

# INSPRATIONS

Fall 2006

Illinois Chapter  
National School Public Relations Association

## A Message from INSPRA President Melea Smith

Dear Fellow PR Professionals -

At the INSPRA Board's recent annual planning meeting, someone questioned the sanity of Board members who are already overloaded with school work volunteering for additional duties to benefit our professional organization. "Why us?" someone asked. "Because that's what we do," another Board member responded.

It sounds trite, but INSPRA is about sharing and caring, supporting and responding where there is need. We are about recognizing that there is a mission greater than ourselves. If INSPRA members had not only realized, but responded to that reality, we would never have been able to successfully host the 53rd annual seminar of the National School Public Relations Association, held at the Chicago Marriott on Michigan Avenue. That event was, by the way, the largest, most successful seminar ever. Over 830 school PR representatives from across these United States, and beyond, attended. Thank you to our sponsors, our Board members and our volunteers for making July 9-12 a very positive experience!

With your help, we have also been named a national Blue Ribbon Chapter award winner and a Year-Round Chapter award Honorable Mention winner (one of only two so recognized). We are counted among the largest chapters in the national organization, due to your support. Because of our large numbers and the resulting influence we wield, we were recently asked by NSPRA to change regional affilia-

tion from Midwest to North Central, effective October 2006. We are a sought-after commodity within the national organization, thanks to our devoted members. (That means YOU!)

We are so excited about our national **President-Elect Bob Noyed, APR**, of Minnesota, joining us to lead two workshops at our Communications Awards celebration on September 15. In the morning, he will present "Assume the Position: Becoming a Strategic Advisor" and in the afternoon, he will lead "PR 101 for New Professionals." Please join us at Maggiano's Little Italy in Oak Brook for a wonderful day of celebrating and sharing.

Another way to raise your professional acumen, and be fiscally responsible, is to sign up for all six Tips & Tactics programs, saving at least \$30 off the total price. While you're at it, be sure to renew your INSPRA membership as well. I think of it like this:

One Corporate Communications Workshop - **\$295**  
Six INSPRA Tips & Tactics Sessions - **\$150**  
INSPRA's Member Needs Help service - **PRICELESS**

So welcome back to another school year; let INSPRA help you make it a great one!

*Melea Smith, APR*

## INSPRA Offers New Professionals Program

The Illinois chapter of the National School Public Relations Association is making history with the launch of an exciting new program in September, 2006. **The New Professionals Program**, coordinated by **Russ Fletcher** of Valley View District 365, will offer professional development and mentoring opportunities for persons new to the school public relations profession, or for those who have had public relations or community relations added to their existing responsibilities.

The program will begin with the companion seminar to the Communications Awards luncheon on Friday, Sept. 15, 2006. NSPRA **President-Elect Robert Noyed, APR**, will host a general workshop for all practitioners in the morning, with an additional one-hour session specifically for new professionals after lunch. The event will be held at Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant in Oak Brook. Information on how to register will be arriving by mail soon, if you have not already received it.

The exciting kickoff will be followed by a mentoring program through the year, with two additional opportunities to hear Regional School Public Relations veterans on Oct. 20, 2006 and March 16, 2007. New professionals (members of INSPRA only) who register for the New Professionals Program, will have the chance to meet, and have phone or email contact, with a seasoned veteran at least once per month throughout the year. The seasoned professional will offer advice, provide support and guidance, and be a 'go-to' source for answers to your questions. To register as a New Professional or to offer to serve as a mentor, please contact **Karen Hyland**, karen@managementservices.org or (815) 464-3275.

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## Superintendents endorse INSPRA membership

Here's what area superintendents are saying about the benefits of belonging to INSPRA:

"All districts have communications activities and processes. Whether or not they are as efficient, timely and effective as they should be is another question. If the communications function works well, the district benefits; and if it does not, the district suffers. Positive or negative, the effects circle back to the Board and superintendent. Superintendents who either conduct or supervise communications efforts would greatly benefit from the information and guidance available through INSPRA and its members."

*Dr. Charles McCormick, Superintendent, Kaneland CUSD 302*

"INSPRA has provided me guidance in school communication issues for over two decades. As both a principal and a superintendent I have attended INSPRA training that has allowed me to grow as a school leader/communicator. Internal communication with staff has been as important as external with our community. The creativity and reality of various INSPRA referendum trainings has sharpened skills that we were able to adapt to pass two successful referenda - both bond issue and education rate. Finally, the camaraderie of the INSPRA members is refreshing an invigorating. I find attending INSPRA Tips and Tactic Workshops invaluable."

*Dr. Bill Dodds, Superintendent, Harrison School District 36*

## Tips & Tactics lineup for 2006-07

Check your mail for information about registering for this year's exciting Tips & Tactics sessions. Each school year, INSPRA hosts six sessions focusing on the latest "must know" public relations strategies for successful school communications. The six-session package is priced at \$150, a \$30 savings for INSPRA members over the single session price, and a \$150 or 50% savings for non-members! Using the most requested topics from INSPRA's June membership survey, the 2006-2007 schedule is a winning lineup!

**Oct. 20, 2006** Bridging the Barriers – Communicating with non-English Speaking Parents & Guardians

**Nov. 17-19, 2006** INSPRA presentations at the Triple I Convention, Hyatt Regency, Chicago

**Dec. 9, 2006** Annual Idea Sharing Meeting

**Jan. 19, 2007** Laying The Groundwork – Public Engagement Strategies

**Feb. 23, 2007** Legal Issues Communications Professionals Face

**March 16, 2007** Introduction To e-Communications

**April 20, 2007** How to Write an Effective Communications Plan

## ISB Journal features articles by INSPRA members

An article by INSPRA VP of Membership **Russ Fletcher** appeared in the July/August 2006 issue of the *Illinois School Board Journal*. His article, "Winning takes effort in hiring sweepstakes," is available by visiting: [http://www.iasb.com/files/j070806\\_06.htm](http://www.iasb.com/files/j070806_06.htm). Watch for future articles by INSPRA members including, "Reporters Can Be Your Friends" by **Kathy Walling** in the September/October Issue and "Open Communications" by **Terri McHugh** and **Dr. Charles McCormick** in the November/December issue.