

Commissioners' Message About Calgary PIPA Conference

May 5, 2006

On April 26 and 27, the Alberta and British Columbia Information and Privacy Commissioners sponsored a two-day conference in Calgary, ***Customers, Employees and Privacy: An Educational Forum for Business***. By all accounts, the conference was a success. More than 300 participants from businesses, unions, non-profits, charities and other organizations attended the inaugural two day forum.

Participants learned about the practical application of private sector privacy law in Alberta and British Columbia. Speakers at the conference provided valuable information on how to make privacy work in business—how protecting customer and employee information can be critical for creating and keeping customer loyalty and employee trust. Participants also learned about what can happen if information gets into the wrong hands, leading to cases of fraud and identity theft.

Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner Frank Work stated: “I was very impressed with the level of commitment businesses and organizations are showing to protection of personal information. It was also very interesting to hear from participants about how they are implementing privacy standards in their organizations and what kinds of issues and challenges they are faced with. Overall, the quality of the presentations at the conference was outstanding”.

His comments were echoed by Information and Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia David Loukidelis: “The conference provided a lot of practical solutions and gave participants the information and tools they need to ensure the protection of personal information. It was also a learning experience for us and our offices. We were able to listen to challenges about privacy protection from the front lines, and that was one of the highlights of the conference”.

Conference delegates were also impressed. Here is a sample of what they told us:

- An excellent conference, good information - the high quality speakers made a "dry topic" interesting and even instilled some excitement at the possibilities for systems that will lead to privacy compliance
- A very good practical seminar. The break-out sessions were a very good idea. For an inaugural event this was excellent!
- Conference was “extraordinarily well organized”, the very high quality of speakers – have set the bar very high
- Overall “incredibly high level of professionalism, from Alberta and British Columbia’s Office staff”
- Definitely need to do it again next year
- Overall, A+

This was the inaugural conference and, based on the feedback we have received, it could very well become an annual event. Stay tuned!

Presentation material from the conference will be posted to the conference website: www.pipa2006.ca.