The SEARCH Membership Group held its 2004 Winter Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, January 22-25, 2004. This Membership Bulletin provides a brief review of this event. Highlights include substantive panel and roundtable discussions, approval of two significant Membership resolutions, and selection of 2004 award recipients.

Message from the Executive Director

At the 2004 Winter Membership Group meeting, we addressed many substantive, critical issues at the national level that will require our continued focus, commitment and participation. I would like to thank all Members for their hard work and valuable contributions at the meeting, particularly your willingness to share your viewpoints during roundtable discussions of these topics.

The feedback we received indicated this was one of the most informative SEARCH Membership Group meetings ever. I am hopeful this means we are on course and meeting your expectations.

We have also been working with the Board and undertaking internal assessments to continue improving the interaction between the SEARCH Board and Staff for administrative purposes. I would like to thank both SEARCH Members and Staff for their support as we make these adjustments to strengthen our organization’s administration.

— Ron Hawley
Board of Directors Meeting

Highlights of the Board of Directors meeting on January 21 are as follows:

- The Board reviewed the activities and deliverable status of current and proposed grants, using “Funding Fact Sheets” as a guide.
- The Board discussed the election process for the Chair, Vice Chair and Board, with a focus on seeking out good candidates. They discussed the need to inform potential Board Members of the roles and responsibilities of the Board, and the time and resource commitments required, well in advance of the July elections.
- The Board discussed At-Large Member appointments, in particular what characteristics and disciplines should be represented through these appointees, including corrections, prosecution, homeland security and public policy. There are currently two vacant At-Large seats on the Membership, and SEARCH Chair Gerry Wethington is taking the Board's input into consideration.
- The Board voted to recommend adoption by the Membership Group of a number of bylaw changes; to accept the findings of two audits (annual and U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General); to select recipients of SEARCH's annual awards; and to recognize a staff service anniversary (see page 4).
- In executive session, the Board’s Finance Committee Chair, Kansas Member Chuck Sexson, lead a discussion of multiple issues relating to SEARCH fiscal and business operations. These issues included establishing the fiduciary roles of the Finance Committee, Board, staff and Corporate Secretary/Treasurer; liability insurance, procurement policies, budgets and costs; Membership dues; audit findings and the like. The Finance Committee has been working with staff on these issues for the past year.

Membership Group Meeting

Resolutions

The SEARCH Membership approved two major resolutions (PDF copies were emailed to the Membership on February 20, 2004):

- “State Participation in Security Threat Assessments for Hazardous Materials Endorsements,” which urges the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to publish a proposed background check rule specifying the process States should use to obtain fingerprints relevant to commercial drivers licensees seeking hazmat endorsements.
- “NICS Improvement Legislation,” which urges the U.S. Congress to adopt legislation to improve and enhance the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). The resolution also urges the Congress to not penalize state criminal justice agencies by reducing federal justice assistance funding based on a state’s inability to obtain records held by the mental health community and provide this information to NICS.

Significant Votes

- JIEM Funding Motion. Col. Kenneth Bouche, Chair of the Systems and Technology Program Advisory Committee (PAC), reported that a large portion of the PAC’s meeting was devoted to discussion of the JIEM Project. The PAC agreed that the JIEM Modeling Tool® is very important and that the Membership Group pass a motion that supports future funding for the tool. Therefore, the Membership unanimously approved this motion: “That the Membership supports the continued funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Office of Justice Programs for the JIEM tool.”
- Bylaws. The Membership voted to adopt bylaw amendments, which the SEARCH Board of Directors had recommended for adoption at their meeting on January 21. Working with the Board, In-House Counsel Sheila Barton revised the bylaws to be consistent with both practice and law, to be more detailed and to reaffirm SEARCH's case for tax-exempt status. The bylaws were last revised in 1991.
Roundtable and Panel Discussions
By design, the Membership meeting featured more panel and roundtable discussions with the intention of encouraging interaction on a number of substantial changes occurring in the justice arena. Key Federal Agency partners and others were invited to share their perspectives with the Membership during panel sessions. Members were asked to contribute to roundtable sessions, as their insights are intended to help formulate recommendations and solutions to drive SEARCH activities in the coming year.

