

Chicago Daily Law Bulletin®

Volume 155, No. 207

Thursday, October 22, 2009

ARDC warns 600 lawyers on deadline for CLE compliance

By John Flynn Rooney
Law Bulletin staff writer

About 600 Illinois lawyers on active status are receiving notices that they could be removed from the master roll of attorneys for failing to comply with continuing legal education requirements.

This week, the Illinois Supreme Court's Minimum Continuing Legal Education Board referred the names of 603 Illinois lawyers for lack of compliance to the Attorney Registration and Discipline Commission, said Karen Litscher Johnson, the board's director.

The board already had sent two notices since late April to those lawyers.

On Wednesday, the ARDC sent out a "notice of impending removal." If the lawyers don't respond either by documenting CLE credits or claiming exemption by Nov. 20, the ARDC can begin removing their names from

the master roll, Johnson said. Those lawyers also are required to pay a \$150 late fee.

In September 2005, the Illinois Supreme Court adopted a rule mandating continuing legal education. There currently are about 86,000 registered Illinois lawyers.

Lawyers whose last names begin with the letters A through M were required to report that they had completed 20 hours of CLE training by July 31, 2008. Lawyers whose last names begin with the letters N through Z were required to report CLE compliance by this July 31.

The A-M group comprises nearly 55,000 lawyers, while about 31,000 are in the N-Z category, Johnson said.

Lawyers can report their compliance on the MCLE board's Web site, www.mcleboard.org.

About a year ago, the board referred slightly more than 2,100 lawyers on active

status to the ARDC for failing to report completion of the CLE requirements, according to Johnson.

The slightly more than 600 lawyers referred this time around is "a significant reduction," Johnson said. "While we would like to have no attorneys referred for MCLE non-compliance, we are headed in the right direction...."

In January, the ARDC removed 587 lawyers from the master roll for failing to file paperwork demonstrating MCLE compliance. Lawyers who are removed for non-compliance can be reinstated by reporting their compliance or a valid exemption and paying a \$250 reinstatement fee.

James J. Grogan, the ARDC's deputy administrator, said that "lawyers are coming on board with MCLE. There are far less issues regarding the process than there were a year ago."