Specific Responsibilities

The MCIT Board of Directors has five committees that focus on particular facets of the organization. During the Jan. 12 Board of Directors meeting, members were appointed to committees as noted below.

Audit Committee meets with MCIT's independent audit firm to discuss the annual audit process, reviews any issues of concern and previews the results of the annual audit prior to its presentation to the full MCIT board.

Committee members are Ron Antony, Yellow Medicine County commissioner; Todd Patzer, Lac qui Parle County commissioner; Randy Schreifels, Stearns County auditor; and Kirk Peysar, Aitkin County auditor.

Claims Committee considers information prepared by the claims handling team concerning pending claims and large losses; reviews litigation strategy; and meets with defense attorneys and/or staff to review claims, ratify defense strategy and authorize settlement as deemed appropriate.

Committee members are Antony; Schreifels; and Don Wachal, Jackson County commissioner. Alternates are Brett Skyles, Itasca County administra-

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COMING EVENTS

March 7
MCIT BUILDING, ST. PAUL
9 A.M.: Board of Directors Meeting
1 P.M.: Claims Committee Meeting

March 13 — VIRTUAL, 11 A.M.
"Hiring Toolkit: Reference Checks, Background Checks and Pre-employment Testing" webinar

April 11
MCIT BUILDING, ST. PAUL
TBD: Board Work Session

April 12
MCIT BUILDING, ST. PAUL
9 A.M.: Board Work Session continues
10:30 A.M.: Board of Directors Meeting
1 P.M.: Claims Committee Meeting

Watch 'Minnesota Open Meeting Law and Remote Participation' Webinar Recording on Demand

Members who missed the live Jan. 17 presentation of the "Minnesota Open Meeting Law and Remote Participation" webinar are encouraged to watch the recording at *MCIT.org/resources*. The session details how and when members of public entity governing bodies can join and participate in open meetings remotely while being in compliance with the law.

Failure to comply with the provisions of the particular statute under which the board is meeting *may mean* that the remote board member:

- Is unable to be counted as part of the quorum
- Is unable to participate in all proceedings

Common questions about board members' remote participation at open meetings are addressed, including:

- The number of times a board member may participate remotely in an open meeting
- Circumstances under which a remote location may be closed to the public
- Participating from an out-of-state location
- Last-minute remote participation
- When technological difficulties arise for remote participation, such as losing video or audio connection

The webinar was developed for these individuals:

- Members of public entity governing bodies, such as county commissioners, SWCD supervisors, joint powers entity board members
- Administrators/coordinators, executive directors, clerks to the board
- County attorneys

Watch Now

The webinar recording is posted to the Resource Library at *MCIT.org/resources*. Use the library's filters to find the session quickly: Choose "Open Meeting Law" from the Topics filter and "webinar" from the Resource Type filter.

MCIT Awards 4 Grants for Jail Camera Programs

The MCIT Board of Directors during its January meeting approved four grants totaling greater than $78,000 to members to adopt or expand the use of cameras in their jails.

The grants are to help improve awardees' ability to benefit operationally from the greater use of camera technology in county jails.

Each county sheriff grant recipient currently has in place camera systems in and around their jails. But each has challenges with these existing systems, such as the following.

- **Outdated technology:** Improved camera resolution requires more computer storage space than aging equipment can provide, and expanding from just fixed-point cameras to body-worn cameras for greater coverage of jail operations.
- **Budget constraints:** Any technology demands ongoing investment and upgrades, but budget constraints are a common theme among the nearly 20 applicants for the grant.
- **Limited supply of equipment:** Shortages in supply of cameras mean that existing equipment is shared among staff or some staff go without cameras. Also, continuous deployment of equipment creates challenges for recharging, repair and other maintenance of cameras.

Grant Winners

- **Goodhue County** will use its $30,000 grant to upgrade its current system to process camera data in real time, allow for more camera feeds to be visible at master control at one time and upgrade unit touch screens to improve efficiency.
- **Koochiching County** has $14,765 in grant funds to update its 15 year-old system and increase its use of cameras around the jail.
- **Stearns County** has received $28,500 to purchase 30 additional body-worn cameras for its jail staff.
- **Watonwan County** will use $5,065 in grants funds to expand its fixed-point camera system to include body-worn cameras for its staff. The addition of sound recording will improve evidence of incidents as well.

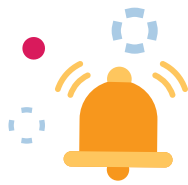### Obligations of Grant Winners

Grant winners will provide brief reports to MCIT at intervals of six months, 12 months, 24 months and 36 months after receiving funds. The reports must include details regarding acquisition, adoption, use of and effectiveness of cameras in achieving stated grant application goals.

This is the first grant program MCIT has offered its members, and the trust will monitor its success to consider whether to offer future grants.

