



## **The History of Minnesota Public Employer Labor Relations Association (MPELRA)**

Minnesota Public Employer Labor Relations Association (MPELRA) was formed in 1980 to provide a voice for public sector management in response to efforts to change the Minnesota Public Employment Labor Relations Act, adopted in 1972. The organization expanded its focus to include information sharing, networking and educational programs.

A steering committee formed MPELRA. Its members were:

Peter Bergstrom	General Counsel, MN Association of Counties
David Bergsven	Personnel and Labor Relations Director, MN Dept of Education
Jack Davis	Personnel and Labor Relations Director, MN Dept of Transportation
David Dombrowski	Manager of Labor & Legislative Affairs, Metropolitan Airports Commission
Tom Dudley	Personnel Director, Hennepin County
Jim Geissner	City Administrator, City of St Peter
Andrea Kircher	Special Assistant to the Attorney General, State of Minnesota
Elmer Malinen	City Administrator, City of St Cloud
Ken Robbins	Director of Business Services, Metropolitan Waste Control Commission
Earl Schlitz	Employee Relations Manager, City of Duluth
Cy Smythe	Consultant, Labor Relations Associates
Terry Sullivan	General Counsel, City of St Paul
Rollie Toenges	Labor Relations Director, Hennepin County
Fred Wagner	Personnel Director, City of Rochester
W. A. Wettergren	Executive Secretary, MN School Boards Association

In 1980, MPELRA received a grant of \$5,600 from the International Personnel Management Advisory Council. This grant was used to lay the foundation for MPELRA.

MPELRA's original mission was the following:

- To provide a means for developing and maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and excellence in public sector labor relations.
- To provide education and training for Minnesota public sector labor relations professionals.
- To provide current information on negotiations, mediation, arbitration and legislation.
- To foster cooperation among members, including sponsoring meetings, workshops and seminars.
- To establish a common understanding of governmental positions being developed for presentation to the State Legislature.

Interim officers and a board of directors were installed. The organization filed Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State. The interim and ultimately charter officers were David Dombrowski, President; Fred Wagner, Vice President; Earl Schlitz, Second Vice President; Ken Huber, Secretary; and David Bergsven, Treasurer. The original Board of Directors included: Jim Geissner, Rollie Toenges, Elmer Malilnen and Ken Robbins. Terry Sullivan was appointed General Counsel.

A charter conference was held on November 14, 1980. Ninety-two members attended the MPELRA charter meeting and conference. Officers and board members were elected and the By-Laws were ratified. In 1981 MPELRA held its second conference in St Cloud. On October 16, 1981 an agreement between NPELRA and MPELRA granted chapter status to MPELRA. MPELRA members were granted automatic membership in NPELRA.

The membership grew from 52 original members in 1980, to 77 in 1981 and to 84 in 1982. As of January 2009, there are over 176 members.

### **Past Presidents of MPELRA**

1981	David Dombrowski	1996	John Erickson
1982	Fred Wagner	1997	Bill Hunt
1983	David Bergsven	1998	Linda Skallman
1984	Ken Huber	1999	Jim Laumeyer
1985	Sue Richards	2000	Dale Ignatius
1986	Mike Hulette	2001	Melanie Ault
1987	Morgan Pascoe	2002	Irene Koski
1988	Joyce Twistol	2003	Jeanette Sobania
1989	David Werts	2004	Sherrie Le
1990	David Griffin	2005	Angela Nalezny
1991	Denise Legato	2006	Angela Nalezny
1992	Brian Brown	2007	Timothy Comstock
1993	Jan Peterson	2008	Timothy Comstock
1994	Rise' Kohlmeyer	2009	David Mueller
1995	Dave Clark	2010	Jennifer Peterson

Seven MPELRA members have served on the NPELRA Board of Directors: Jim Geissner (also NPELRA President for 1983-84), Betty Thornburg, Peter Obermeyer, Nancy Arneson-McClure, Fred Wagner, David Dombrowski and Sherrie Le. Robert Bruce was an NPELRA Charter member. Roger Dahl, originally from Minnesota, was the NPELRA Executive Director for many years and Secretary-Treasurer for the first NPELRA Board.

Four MPELRA members have been awarded the NPELRA Award of Excellence: Rollie Toenges, Jim Geissner, Irene Koski and Jeanette Sobania. Jim Geissner also received the President's Award. MPELRA members and organizations who have won the NPELRA Pacesetter Award: Jim McKane, Melanie Ault and Mn/DOT's Human Resources Division.

The first MPELRA Award of Excellence in Labor Relations was given to Paul Larson in February, 2009. The 2010 Excellence in Labor Relations Award was given to William (Bill) Peters in February, 2010. The first MPELRA PaceSetter Award was given to Krista Amos in February, 2010.