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# Coping with Community Trauma

by Marilyn Hajer and Mary Walsh

"When we began to develop our city's safety plan, we realized that whole communities can be traumatized. Multiple incidents, such as violent crimes, can cause whole neighborhoods to be in a state of shock. Neighborhood residents were telling us that they needed to build coping strategies and ways to heal," says Manjit Jheepa, manager of Toronto, Canada's community safety secretariat. As a result, the city is now eight months into developing a community crisis response program.

The continuum of psychological reactions to a traumatic event ranges from brief stress reactions that get better by themselves to the full-blown post-traumatic stress disorder, which can have severe and long-lasting symptoms.

We don't have to look far to understand the growing awareness of the need for community-wide crisis intervention in dealing with the psychological traumas that can affect citizens of an entire town or region. These days, 24-hour media and Internet coverage brings all sorts of deep, anxiety-producing events directly into our living rooms: actual and threatened terrorist attacks, civil unrest, war, violent crimes, sexual abuse cases, extreme-weather tragedies, multi-accident vehicle fatalities, and more. And in the need for homeland security, there continues to be a new emphasis on the community-wide impacts of disasters.

## Defining and Understanding Trauma

A traumatic event is one that can potentially destroy a victim's fundamental assumptions about the safety of the world and produce feelings of deep fear, horror, and grief. In the presence of such an event, people are temporarily overwhelmed. In the most extreme events, nobody is immune from serious psychological trauma, sometimes lasting years.

It's estimated that 10 percent of Manhattan residents and at least 4 percent of people around the United States suffered serious emotional reactions after the September 11 terrorist attacks. "The South Asia tsunami recovery," notes Dr. Richard Ottenstein, chief executive officer of the Workplace Trauma Center in Owings Mills, Maryland, "will not be measured in days, weeks, months, years, or even decades, but will take generations. The impact will remain within the affected nations' legacies for possibly centuries."

Living with potential disasters like terrorist threats or the mounting evidence of climate change can also cause feelings of intense fear and helplessness. "We have no idea what the psychological effects might be if it becomes clear that we have triggered the melting of the Greenland ice sheet and that we cannot stop it," observes Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute.

The continuum of psychological reactions to a traumatic event ranges from brief stress reactions that get better by themselves to the full-blown post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which can have severe and long-lasting symptoms. Specifically, PTSD is an anxiety condition that can exist in different intensities and for different durations of time. It can develop immediately after a traumatic event or have a delayed onset at least six months after the event, sometimes years later.

## Local Government's Role

Mental health workers have long recognized the symptoms of post-traumatic stress. And with a better understanding of psychological trauma, local government managers can also more effectively prepare now for citizens' needs during and after a critical incident.

Local governments like Toronto, Ontario, are taking a serious look at how to strengthen communities shaken by

tragedy and empower neighborhoods to deal with grief and anxiety. But how exactly can local governments deal with widespread trauma? "We need a new model of crisis intervention that includes whole communities and helps those communities build their own capacity for handling trauma," offers Jheepa.

One of the first steps in developing an effective program for community trauma response is to recognize the seriously stressful nature of disasters and the long-lasting mental health problems that can afflict large numbers of citizens.

"Organizations must realize that trauma happens," says David Wee, disaster mental-health coordinator for the city of Berkeley, California. "Jurisdictions already include trauma management as part of their employee assistance programs, but they also need to think about the trauma needs of the wider community," observes Wee.

#### Fast Facts About Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- PTSD can develop after a person is exposed to actual or threatened death or serious injury to themselves or others.
- PTSD symptoms include intrusive flashbacks of the trauma in which the victim relives the experience, acting as if the event were recurring. Other symptoms include hypervigilance, emotional numbness, depression, intense fear, helplessness, confusion, and poor concentration.
- More than 5 million Americans between the ages of 18 and 54 are diagnosed with PTSD.
- 67 percent of those exposed to mass violence have been shown to develop PTSD.
- People who have experienced a previous trauma have a greater risk of developing PTSD after a later event.
- PTSD symptoms usually begin within three months of a traumatic event.
- In some cases, years can go by before symptoms appear.

