

Recharging the Speakers Bureau

[A joint effort by the Illinois Supreme Court and the Illinois Judges Association]

The Illinois Judicial Speakers Bureau is being recharged with a special marketing effort this fall and by a formal program on Friday, December 9, 2005 at the IJA Convention.

The Illinois Judicial Speakers Bureau was established by the Illinois Supreme Court and the Illinois Judges Association to increase awareness of our judicial system and its role in the community. Community groups hear directly from judges and other court officials, as well as students through the *Judges in the Class Room* program.

There has never been a greater focus about the law and the courts, largely attributable to the unfair criticism from many fronts and the media through daytime "Judge" shows, Law and Order TV series and the movies. Too often the public gets a distorted or imprecise view of how the courts and judges operate. Simply stated, there could be no more important time for judges and lawyers to step up and inform the public about the courts to help build public understanding and confidence.

Judges throughout the state will be asked to send out requests to their area community and service groups and schools, offering to make presentations about the courts and the judicial process.

Judges will also be asked to submit a list of their speaking engagements by fax or email to Maureen McClelland the IJA's Executive Assistant who will forward the same to the Illinois Supreme Court for recognition by the court at a later date. Judges are asked to submit the list of their speaking engagements on the enclosed form every 6 months to a year depending on the number of presentations made by the judge.

Topics judges should consider include:

1. The Role and Structure of the Courts;
2. How Courts Decide;
3. The Human Element of Being a Judge;
4. Judicial Independence for Third Co-Equal Branch of Government;
5. Alternatives to Formal Court Procedures (Alternative Dispute Resolution);
6. Our Judicial System in Perspective;
7. Constitutional Rights;
8. Jury Selection and Service;
9. Plea Bargaining and Sentencing;
10. Domestic Violence;
11. Individual Courts such as:
 - Traffic Courts
 - Small Claims Courts
 - Criminal Courts {Misdemeanor or Felony}
 - Civil Courts (for damages, chancery, tax, eminent domain)
 - Juvenile Courts
 - New Problem-Solving Courts (e.g. Drug Courts)