REMINDER

3 Reports Due to MCIT Soon

The MCIT underwriting department has begun gathering risk exposure information from members for next year's coverage contribution calculations. Reports are due to MCIT either by March 31 or April 30 as noted below.

MARCH 31 — Liability Risk Assessment for 2025

Members must submit online by March 31 information regarding ratable liability exposures, such as the expected number of employees, the organization's budget, park acres, road miles maintained and total jail cells.

The MCIT primary contact for each member has already received an email with a link to the online liability risk assessment form along with instructions for completing it.

This data is used in the ratemaking process and to calculate each member's liability coverage contribution for next year.

APRIL 30 — Payroll Estimate for 2025

At the beginning of April, the member's primary contact will receive a request to submit online by April 30 the best estimate of the organization's gross payroll for each applicable MCIT job classification for 2025. Members provide this data using specific job classification codes that consider the risks associated with job duties.

This payroll exposure information and the member's unique experience modification factor are used to calculate the member's workers' compensation contribution.

APRIL 30 — Update and Submit EDP Inventory

Each member's annual inventory of electronic data processing (EDP) equipment must be submitted to MCIT by April 30. The inventory of items that accept and manipulate data or are connected to a computer system needs to include all EDP equipment that the member wants covered.

EDP coverage is provided to members on a blanket basis. This means that the member's coverage limit and scope of items covered is determined by the total of all items on the EDP inventory on file with MCIT. This is different from other property coverages, where individual items are scheduled with specific values.

Members are encouraged to update their EDP inventory throughout the year to ensure that the blanket limit of coverage accurately reflects their current EDP equipment and replacement costs.

Members should include cabling and installation expenses in the replacement cost as applies.

Members must submit just one inventory for the entire organization.

To submit the inventory, members simply email the document to *member services@mcit.org* or mail a copy to MCIT. A sample EDP inventory spreadsheet is available at *MCIT.org/resources*.

Contribution Estimates Provided in August

The exposure data collected is aggregated and used in establishing rates for next year. The rates are then uniformly applied to each member's risk exposures to determine the member's contribution for the coming year.

MCIT must gather key information now so that renewal contribution estimates can be distributed to members in August in time for setting their budgets.

Contact MCIT with Questions

Questions regarding any of the data requests can be directed to MCIT underwriting specialist Nick Anderson at *nanderson@mcit.org* or **1.866.547.6516, ext. 6417**.

Learn More

"MCIT's Data Reporting Cycle" (available at *MCIT.org/resource*) is a month-by-month guide to key data reporting requests and MCIT decisions.

EXAMPLES OF EDP EQUIPMENT

- Computers
- Tablets
- Smart phones
- Servers
- Monitors
- Network-connected printers and copiers
- Electronic voting equipment
- 911/dispatch systems
- 800 megahertz equipment (ARMER radios)
- Survey equipment
- UPS (uninterruptible power supply) systems
- GPS and GIS systems

CONFIDE Program Offers Support

The life of a public entity elected board member is demanding and often stressful. Their dedicated service to the community and constituents may take a toll on their happiness, peace of mind or family life. Because of this, MCIT has established a professional consulting and counseling program specifically for commissioners and elected leaders and their families.

Known as CONFIDE, this program is a confidential, professional service to support the wellbeing of local government leaders. It is offered as part of the MCIT Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and provided at no cost.

CONFIDE Offers:

- Confidential counseling and consultation on personal issues related to public service, work and home life at no cost. Personal information and an individual's use of the program are not shared. Counselors are required by state and federal law to protect the confidentiality of anyone using the program.
- Short-term, solution-focused counseling for commissioners, spouses and other dependents.
- Qualified, professional, licensed counselors accessible to every Minnesota county.
- Assistance in identifying long-term resources when needed.
- Sound advice and experienced wisdom in dealing with difficult situations.

Government leaders are encouraged to contact CONFIDE at **1.800.550.6248**

to access services. Phones are answered 24 hours a day, every day to offer assistance when people are in need.

Providers are available to meet with individuals in person, via phone or through virtual sessions. The program provides up to six sessions for each identified issue.

Support for Many Issues

CONFIDE assists government leaders in both their public roles and their personal lives. The program can help leaders with concerns related to:

- Leadership fatigue
- Stress of public life
- Peer-to-peer interpersonal conflict
- Impact of elected life on family
- Feelings of being overwhelmed
- Regret and dissatisfaction
- Communication breakdown
- Other professional concerns

CONFIDE addresses personal issues:

- Stress
- Conflict
- Depression and anxiety
- Grief and loss
- Relationships
- Family issues

- Financial concerns
- Substance use

Proven to Help

Past users of the program have been overwhelmingly happy with the service and assistance they have received. One user commented, "I am grateful for this program."

