Congressman Higgins and Customs Officials to Discuss Law of the Northern Border

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY, N.Y. (September 9, 2015) – Biathletes having costly rifles confiscated at the border, legal aliens lost in limbo without proper paperwork, drunk-driving convicts turned around en route to summer beach cottages – there is no lack of odd and eccentric predicaments that arise at America’s Northern border.

And most people – even Buffalonians – have no idea what the rules are that govern the border crossings to and from the U.S. and Canada.

A Continuing Legal Education seminar aims to help change that. U.S. Congressman Brian Higgins and Rose Hilme, acting director of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s Buffalo Field Office, will join two attorneys to discuss the considerations and complications involved with traversing our nearby international boundary.

The event will kick off the fall CLE season for the Niagara Law Center, which is a collaboration between Niagara University CLE and the Bar Association of Niagara County. The Center has about six CLE events planned for the fall.

“This CLE is a bit unique in the fact that not only lawyers and legal scholars will want to attend, but so will many members of the general public,” said attorney Ryan Thompson, NU CLE program director.

“I recently spoke with an older gentleman who had a drunk-driving conviction from the 1970s and was extremely distraught about not knowing whether he could attend his nephew’s wedding in Canada. No one knew the answer – not his lawyer, not the police, not the courts.”

Thompson said that this CLE’s appeal to the everyman is why they chose to host the seminar in easily accessible downtown Buffalo. It’s also why Congressman Higgins, who has a reputation of being closely involved with his Western New York constituents, was asked to be a speaker.

The program had originally been planned for Sept. 24, but then plans by Pope Francis to visit the United States, Washington D.C. and Congress that day will require Congressman Higgins to return to the capital, Thompson said.

The two other speakers are U.S. Customs Assistant General Counsel Christopher Paresi and attorney Eric Schultz, of the newly formed law firm Barclay Damon LLP.

The program, titled “Border Consequences: How to Handle Customs, Convictions and Canada,” will take place at the U.S. District Court, 2 Niagara Sq. in Buffalo on Monday, Sept. 21, from 1-4:30 p.m. The cost is $65, or $55 for members of the Niagara Bar, and attendees earn 4.0 CLE credits. Light refreshments will be served.
For more information on the Niagara Law Center, please contact Ryan Thompson at gcatty@niagara.edu or 716.286.8324, or visit www.niagara.edu/cle.

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