*Source: Adapted from the Web site of the Anxiety Disorders Association of America ([www.adaa.org/AnxietyDisorderInfor/PTSD.cfm](http://www.adaa.org/AnxietyDisorderInfor/PTSD.cfm)).*

That's what Captain James Nelms of the Henry County (Georgia) Fire Department needed to do when a freight train carrying deadly chlorine gas derailed in Graniteville, Georgia, this past January, causing the displacement of more than 5,400 residents. Nelms spearheaded the county's briefings on critical-incident stress-management response and provided some level of crisis intervention services to more than 2,000 people.

Said Nelms, "A veteran child therapist, who assisted at one of the briefings, offered to me that seeing the clinical director from the mental health center on stage with a variety of other community leaders made her profession seem like a normal part of the response to this local disaster, perhaps for the first time in her career."

As part of this emphasis on the importance of dealing with community-wide trauma, local and state governments are including strategies for handling this possibility as an integral part of their emergency preparedness operations.

#### A Brief History of PTSD

In the mid-1890s, Sigmund Freud, a Viennese psychoanalyst, developed his theory of hysteria, in which he described the traumatic stress of his female patients who had been sexually abused as children.

About 20 years later, "shell shock" from psychological trauma was diagnosed in soldiers who had suffered atrocities in World War I. These men exhibited the same symptoms as Freud's hysterical women, including uncontrollable crying, emotionally frozen and numb reactions, memory loss, and mutism.

During World War II, studies of combat neurosis received further attention from American psychologist Abram Kardiner. Findings indicated that any soldier could develop traumatic stress depending on the severity and duration of exposure to combat.

In the 1970s, Vietnam veterans returned home angry and demanding attention. Their self-advocacy resulted in a legal mandate for mental health treatment programs to address their psychological trauma. At the same time, the women's movement was gaining its own voice, and disclosures by rape survivors of sexual assaults were reported and discussed in the media. Early research of Vietnam vets' and rape survivors' experiences showed that the psychological aftereffects for the two groups were similar.

In 1980, this research became the foundation of a formal diagnosis called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which the American Psychiatric Association has included in its official manual of psychiatric disorders.

*Source: Adapted from *Trauma and Recovery* by Judith Lewis Herman. 1992. Basic Books, pp. 74-75.*

For example, tornado-prone Tulsa, Oklahoma's widely recognized disaster response program includes such a strategy as an important element in its plan. "A successful and unique part of our program is the attention the city and its partners have paid to the community-wide trauma associated with disasters," says Tim Lovell, public/private program manager of the Mayor's Citizen Corps in Tulsa.

Tulsa's focus on developing a mental health disaster response model had its roots in the 1991 Gulf War. At that time, a large number of military families were hard hit by the stresses of the war. The city formed the Tulsa Human Response Coalition (THRC) to coordinate community support groups working with the community's military families. The coalition now has a Mental Health Rapid-Response Team ready to be dispatched at a moment's notice. Members of the team are fully licensed mental-health professionals who have received critical-incident stress training.

This past January, the Tulsa Human Response Coalition held its second annual "tabletop disaster simulation" exercise. More than 75 participants from 50 agencies engaged in the mock response to a disaster scenario involving a "dirty bomb" detonation in Tulsa's downtown civic center.

#### Resources

This list contains some, but by no means all, of the organizations offering information and support for local government managers wanting to incorporate trauma stress management into their communities' emergency management plans.

American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress

[www.aaets.org](http://www.aaets.org)

American Red Cross

Building a Disaster-Resistant Neighborhood Program

[www.tallytown.com/redcross/drn.html](http://www.tallytown.com/redcross/drn.html)

Anxiety Disorders Association of America

[www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org)

The International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.