Commissioners and other elected government leaders of MCIT members can contact CONFIDE any time at **1.800.550.6248** for no-cost consultation and counseling.

Members who have questions about the program should contact MCIT Deputy Director Steve Nelson at **1.866.547.6516 ext. 6411** or *snelson@mcit.org*. Informational brochures are available at *MCIT. org/resources* or by calling MCIT toll-free **1.866.547.6516**.

CONFIDE is administered by Sand Creek, MCIT's partner in providing the EAP to its members.

Board Committees Focus on Specific Responsibilities ... continued from page 1

tor, January-April; Kurt Mortenson, Otter Tail County commissioner, May-August; and Patzer, September-December.

Governance Committee discusses modifications to MCIT's coverage document, bylaws and joint powers agreement when needed.

Committee members are Mortenson; Patzer; Jack Swanson, Roseau County commissioner; and Marcia Ward, Winona County commissioner.

Investment Committee reviews MCIT investment policies and

makes investment adjustment recommendations to the full board as appropriate.

Committee members are Peysar, Schreifels and Skyles.

Personnel Committee oversees MCIT's personnel administration, including issues related to employment, salary, benefits and personnel policies.

Committee members are Antony, Mortenson, Skyles and Wachal.

'Hiring Toolkit: Reference Checks, Background Checks and Pre-employment Testing'

The hiring process for a public employer requires careful attention to ensure that the process is fair for all applicants and complies with the law. The last webinar in the four-part "Hiring Toolkit" series "Reference Checks, Background Checks and Pre-employment Testing" provides risk management best practices related to conducting these assessments of job applicants.

The session is presented live March 13 at 11 a.m. by MCIT staff counsel for risk control. The session is about an hour. There is no charge to attend.

What You Learn

- Importance of conducting reference checks
- How to avoid discriminatory or incomplete reference checks
- Tips on how lawfully to conduct and use criminal background and credit history checks and pre-employment physical or mental examinations in a hiring decision
- Pitfalls of using social media for reference or background checks

Recommended Attendees

- Department heads, managers, supervisors or others who are involved with the hiring process
- Human resources professionals or those tasked with HR responsibilities

Register Now

Each attendee must individually register to attend this webinar. Visit *MCIT.org/events* and navigate to the "Hiring Toolkit: Reference Checks, Background Checks and Pre-employment Testing" page for a link to the registration form.

Tip: Be sure to check that the email you enter on the webinar registration form is correct before hitting the "Register" button. This is the address to which all communication, including the confirmation email with the link to join, will be sent. *If the address is entered incorrectly, you will not receive the link to join.*

Additional information about the webinar and tips for attending are also provided at *MCIT.org/events.*

MISSED THE PREVIOUS 'HIRING TOOLKIT' WEBINARS? WATCH RECORDINGS ANY TIME

Recordings of the other three "Hiring Toolkit" webinars presented in January and February are posted to *MCIT.org/resources*. Use the filters to find them quickly: Enter "hiring toolkit" in the Keyword filter and choose "webinar" from the Resource Type filter.

Previously presented "Hiring Toolkit" webinars include:

- Hiring Toolkit: Job Applications, Advertising and Job Descriptions
- Hiring Toolkit: Veterans Preference Act and Candidate Screening
- Hiring Toolkit: Interviewing

Cyber-security Seminar for Member Leaders: April 25, St. Cloud

The "Cybersecurity for County Decision-makers" seminar April 25 in St. Cloud addresses key areas of cyber-security that local government leaders need to know to facilitate their organizations' management of cyber-risks.

The Association of Minnesota Counties and MCIT present this valuable training opportunity for member decision-makers. *The event is open to all MCIT members, not just counties.*

Seminar Overview

The day of training offers leaders:

- Insights into the current cyber-security landscape and risks facing local government operations
- Common causes of cyber-security incidents
- Cyber-security best practices for local governments to adopt or improve
- Strategies to position the organization to respond successfully if an incident occurs, including the role of elected leaders and best practices for them
- Lessons learned from those involved with cyber-incidents and their aftermath: Representatives from organizations that have experienced a breach, coverage providers, breach counsel and cyber-forensics professionals

HOW TO CONDUCT AN EMPLOYEE INVESTIGATION

APRIL 17-18
PARK EVENT CENTER, ST. CLOUD

SPACE IS LIMITED TO THE FIRST 34 INDIVIDUALS!
Register early to secure your spot.

Allegations of employee misconduct can run the gamut from an inappropriate comment to the exceptionally serious and require the employer to respond appropriately. The investigation must be fair, thorough and comply with the law. This fast-paced, two-day seminar helps members meet these requirements.

