Flexible Workplaces Key to Recruitment and Retention

Gary Gannage, President

As MEMBERS KNOW, two joint working groups were established under the Memorandum of Understanding that we negotiated with the employer in March 2007 – one on psychological harassment and the other on alternative work arrangements.

We have devoted much space in this newsletter to bullying and psychological harassment; members have consistently identified this as a major problem in the OPS and AMAPCEO has tried to address it on multiple levels: through the media, directly with the Minister of Labour (with proposals to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act) and in various forums with our employer. Of the two working groups, the one on psychological harassment began first and is close to finalizing a report that will be submitted jointly to the Public Service Commission and the AMAPCEO Central Employee Relations Committee (ACERC).

In this column, however, I would like to briefly address alternative work arrangements. This joint working group has recently gotten underway and AMAPCEO members on this group are: TERESE KAROLEWSKI (Education), ANGELA LANCEY (Children and Youth Services), CHRISTOPHER LUNN (Health and Long-Term Care), TINA PIERUCCI (Government and Consumer Services) and Vice-President ROBERT STAMBULA (MTO), as AMAPCEO co-chair of the working group. Their mandate includes undertaking research on the effectiveness of current OPS policies, directives and practices, as well as best practices and collective agreement provisions in Ontario and other jurisdictions, and preparing recommendations. Alternative work arrangements include, but are not limited to, measures such as flextime, compressed work weeks and telecommuting.

As we have noted in the past, the OPS actually has policies that promote flexible work arrangements, but whether employees can take advantage of them depends on the discretion of local managers and the culture of their workplace. While legitimate operational requirements need to be factored into staffing arrangements, the overwhelming attitude on the part of management seems to be that everyone needs to be at their desks where they can be watched while they work – the command-and-control approach to management.

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Keith Baird Is New Treasurer; Michael Goreski Also Joins the Board; Phyllis Waugh Transfers to the Feds

When PHYLLIS WAUGH submitted her resignation as Treasurer in March, she set off a chain reaction that resulted in two changes on the AMAPCEO Board of Directors. KEITH BAIRD (Education Toronto), who already sat on the Board as a Director, was elected on May 6th to succeed Waugh as Treasurer. MICHAEL GORESKI (MCSS Mississauga) was subsequently elected, on May 29th, to fill Baird’s position as Director. Phyllis Waugh (Revenue Whitby) resigned because her position of Senior Tax Appeals Officer was transferred to the federal government as part of the corporate tax divestment. A former Chapter Chair in Finance, she had been on the Board since 2002 and was elected Treasurer in 2003. She was re-elected by acclamation twice - in 2005.

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Board and Council News

The Board of Directors held its annual strategic session in May in order to confirm strategic directions and review staffing and other financial pressures in advance of developing the 2009 draft operating budget in the Fall. The plan will be tabled for discussion at Provincial Council in conjunction with the submission of a budget (that is ultimately approved by the Annual Delegates’ Conference).

The Board also reviewed critical dates for the remainder of the year. Of particular interest are the nomination deadlines for the Fall election cycle: nominations for chapter and central positions will open on Friday, August 29th. The nomination deadline will be Friday, September 26th. This year’s Annual Delegates’ Conference (ADC) is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, November 28th and 29th, in Toronto.

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- The government’s proposed change in the time of Question Period was discussed at both the Board and Provincial Council. President **Gary Gannage** noted that AMAPCEO had written to express our concerns to both **Michelle Diemannuile**, then Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, and **Michael Bryant**, Government House Leader. Should anyone experience any change in their working conditions as a result of the new time for Question Period, AMAPCEO advises its members to discuss concerns, in the first instance, with your immediate supervisor. If you continue to have concerns that have not been resolved to your satisfaction, however, please contact the AMAPCEO office for further advice.

- The Council held a discussion on the Board’s report on a number of proposed constitutional amendments that had been referred by the ADC to the Board for further study.

Flexible Workplaces Key...Continued from page 1

This attitude has to change if the OPS is going to compete with other public sector employers in the “war for talent”, otherwise known as retention and recruitment: the need to hold on to existing staff and attract employees at a time when the cohort of replacement workers is much smaller than the baby-boom generation that has now started to retire.

