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Holland & Knight presents seminar for public officials



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LAW BULLETIN STAFF WRITER

With about 20 lawyers in its local government group here, Holland & Knight LLP lawyers work as corporation counsel or village attorney for 21 public entities.

Just last week, the firm was retained by northwest suburban Carpentersville.

That added to the firm's municipal client roster, which also includes Arlington Heights, Des Plaines, Schaumburg, Highland Park, Lake Forest, Glencoe, Northbrook and Oak Brook.

Officials from those suburbs will be among the 200 local government officials who will hear about issues — such as land use and public records — at a Friday seminar run by Holland & Knight lawyers.

This biennial seminar for local government clients began 24 years ago. The latest seminar comes on the heels of the April 9 municipal elections in Illinois.

"We felt that this was a logical service to provide to our clients immediately after the general municipal elections to bring them all together and give them the benefit of our experiences and knowledge on many of the issues they deal with on a day-to-day basis," said [Peter M. Friedman](#), a Holland & Knight partner and leader of its Chicago real estate and local government group.

The firm's Chicago office local government unit consists of about 20 lawyers.

The seminar was designed for existing clients, said [Steven M. Elrod](#), executive partner at Holland & Knight's Chicago office who also serves as chairman of the firm's national land use and government team.

"Our clients have in one room 20 lawyers who are specialists in municipal law and more than 200 officials with whom they could network and confer and trade ideas and approaches to local governance," Elrod said.

Friedman said the intent isn't to attract new clients.

"But I will say the seminar, in addition to the legal work we do for local governments, is why we continue to add new local government clients each year," he said.

The seminar will include discussions about daily governance issues, including the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and the state's Open Meetings Act. The firm's lawyers also will discuss land use issues that local governments face, such as group homes, utility structures, adult uses and billboards.

The seminar at City Winery in Chicago, will last six hours, ending at 5 p.m.

The seminar will include a fundamental training session on Illinois laws for officials who were elected earlier this month.

A separate session will be conducted for more experienced government officials on issues such as economic development, governmental cooperation and on pending or recently adopted legislation by the Illinois General Assembly.

Near the end of the seminar, Elrod will moderate a panel of mayors and village presidents in an informal discussion about best practices for local governments.

"It's probably one of the most practical and substantive training seminars that's available to these local government officials," Friedman said.

[Todd A. Heller](#), a partner at Law Offices of Todd A. Heller & Associates in Deerfield and Chicago, also has served as a Northbrook village trustee since 2005.

He plans to attend the seminar for the fifth time. He said the seminar is beneficial in at least two ways.

"As a trustee, I get up to date on recent laws," Heller said. "Besides the actual nuts and bolts of the law, they give you practical insight on the law and how it relates to government operations."

At a previous seminar, Heller said he learned about land use planning and laws related to zoning. Information provided at a seminar helped when Northbrook established a tax increment financing district, he said.

"Typically, I come out of the Holland & Knight seminar with at least one new concept," Heller said.