[www.icisf.org](http://www.icisf.org)

Critical-incident stress management (CISM) has been developed for mental health workers and emergency service workers to deal with psychological trauma victims. For a concise explanation of CISM, see A Primer on Critical Incident Stress Management by George Everly and Jeffery Mitchell, available on the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation's Web site. CISM is currently being carefully scrutinized for its effectiveness, especially when victims are brought into CISM sessions before they may be ready and when the session is administered by people who are not trained properly.

International Trauma Studies Program

New York University

[www.nyu.edu/trauma.studies](http://www.nyu.edu/trauma.studies)

National Center for PTSD

[www.ncptsd.va.gov](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov)

National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)

[www.trynova.org](http://www.trynova.org)

National Hazards Center

[www.colorado.edu/hazards](http://www.colorado.edu/hazards)

Clearinghouse of knowledge concerning the social science and policy aspects of disasters.

Workplace Trauma Center

[www.workplacetraumacenter.com](http://www.workplacetraumacenter.com)

Responders were organized into staging areas and formed a rapid-response team to address issues arising immediately after the incident, two days out, and two weeks out. Developments ranged from exposure to radiation to backlash against multicultural/multifaith groups, questions of water quality, evacuation of the emergency operations center, and coordination of mental health resources.

"We were extremely pleased with the way the group handled the exercise," says THRC Coordinator Carrie Wiggs. "The communication and collaboration between work groups was exceptional. Mental health responders were considered an important component of the exercise." (For more information on the Tulsa program, readers can e-mail Carrie Wiggs at [cwiggs@csctulsa.org](mailto:cwiggs@csctulsa.org) and can visit the Web site at [www.citizencorpstulsa.org](http://www.citizencorpstulsa.org).)

## Involving Neighborhoods

Another important step that local governments can take in dealing with community trauma is identifying ways that neighborhoods can handle traumatic events and develop resiliency in the aftermath of a disaster.

Toronto's community crisis response program tries to do just this. "We need to build competencies within neighborhoods. However, if we have communities playing a role in crisis intervention, we need to figure out what that support looks like," says Jheepa. As part of this effort, the city's community crisis response program is asking such questions as: What does healing look like for multicultural neighborhoods? What are the cultural competencies for dealing with trauma? How do we attract and keep volunteers? What are the city's liabilities?

Just now, the Toronto program is considered a work in progress. (For further information on Toronto's program, call Michelle Munroe at 416/392-8697.) Key elements of the program include:

- **Coordinated community crisis network.** Key service providers come together to develop a crisis response protocol, coordinate services, and furnish community-wide education and training.
- **Neighborhood crisis response support.** In partnership with the community crisis network, this part of the program works with neighborhood associations and community-based agencies to develop neighborhood crisis response teams.
- **Crisis funding.** Monies are made available as one-time financial assistance for initiatives that address neighborhood crises or for establishing neighborhood crisis teams.

Community training is also a big part of the city of Berkeley's efforts to offer critical-incident mental health support for neighborhoods. Curriculum in handling trauma has been offered on a community-wide basis since 1983. "After September 11, we recognized that we needed to train people throughout city government to provide stress management assistance. Our mental health team was stretched too thin," observes Wee.

Long-term mental health followup is also a hallmark of the Berkeley program. "We provide multiple programs to address traumatic stress. During the East Bay firestorm in 1991, we provided trauma and stress support for 16 months after the incident," notes Wee. (For additional information on the Berkeley disaster mental health model, send e-mail to David Wee at [dwee@ci.berkeley.ca.us](mailto:dwee@ci.berkeley.ca.us).)

## Conclusion

Rudolf Giuliani explained his disaster management strategy in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center by stating succinctly, "We plan for the worst, and hope for the best." Local governments around the United States and Canada are taking this approach to emergency preparedness by designing mitigative strategies to alleviate the impacts of future disasters.