This problem was highlighted in a May 27th presentation sponsored by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC). HR representatives from three levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal) cited the now-familiar demographic stats (e.g., the average age of employees in the OPS is 45; in less than ten years, one-half of senior executives in the OPS will be retired; the federal government needs to hire 12,000 new recruits every year to replace its current workforce). All three levels of government, plus numerous other public sector employers, will be competing at the same time for the same limited talent pool, resulting in a seller’s market.

The presenters all agreed that a huge cultural shift is required at all three levels of government in order to attract new employees and keep existing staff. Workplaces that are flexible, that pay well, that offer good benefits, that provide training opportunities and that foster high-quality management will attract (and keep) employees. Employers also have to promote greener workplaces and one obvious way to do that is to offer flexible work arrangements that allow employees to reduce commuting between home and office, encourage the use of public transit and generally cut down the carbon footprint of offices.

You can have the best policies in the world in the glossiest brochures, but unless those policies come alive by actually being implemented—unless there is a commitment to making them practices and not just policies—you will not have the flexible and creative workplaces that will attract and keep employees. This is one of the major challenges facing the Ontario Public Service, and AMAPCEO is hopeful that the contributions of our members on the Joint Working Group on Alternative Work Arrangements will help bring about the necessary changes.
Dave Colvin Announces Resignation as Secretary; Honoured for MNR Service

At the meeting of the AMAPCEO Board of Directors held on May 21st, **Dave Colvin** announced his resignation as Secretary of the Association, to take effect on August 31st, when he will retire from the OPS. The Board accepted the resignation “with great regret”.

Colvin is a Policy/Liaison Officer with the Aboriginal Affairs Unit in the Ministry of Natural Resources in Sudbury. He became active in AMAPCEO as Chair of the Sudbury/MNDM Chapter, was elected to the Board as a Director in 1998 and has been Secretary since 1999. He is also a former Chair of the Provincial Council and a former Chair of the Elections and Credentials Committee.

Later in the day on May 21st, Grand Council Chief **John Beaucage** of the Union of Ontario Indians (UOI), in the presence of the Minister of Natural Resources, **Donna Cansfield**, ADM **Charlie Lauer** and members of the Anishinabek Ontario Resource Management Council, presented Colvin with a plaque recognizing his contributions to promoting strong working relations between MNR and the UOI. The ceremony was special, as it was one of those rare occasions that non-aboriginals are recognized in this way by the union. The Minister and ADM also took this opportunity to thank him for his work with the ministry.

Because Colvin’s resignation creates a vacancy that occurs within the six months immediately prior to the next Annual Delegates’ Conference (scheduled for Friday and Saturday, November 28th and 29th, 2008), the by-election to replace him on an interim basis will be held by members of Provincial Council, acting on behalf of the Delegates, likely at the September meeting of the Council. Under our Constitution, the Council must elect a successor for an executive position from among the existing members of the Board of Directors and, if they choose to fill the subsequent Director vacancy (which is optional), the pool of candidates is restricted to the current members of the Council.

Media Brief: Why Leisure Matters

*New York Times* reporter **Marc Alboher** has written recently about the importance of leisure time in a busy world. In March, she interviewed Canadian economist **Linda Nazareth**, author of *The Leisure Economy*, who argues that North America is inevitably moving to become a society where people have more time. She believes that this will be brought about not only through the retirement of large numbers of baby boomers, who through their sheer numbers will elevate the status of leisure, but from the attitudes of those in Generation Y, born since the late 1970s: Gen Y, according to Nazareth, “are already putting demands on corporations and when they have their families, they will make even more demands. And what they want most of all is time. And because the boomers are retiring [thereby creating a seller’s labour market], quite a lot of [Gen Y employees] will get a ‘yes’ when they ask for those things”.