- Congressional. This panel addressed the significant criminal justice information management issues being tackled by the 108th Congress. (Panelists: SEARCH General Counsel Robert Belair and Mr. Michael Robinson, Legislative Director for Rep. Hal Rogers, R-KY.)

- TSA. This panel discussed the TSA’s handling of hazmat endorsements for commercial drivers’ licensees, and led into the Membership’s adoption of a SEARCH resolution (see page 2). (Panelists: Mr. John Berry, Program Manager, HAZMAT Credentialing, TSA; Mr. Kevin Lewis, CDL Safety Director, American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators; and Montana Member Wilbur Rehmann, former chair, National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact Council.)

- PROTECT Act. Panelists discussed the potential significant impact of the PROTECT Act Feasibility Study, which examines the capacity of the States and the FBI to perform noncriminal justice background checks on employees and volunteers who provide care to children, the elderly and the disabled. At issue is the possible impact on the system or processes used to do these checks in the future. While this panel discussion did not lead to a formal SEARCH resolution, it resulted in a stronger Membership directive for SEARCH to work closely with these initiatives. (Panelists: Mr. Frank Campbell, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Policy, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ); Mr. Walter Gaylord, Director, Case Analysis and Support Division, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC); and Mr. Allen Nash, Management Analyst, Programs Development Section, FBI Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division.)

- Justice Information-sharing Initiatives. Panelists addressed several significant national initiatives to enhance criminal justice information sharing post-9/11 and create collaboration within the justice community. (Panelists: Illinois Member Col. Ken Bouche, SEARCH’s representative on Global; Mr. Steven Correll, Executive Director, NLETIS; Mr. Michael Duffy, Director, E-Government Services, Justice Management Division; and Mr. Mike Kirkpatrick, FBI CJIS Division.)

- Roundtable topics discussed included pending Federal legislation to modify the NICS; noncriminal justice entities conducting FBI record checks; sex offender registry validation mandates; Compact Council issues; and the Federal appropriations process.

Guest Speakers, Presentations and Reports
The meeting featured addresses by these officials, who discussed current and future activities and initiatives, and responded to questions from Members:

- Mr. Mike Kirkpatrick, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI’s CJIS Division, reported on division activities.

- Mr. Larry Webster, SEARCH Justice Information Exchange Model (JIEEM) Project Manager, gave a presentation on the JIEEM Modeling Tool®.

- Mr. Larry Greenfeld, Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), U.S. DOJ, was unable to attend but sent a four-page letter detailing upcoming BJS activities, goals and priorities, particularly...
with respect to the National Criminal History Improvement Program, and indicated his “deepest appreciation for the warm and supportive environment and the highly productive partnership that I believe exists between the State repositories, SEARCH, the FBI, and BJS.”

Program Advisory Committee Meetings

The Law and Policy PAC:
- Discussed the NICS Improvement Act of 2003.
- Discussed homeland security issues and the Law Enforcement National Data Exchange project (N-DEx).
- Reviewed a summary, best practices and final results of the PAC survey on the impact of state financial problems on the operations of criminal history repositories.

The Research and Statistics PAC:
- Discussed a variety of NIBRS-related issues, including national implementation status, NIBRS modifications and SEARCH NIBRS grant activities.
- Reviewed an October 2003 state survey conducted by the Association of State UCR Programs.
- Discussed other issues, such as Law Enforcement Information Sharing (LEIS) initiative strategies and N-DEx.

The Systems and Technology PAC:
- Discussed SEARCH involvement in interoperable communications projects.
- Discussed justice information-sharing projects and activities.