Participants Learn:

- Strategies for approaching topical areas, such as allegations of harassment, workplace bullying, computer misuse and theft
- The impact various laws have on an investigation
- Techniques to manage media and public scrutiny of an investigation

Seminar Provides Practical Skills To:

- Determine when an investigation is necessary
- Plan an investigation
- Use documentary and physical evidence effectively
- Interview witnesses
- Document findings properly

Training Is Designed For:

- Human resource professionals who have a desire to begin conducting their own investigations
- Seasoned professionals who want to hone their investigative skills

Questions?

- Learn more and register at *MCIT.org* in the Events section.
- $150 per member attendee: Payment by credit card is required for this event at the time of registration.
- If registration is full, MCIT maintains a wait list. In case of cancellations, MCIT will offer the open spot to people on the waiting list on a first-come, first-offered basis.
- Members who have questions about this event should contact MCIT Communications Manager Heather Larson-Blakestad at *hblakestad@mcit.org* or **1.866.547.6516, ext. 6430.**

*MCIT cancelation policy: Seminar cancellations received by April 3, 2024, will receive a full refund. No refund will be issued for cancellations received after this deadline.

- Resources available to local governments through AMC and MCIT, including a high overview of coverage offered through MCIT

The program is specifically designed for:

- County commissioners and other local government board members
- Administrators/coordinators, executive directors, SWCD district managers, other top leaders of member organizations
- Emergency managers

Register Now

Members can register through the AMC website at *MNCounties.org/meetings_and_education/index.php*. MCIT encourages organizations to have more than one member of its top leadership attend this event as a way to facilitate important conversations about how they can support cyber-security initiatives within their entities.

'CYBERSECURITY FOR COUNTY DECISION-MAKERS' DETAILS

- **Date and time:** April 25, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- **Location:** Holiday Inn & Suites, St. Cloud (75 37th Ave.)
  - ◆ AMC has set aside a small block of rooms at the Holiday Inn & Suites for April 24 (set aside ends March 25). Participants are responsible for making their own hotel reservations.
- **Registration fee:** $175 per participant*
- **Questions?** Direct all questions regarding this event to Matt Cassady with AMC at **651.789.4341** or *mcassady@mncounties.org*

*Full refunds granted if cancelation is received before April 15. Refunds, less a $100 cancellation fee, are provided if notice is received between April 15 and 19, 2024. No refunds issued after April 19.

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Webinar Series Kicks Off in May

A series of four no-cost webinars offer best practices for managing employee performance. The webinars also identify traps in the performance management process that often snare managers and strategies to sidestep them.

The sessions are ideal for those who have authority over other employees and are responsible for managing their job performance.

MCIT has partnered with experts to present the webinars, including employment law attorneys and Employee Assistance Program professionals.

Each of the below webinars is a stand-alone session, but they are developed to be attended in series. A Q&A with presenters is offered with each session.

Fundamentals of Performance Management and Evaluations
MAY 15 AT 11 A.M.
Discusses the importance of:
- Coaching throughout the year
- Documentation
- Formal annual performance evaluations

Best Practices for Disciplining Employees
MAY 29 AT 11 A.M.
Explores:
- Strategies to discipline employees without running afoul of the law
- When and how to establish and manage performance improvement plans
- How to make a defensible decision to terminate an employee when necessary

What to Do When Substance Use Affects an Employee's Job Performance
JUNE 12 AT 11 A.M.
Covers:
- Signs of substance use and threshold for reasonable suspicion of substance use by employees
- Strategies managers can use to respond when an employees' substance use or addiction affects his or her job performance
- Ways to manage an employee's performance while going through treatment

The session also includes a review of Employee Assistance Program services.

Tips for Effective Difficult Conversations with Employees
JUNE 26 AT 11 A.M.
- Provides strategies for having effective conversations with employees about difficult topics, including poor job performance
- Methods discussed include preparing for the conversation, managing emotions during the conversation and establishing outcomes

Register Now
Visit *MCIT.org/events* for more information about each performance management webinar and a link to the registration form. Be sure that the email entered on the registration form is correct. Otherwise the confirmation message will not deliver correctly.

- A person must register separately for each webinar in the series he or she wants to attend.
- Individuals may register for a webinar any time until the live session ends.
- No fee is charged to attend a webinar.
- Tips for attending webinars are provided on the events pages at *MCIT.org/events*.

Questions?
Members who have questions about these webinars or their registration status should contact MCIT Communications Manager Heather Larson-Blakestad at *hblakestad@mcit.org* or **1.866.547.6516, ext. 6430**.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR MCIT WEBINARS

To register for a webinar offered through MCIT:

1. Visit *MCIT.org/events* and click the event you want to attend.
2. On the event page, click the "Register Now" button to open the registration form.
3. Enter information in all required fields and click button to submit the form.

Tip: Be sure to check that the email you enter on the registration form is correct before submitting the form. This is the address to which all communication, including the confirmation email with the link to join, will be sent. If the address is entered incorrectly, you will not receive the link to join.