In May, Alboher interviewed **Alison Link**, who provides advice on how to define leisure for one’s own life, even if only for a few minutes at a time in a busy day. “Few of us really think about or plan for leisure”, she said. “Too often we end up feeling stressed and overwhelmed. We need to plan for leisure, perhaps by doing one small thing every day, putting enjoyable activities on the calendar. But before people start moving up leisure on the priority list, they need to appreciate and recognize the value and benefits of leisure…” [Sources: *New York Times*, March 10 and May 5, 2008]
Member Profile: Policy Advisors and Analysts

In March, Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory created a minor furor when he called on the government to make serious cuts to the “bloated civil service” as a way to deal with the current economic slowdown.

Prompted by recruitment ads to fill vacant policy analyst positions in the OPS, Tory described incumbents of these jobs as “people who are breathing each other’s exhaust and sitting around, analyzing each other’s papers.” He went on to say that “there hasn’t been enough attention paid to looking at whether those people are really making a productive contribution to the effective delivery of public services in Ontario”.

Good grief! Who would have thought that a reduction in the number of policy analysts could fend off the threat of a recession? More to the point, however, Mr. Tory’s comments (which disappeared from the media the next day) reflect a peculiarly uninformed view of the role and responsibilities of policy analysts.

The AMAPCEO office received a number of complaints from members about the disparaging remarks (although one wagish member suggested that the Tory comment at least vindicates health and safety concerns about the air quality in government buildings). Mr. Tory’s comments are particularly surprising, given his previous involvement at the highest levels of government (as a top aide to former Premier William Davis). Nevertheless, AMAPCEO Member News decided to look at “whether those people are really making a productive contribution”.

There are about 700 AMAPCEO colleagues working in all 23 ministries who plan, coordinate and provide professional policy advice and expertise in the development of a broad range of strategies, plans and legislative/regulatory work to support OPS initiatives. They share a variety of titles including senior policy advisor, senior policy analyst, policy analyst, junior policy analyst, policy advisor and policy officer. In addition, of course, many other AMAPCEO-represented employees conduct policy analysis as part of their jobs, although their titles may not explicitly reflect that function.

Policy advisors and policy analysts provide corporate management and program branches with research, analysis and advice in the planning, design, development and delivery of strategies, policy options, briefing notes and backgrounders, potential legislation, stakeholder relations, communications and funding programs. Other responsibilities include trying to anticipate issues and trends that have potential impacts on the government, its programs and its stakeholders, through environmental scanning, media analysis, reviewing academic literature, participating on advisory bodies with stakeholders and other research methods.

Kate Azure, a senior policy advisor, works in the Long-Term Care & Community Care Unit of the Health Program Policy and Standards Branch in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Azure represents the ministry in provincial inter-ministerial committees such as the Seniors Advisory Committee for Long-Term Care; the Ontario Partnership in Aging and Developmental Disabilities; and the Cultural Competency Toolkit Steering Committee, in the areas of developmental disabilities in LTC homes and diversity.

“Policy work uses all of my education and experience”, says Azure. “I get to use objective discipline and data analysis skills from my science degree on the statistics we need to work with in health care. Journalism and law are always useful in research, writing and in the consultation process. I enjoy using all of my skills, abilities and experience.”

Her colleague, Barbara Gough, a senior policy advisor in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, has the lead in the Universities Unit on teacher education, nursing education and clinical education. As part of these responsibilities, she monitors labour market supply and demand in the elementary and secondary teaching profession and in nursing, and the impact on teacher education and nursing education programs in universities. As the sole policy advisor assigned to these files, she works on policy, program funding, issues, labour market supply and demand and stakeholder relations. She became a senior policy advisor because that is where she judged the core and the most interesting work in government to be.

“The most rewarding aspect to me today is dealing with my stakeholders and achieving positive outcomes for them and their students”, states Gough. “I work quite closely with the universities, specifically the deans and directors in the faculties of education and the faculties of nursing, and to some extent with the directors of planning. I enjoy getting their perspective on what government is trying to accomplish and working with them to come to joint solutions”.

Norm Mohamid, a senior policy advisor in the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) at the Ministry of Community and Social Services, enjoys working on new broad initiatives to develop original approaches to meet the needs of Ontarians, but does encounter daily challenges in doing so.

