

THE CAUCUS

The F.M.C.S. Retiree Newsletter
By Friends of FMCS History Foundation

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FMCS Retirees and Others Gathering in Florida

If you weren't one of the 45 individuals who attended this year's gathering of retirees in Dunedin, Florida in late April, you missed a good time. The good times included: golfing, enjoying the seaside and sun, visiting nearby sites, sharing meals and drinks, and catching-up with old friends and acquaintances.

But the biggest treat featured our own Jack Buettner (665) bringing us up to date on FMCS. Since Jack joined FMCS on 8-27-72, he has lived through the numerous changes after most of us left. So his comments on today's FMCS were interesting to those who heard them.

Here are my recollections of what Jack said:

He extends greetings from National Director George Cohen who also wanted to express his appreciation to everyone for their contributions over the years to the Agency.

Jack explained that one big change is contract expiration dates are not as important as they once were. Delays and extensions are not unusual. The two big issues are health insurance and pensions.

The Service held three seminars across the country for labor and management related to health care in an effort to inform them and help them understand the issue and the options. The Service has made some similar efforts on the issue of pensions. In some states, mediators handle a large number of state and local public sector disputes. Mediator use of interest based bargaining is primarily in public sector.

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In addition to mediating traditional contract disputes, mediators also do grievance mediation and employment disputes in authorized settings (private sector EEO cases, State and Local Governments on a reimbursable basis).

Labor-management training activities by the Service have declined because most employers minimize staffing to such an extent that releasing employees from their job for training is difficult. However, the Service manages to occasional conduct an RBO.

A Clinton Executive Order had encouraged labor-management partnerships in the Federal sector. Bush removed that EO and partnerships declined. The Obama Administration reintroduced the partnership concept and called it Federal Forums. The Service provides training and support for these activities.

At least 50 area labor management committees exist today in the US, which mediators have started and continue to support.

Currently, there are 170 field mediators. The Service is able to hire replacements for retirees, but the number of qualified candidates to choose from has been becoming more difficult due to a smaller labor movement and less collective bargaining, which produces fewer individuals with experience at the bargaining table. Therefore, for the last several years, FMCS has been hiring some mediator-interns directly out of college, and keeping them for extended period of time in trainee status.

The structure of FMCS has changed. The Director has two Deputy Directors and a Chief Financial Officer, plus public affairs, EEO, and General Council who report directly to him.

The chief financial officer oversees: administrative services, budget and finance, human resources and information services.

The deputy director of national and international programs oversees: ADR/international/FMCS institutes, education and training, and arbitration services.

The deputy director for field programs oversees: the director of field operation (Jack's job) who oversees the ten district directors.

- | Ten districts | Field Offices and Home Offices |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Woodbridge, NJ, | 5 – Boston, Hartford, Portland, Providence, Woodbridge |
| 2. Philadelphia | 7—Albany, Baltimore, Harrisburg, Philly, Trenton, D.C., Wilkes-Barre (home office) |
| 3. Pittsburgh | 8 – Battle Creek (home office), Buffalo, Detroit, Erie, |

Grand Rapids (home office), Pittsburgh,
Syracuse, Saginaw (home office).

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 4. Cleveland | 6 – Charleston, WV (home office), Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo. |
| 5. Orlando | 10 – Atlanta, Birmingham, Charlotte, Chesapeake, Louisville, Memphis, Miami, Nashville, Orlando, Roanoke (home office) |
| 6. St. Louis | 7 – Baton Rouge, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, San Antonio (home office), St. Louis, Wichita. |
| 7. Seattle | 5 – Seattle, Oakland, Portland, Helen, MT, Denver. |
| 8. Los Angeles | 9 – Albuquerque (home office), Bakersfield (home office), Honolulu, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Diego, Santa Ana, Tucson. |
| 9. Chicago | 6 – Chicago, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Peoria, Rockville, South Bend. |
| 10. Minneapolis | 5 – Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Green Bay, Minneapolis, Omaha. |

Total offices = 68 including 9 home offices

From The Editor

If you can't remember when you wrote a check to the Caucus or the Friends, it has been too long ago. So please send one of any size. Since the Director eliminated the 'check-off' for current mediators, that source of funds has virtually dried-up.

Anyone reading this Caucus issue who hasn't attended an annual Florida gathering of mediators, I hope this special issue will encourage you to attend. John Popular and Dick Deem work very hard each year to host the event. They would certainly welcome you.

If you haven't seen the FMCS website recently, check out the annual reports at <http://www.fmcs.gov>. You will be surprised by some of the numbers.

**The Caucus
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