Awards and Recognitions

Annual Awards
By unanimous votes, the Board selected recipients for SEARCH’s two annual awards: the O.J. Hawkins Award for Outstanding Contributions in Criminal Justice Information Systems, Policy and Statistics in the United States, and the Gary R. Cooper Meritorious Service Award. The recipients will be honored at the 2004 Annual Meeting next July.

- **Ms. Carol A. Kaplan**, retired Chief, National Criminal Justice Improvement Programs, BJS, U.S. DOJ, will receive the 2004 O.J. Hawkins Award. She is being recognized for her decades of work to improve the nation’s criminal history systems. This award formally acknowledges an individual’s service, dedication and contributions that have improved the justice community’s ability to develop and use criminal justice information, and is intended to honor an individual whose efforts have had a national impact over a significant period of time.

- **Mr. Charles “Chuck” Sexson**, Assistant Director, CJIS Division, Kansas Bureau of Investigation, will receive the 2004 Meritorious Service Award, presented each year to the SEARCH Member who has provided outstanding work on behalf of SEARCH and criminal justice information systems, policy and statistics. Chuck, a Member since 1995, serves on the Board of Directors and chairs the Board’s Finance Committee.

Staff Recognition
The Board also voted to recognize Ms. Debi Garza’s 25 years of service as a SEARCH employee. Ms. Garza, Accounting Manager, was presented with a commemorative clock at a reception on Friday, January 23. She started work with SEARCH on March 12, 1979.
New Members
SEARCH Members and staff welcome the newest appointees to the SEARCH Membership Group:
• Mr. David Schade, Alaska
• Ms. Jennifer Hemenway, Utah
• Ms. Linda Rosenberg, Pennsylvania
• Capt. Elizabeth E. “Betsy” Shamany, Delaware
• Capt. Jose A. Ramirez, New Mexico
• Capt. James Beshada, New Jersey
• Lt. John J. Shelton, Nebraska

Recent Retirements
These former SEARCH Members recently retired:
• Mr. David Bolme, Tennessee
• Mr. Mike Haddon, Utah
• Ms. Dalila Loran-Parker, North Carolina
• Maj. Garry Holmberg, New Jersey
• Capt. David E. Deputy, Delaware

Check out the Members-only Website (www.search.org/members/default.asp) to download the following from the January 2004 meeting:
■ Membership, PAC and Board minutes
■ Speaker/Panelist presentations
  • Mr. Bob Belair, “Federal Legislative Update”
  • Mr. John Berry, “TSA HazMat Background Checks on Truck Drivers”
  • Mr. Walter Gaylord, “PROTECT Act Pilot Program Update”
  • Mr. Mike Kirkpatrick, “FBI CJIS Division Update”
  • Mr. Allen Nash, “PROTECT Act Feasibility Study”
  • Mr. Larry Webster, “Justice Information Exchange Model Update”
■ New resolutions
■ Revised SEARCH Bylaws

2004 Annual Membership Meeting
Set your calendars for July 22-25! The 2004 Annual Membership Group meeting will take place at the Swissotel in Chicago, Illinois. Meeting information, including hotel and travel details, will be sent to Members in the coming months. Also, mark your calendars for the following Membership Group meetings:
• January 27-30, 2005 (either Denver, Colorado, or Tampa, Florida)
• July 21-24, 2005 (possibly Washington, D.C.)

On the Lighter Side...
The Winter 2004 meeting might be best remembered for the challenges of dealing with noisy neighbors—conventions and meetings that featured pounding disco music as a backdrop. Luckily, SEARCH staff Terri Nyberg and Jan Burnaugh successfully dealt with the challenge, enabling the business of SEARCH to continue. At one point during the Systems and Technology PAC meeting, members raise their arms in unison in a “Y” formation, no doubt because the sounds of the Village People’s anthem “YMCA” blaring through the walls temporarily trumped the more serious business at hand.