“One of the biggest challenges is communicating to other ministries and the public what it is we do at the ADO”, says Mohamid. “The work on accessibility standards and regulations is a large policy piece and positive outcomes will be determined by the actions of other ministries inside the OPS and businesses outside of the OPS. So we often cannot respond directly when the public and other parts of the OPS ask how we will ensure success in accessibility in housing, employment or transportation. We all want concrete answers so it’s a bit of work to get across the message that the ADO’s implementation of an accessible society requires an effort by everyone.”

“The challenges and issues are exactly the same as what makes the job rewarding,” states Azure. “The democratic process requires constant change and improvement, working with people with all kinds of interests. Daily challenges arise with issues that are unnecessarily the result of constantly feeling we need to change - to reinvent the wheel. Management should withstand pressures to change simply for the sake of change, and develop processes to evaluate the difference between substantive change and unnecessary change.”

Gough sympathizes with her colleagues’ daily challenges. “My time gets filled with routine tasks that prevent me getting to policy work: correspondence (sometimes to people who send a rant to the ministry web site at 3:00 a.m.) and preparing meeting notes for the Minister or Deputy when they are meeting with stakeholder groups. As with any job, there are conflicting demands on my time: decision notes, house notes, new policy initiatives, stakeholder meetings and joint ministry meetings.”

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AMAPCEO Intervenes and Makes a Difference

Two recent examples of AMAPCEO successfully intervening on behalf of members to make a difference:

**PACY.** Our members who work in the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (PACY) have a keen interest in the search process for the new Provincial Advocate. In February, AMAPCEO President GARY GANNAGE wrote to the Speaker of the Legislature, who is chairing the search committee, with comments on the skills and experience that the Advocate should possess.

Among other attributes, we urged the committee to look for someone with a basic knowledge of and respect for Ontario’s labour relations legislation and practices and the ability to work in a unionized environment. We were very pleased when the job ad appeared to see that our suggestions were incorporated and extend our thanks to the MPPs who sit on that committee.

**CTAR.** Readers will recall that our members who accepted transfers from the Ministry of Revenue to the federal government as part of the corporate tax divestment (CTAR) faced a potentially negative impact on their pension entitlements as part of the move. In addition to raising this matter with the employer, we also submitted a brief to the Ontario Expert Commission on Pensions, which is reviewing defined benefit pension plans in Ontario.

Our brief (which is posted in full on our website) focused on the problems faced by all employees who transfer to another employer as part of a divestment and who are prevented from transferring their existing pension assets to the new employer as the result of Section 80 of the Pension Benefits Act.

We are pleased to note that the government heard us and introduced a technical fix for OPS employees affected by the CTAR divestment through an amendment to the omnibus budget bill (Bill 44), which recently received Royal Assent. This amendment allows the employees the option of transferring their pension fund assets to the federal pension plan.

The result of intensive lobbying by AMAPCEO, this action resolves an outstanding issue for divested employees who had been faced with the prospect of having their pensionable service split between the PSP and the federal public servants’ pension plan. Such a split would have resulted in divested members having, in many cases, a significantly lower retirement income than they would have had as members of only one of the plans.

Although AMAPCEO is grateful for the government’s action to address the immediate needs of our members in this particular divestment, we must reiterate the call we made in our submission to the pension commission to address this shortcoming for all employees facing divestment.

Know Your Collective Agreement

Job postings in Northern Ontario recently have started to indicate that “Candidates from this job posting may be used to fill similar positions with the same core functions within the region and within 125 km of the work location.” Some members have asked about this new process.

When we were negotiating our Memorandum of Understanding in March 2007, the Employer sought a concession in our posting rules, asking to change from using a posting from an “identical” position to fill another vacancy to a posting from a “similar” position. This was a concession that the Employer had managed to obtain from OPSEU.

We fought the concession and succeeded in maintaining the existing language in our agreement; Article 18.8.1 (a) is unchanged and only provides for using a posting from an “identical” position. In the “give and take” of bargaining, however, we did agree to a time-limited and controlled pilot project. The pilot excludes the central (GTA) region, but allows the Employer to select one of its three other HR delivery regions. Almost a year after its authority to commence the pilot, and with the expiry date (September 1, 2008) fast approaching, the Employer disclosed in 2008 that it had selected the northern region for the pilot, apparently because the other regions did not have the necessary infrastructure in place.

The pilot is scheduled to expire on September 1. Further details are posted on the website on both the home page and under the Collective Agreement section.

**Pay for Performance:** The planned date for AMAPCEO Pay for Performance (P4P) payments is August 7th; this has been confirmed by MGCS in a March memo to Deputy Ministers.

Is Bullying Worse Than Sexual Harassment?

A recent study from two Canadian researchers has found that, although both bullying and sexual harassment result in toxic work environments and affect employees’ health, cases involving bullying or psychological harassment had more serious consequences.

Professors SANDY HERSHCOVIS of the University of Manitoba and JULIAN BARLING of Queen’s University compared workplace aggression and sexual harassment on a range of outcomes by reviewing 110 studies over 21 years. “Across the majority of them,” according to Hershcovis, “we found bullying or psychological harassment had stronger effects than sexual harassment”.

Herscovis and Barling’s report was presented at the recent International Conference on Work, Stress and Health, held in Washington D.C.
Squeezed? by JARED BERNSTEIN (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2008) tries to explain what happened to the bulk of Americans during the past couple of decades. Organized as a primer on U.S. economics that uses inequality as a starting point, Bernstein notes that the economic expansion from 2000 to 2006 tended to benefit those already at the high end of the income strata: “Over the course of this highly touted economic expansion, poverty is up, working families’ real incomes are down and some key prices are growing a lot faster than the average”. Bernstein is an economist with the Economic Policy Institute, which is based in Washington, D.C.

In a similar vein, Pluto Press and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives are jointly releasing in June Economics for Everyone: A Short Guide to the Economics of Capitalism, by JIM STANFORD. Stanford is an economist with the Canadian Auto Workers union and also writes a weekly column for The Globe and Mail. This book provides a comprehensive description and critique of free-market economics and is described as “completely free of technical jargon and mathematics” intended to show the lay reader where working people fit into the big economic picture, as well as the points of opportunity where they can build a better and fairer system.

Spring Election Results

The Elections and Credentials Committee has announced election results for some of AMAPCEO’s 23 ministry or regional Chapters. (Some Chapters hold elections in the Spring and the rest are held in the Fall.)

Three Chapters that had vacancies in their Chair positions now have new Chapter Chairs: WILMA DAVIS in Labour, NELLA BELCASTRO (MOHLTC) in Kingston and DAVID PICARD (MTO) in the Northwest Ontario Chapter. Re-elected as Chairs were: SHARYN BIR in MGCS, GRAHAM HOWE in OMAFRA & Guelph Region and DAVE BULMER (MOHLTC), Chair of the Ottawa and Eastern Ontario Chapter. GRAHAM HOWE will step aside for a few months while on a self-funded leave and are going to press, we learned that Environment and Energy Chapter Chair ADAM SOCHA is embarking on a leave of absence to work for the federal government; ARTHUR BROWN will be Acting Chapter Chair until elections can be held next Spring to replace Adam.

A total of 20 Delegates were either re-elected or elected:

MCSS/CYS/PACY/OFA – KATE WHITEHORN
Culture, Citizenship & Immig, Tourism – JASMINA KONOPEK
MEDT/MIA/MRI – ALEX LOFTHOUSE
Environment and Energy – RICHARD ROGACKI
MGCS – LINDA BALLANTYNE, DAVID CHAN, TERRY RYAN, TJ SAROYA and GERRY WHITTAKER
Guelph/OMAFRA – ARLENE ROBERTSON
MOHLTC & Health Promotion – KATE AZURE, LILY CHOU, JEFF GICPERRY, MARK KITELY and ANNE-LUISE WINTER
Kingston – JOHN LIPCESEI
London – ANNE STEWART
Northwest Ontario – DONNA DAVENPORT
Sudbury/MNDM – CHRIS BAMBER and GUY ROCHON.

Three members were elected to Chapter Executive Committees: NORM ROBERTSON and SHERRY FLOOD (Sudbury/MNDM); BRADLEY SHAW (OMAFRA/Guelph); and DAVID FARR (MOHLTC/Health Promotion).

Congratulations to all newly elected and re-elected members and thanks to all candidates who allowed their names to stand for nomination.

Goodbye and Thanks to Dionne Sinclair

Active AMAPCEO member DIONNE SINCLAIR resigned from the OPS in March and as a result has left her position as a Delegate from the Ottawa-Eastern Ontario Chapter. A former member of the Board of Directors, Dionne is one of only a few members to have chaired two different Chapters – London, when she worked at the Sarnia Detention Centre, and more recently Ottawa. She also chaired last year the special Constitutional Review Committee which reported to the December 2007 Annual Delegates’ Conference. We wish Dionne all the best as she embarks on a new career; her former colleagues are grateful for her work on their behalf.

Member Profile….Continued from page 4

One of the most important and traditional functions of policy analysts -broadly defined- is to act as an honest broker and in so doing to “speak truth to power”. They are expected to develop expertise in their field, outline potential options and develop advice to help the government ultimately make decisions. Governments need to hear a broad range of opinion before acting and part of the responsibility of policy analysts is to ensure that the relevant options and implications are presented, as objectively as possible, accompanied with the appropriate background information and recommended actions.

Ontario, along with other Canadian provinces and the federal government, has a long tradition of fostering an apolitical, non-partisan and professional civil service. Regardless of which political party happens to form the government of the day, employees in the OPS serve each one, making a significant contribution to the public good and protecting the public interest. Policy analysts and advisors are central to the fulfillment of this role.

(Ninth in a series of occasional articles on the work of AMAPCEO-represented employees.)
New Health and Safety Representatives Appointed

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Health, Safety and Wellness Committee has appointed the following 20 AMAPCEO members to two-year terms as Health and Safety Representatives.

Health and Safety Representatives sit on local joint health and safety committees with employer representatives and members nominated by other bargaining agents. The new appointees are:

- **ELENA ANGELONI**
  - Children and Youth Services
  - 800 Bay Street, Toronto

- **ALEXA PAGEL**
  - Environment
  - 40 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto

- **CHRIS BAMBER**
  - Community and Social Services
  - 199 Larch Street, Sudbury

- **KAREN PAWLOWSKI**
  - Environment
  - 135 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto

- **NICKI BERTUCCI**
  - Environment
  - 2 St. Clair Avenue, Toronto

- **JEFF GIC PERRY**
  - Health and Long-Term Care
  - 80 Grosvenor Street, Toronto

- **MARY PYSCH**
  - Natural Resources
  - 99 Wellesley Street West, Toronto

- **JOANNE REY**
  - Health and Long-Term Care
  - 5700 Yonge Street, Toronto

- **BEVERLEE RITCHIE**
  - Natural Resources
  - 300 Water Street, Peterborough

- **EYDIE TROPER**
  - Training, Colleges and Universities
  - 900 Bay Street, Toronto

- **STEVE DUBIN**
  - Attorney General
  - 361 University Avenue West, Toronto

- **JILL SHAW**
  - Community and Social Services
  - 80 Grosvenor Street, Toronto

- **CHRIS BAMBER**
  - Community and Social Services
  - 199 Larch Street, Sudbury

- **LAURA COFFEY**
  - Environment
  - 40 St. Clair Avenue, Toronto

- **LAURA KEATINGS**
  - Government and Consumer Services
  - 700 University, Toronto

- **AMALIA NERO**
  - Environment
  - 2 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto

- **CHRISTINE D’SOUZA**
  - Health and Long-Term Care
  - 5700 Yonge Street, Toronto

- **JOANNE REY**
  - Health and Long-Term Care
  - 5700 Yonge Street, Toronto

- **DAVE FARR**
  - Health and Long-Term Care
  - 102 Commerce Park Drive, Barrie

- **LAURA KEATINGS**
  - Government and Consumer Services
  - 700 University, Toronto

- **JAMES LEUNG**
  - Government and Consumer Services
  - 777 Bay Street, Toronto

- **DAVID WRIGHT**
  - Municipal Affairs and Housing
  - 255 Albert Street, Ottawa

- **ALEXANDER WILLIAMS**
  - Environment
  - 40 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto

A complete list of AMAPCEO’s 122 Health and Safety Representatives appears on the website. Anyone interested in becoming a Health and Safety Representative is encouraged to contact LIZA PAPANIKOLAOU at 1-888-AMAPCEO or 416 595 9000 (ext 2725) or by e-mail at lzap@amapceo.on.ca. For more information on health and safety issues, please visit the health and safety section of the AMAPCEO website.

Health, Safety, and Wellness News

**Day of Mourning.** At the invitation of WSIB Chair Steve Mahoney, AMAPCEO President GARY GANNAGE participated in the annual Day of Mourning ceremony, held at the Legislature on April 28th. The national ceremony is held each year to commemorate those killed or hurt by workplace injuries or disease. Gannage said he was honoured to take part in this event to demonstrate AMAPCEO’s commitment to help build a culture of safety in the OPS.

AMAPCEO Health and Safety Conference. AMAPCEO held its third annual conference for health and safety representatives on April 23rd. Notes from the event will be posted shortly in the Health, Safety and Wellness section of the AMAPCEO website. Major issues identified at OPS joint health and safety committees over the past year included: scent sensitivity; lighting; cleanliness of buildings; employee security; bullying and psychological harassment; ergonomic problems; issues related to size of cubicles; and air quality. Members noted both achievements and challenges. The recent creation by the employer of a corporate health and safety centre in MGCS (long proposed by AMAPCEO) was viewed as a good first step in getting the employer to take health and safety issues more seriously.

**First criminal conviction under Bill C-45.** In March, a Quebec paving stone manufacturer became the first company in Canada to be convicted of criminal negligence in a workplace death under the Bill C-45 amendments to the Criminal Code (enacted in 2004). After a young employee was crushed by heavy machinery, investigators found a number of contributing factors, including a disabled safety device on the equipment and inadequate safety training for employees.
AMAPCEO, established in 1992, is the second-largest bargaining agent in the Ontario Public Service, representing 10,000 professional and supervisory public servants who work directly for the Government of Ontario in every ministry and in a number of agencies, boards and commissions, in all regions of the Province and in ten cities outside Canada. We also represent employees in the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, an independent office of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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Dan Skwarok

ACERC Report: Update on Issues Under Discussion

Under our Collective Agreement, AMAPCEO and the employer have established a system of joint employee relations committees both centrally and at the ministry level. An AMAPCEO-Ministry Employee Relations Committee (AMERC) operates in each ministry and there is an AMAPCEO-Central Employee Relations Committee (known as ACERC) that consists of corporate representatives from the employer and AMAPCEO. President GARY GANNAGE is the AMAPCEO co-chair of ACERC; the employer co-chair is DAVID LOGAN, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations, in MGCS.

AMAPCEO raises many issues at the monthly meetings of ACERC. Some are long-standing matters that continue on the agenda for a number of meetings until they are either resolved or otherwise addressed in a way that takes them off the table; other matters are raised and dealt with at the same meeting. Examples of recent and continuing issues include: the government’s plans to divest from the OPS the Public Health Labs and Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre; changes in the time of Question Period; the process of disclosing budgetary changes to AMAPCEO; the employer’s plans for the diversity agenda; HR Service Delivery Transformation; implementation of the OPS HR Plan; and restructuring plans at the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

At the most recent ACERC meeting, held on June 3rd, Gary Gannage formally asked the employer to immediately review the kilometric rates for reimbursing employees for use of personal vehicles on government business, given the current level of gas prices. Using the CAA rates as a guide, it would appear that the existing OPS rates cover only about one-half of the true cost of operating a vehicle.