As part of this effort, some local government officials are now thinking ahead to include community-wide emotional trauma management as a way to protect citizens from the short- and long-term psychological impacts of community-wide disasters.

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# PM MAGAZINE

## COVER STORY

# Pioneering the Future: A New Generation of Local Government Professionals

by John Nalbandian

The Local Government Management Fellows (LGMF) Program was begun in response to demographic trends predicting significant retirements of experienced local government executives. This will occur at the same time as political, economic, and social trends worldwide are thrusting into prominence the role of local and regional governance.

ICMA, in partnership with the International Hispanic Network, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, and the National Forum for Black Public Administrators, established this one-year fellowship program—a full-time work experience—with participating local governments in order to give the best and most recent M.P.A., public policy, or public affairs master's-degree graduates an attractive opportunity to learn about and enter the local government management profession.

The pioneering sponsoring local governments are:

- Catawba County, North Carolina
- Charlotte, North Carolina
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- San José, California
- Sarasota County, Florida
- Winchester, Virginia



Visit [ICMA.org/lgmf](http://ICMA.org/lgmf)

for information on this Fellowship program.

In 2005, ICMA expects to add to this list, offering a dozen fellowships.

## Meet the Fellows

As chair of the LGMF Program Advisory Board, it is my pleasure to profile this pioneering group of Local Government Management Fellows.



**Kelly Spivey** (serving in San José, California) spent two semesters studying abroad—a summer in Mexico and a semester in Spain—and earned her M.P.A. degree from the University of Toledo in 2004. Prior to her selection as a fellow, Kelly gained work experiences in several nonprofit organizations and as a research and teaching assistant at the University of Toledo in Ohio.

Of her experiences, Kelly writes, "I have spent all of my professional and volunteer time working alongside the public sector for nonprofit agencies that address myriad needs of the community. These experiences . . . culminate in my aspiration to work in the public sector," specifically in local government, she adds.

Having moved from Ohio to northern California, Kelly seems to be off to a great start toward this goal through the

projects she is involved in. Gathering information relevant to the closing of the downtown hospital and trauma center and crafting a request for qualifications for potential site reuse has brought her into contact with high-level administrators on a critical administrative and political issue. Among her varied projects, she has worked on a neighborhood revitalization initiative, hosting community meetings and doing surveys in Spanish.

Kelly was attracted to the LGMF Program as the path to a major geographic move that permits her to use her Spanish professionally. She loves the diverse opportunities she has been given. Like other fellows, Kelly has found that a major challenge is defining her role in the organization. With flexibility and moving among different departments and assignments comes ambiguity, and learning to adapt to this is a challenge.

Her most satisfying experiences center on the high-level access she enjoys to administrators and elected officials in this city of more than 6,000 employees. Kelly recommends the LGMF Program for the variety of opportunities it offers, both in organizational setting and geography. She likes the freedom to explore her future that the fellowship has provided. "It signals a new level of professional freedom and exploration," she writes.



**Mary Sassi** (serving in Sarasota County, Florida) graduated from Arizona State University in 2004 with a master's degree in public administration. Included among Mary's numerous social-service volunteer activities was spending the spring of 1999 in India interviewing Tibetan refugees as part of a study abroad program.

Mary's past work experience has included supervising an extended daycare center and serving as an analyst for the Charleston County (South Carolina) School District. She was attracted to the LGMF Program because it was an opportunity to cultivate direct experiences that would contribute to her development as a future leader with a personal goal of building public/private nonprofit partnerships in service to the community.

Mary's varied experiences in Sarasota County are contributing toward her goal. She has worked on an affordable housing/community housing initiative, has helped conduct economic and fiscal impact studies for the construction of a conference center, and has become involved in a program that coordinates various maintenance efforts and capital improvements into integrated neighborhood plans.

During several hurricanes this past season, Mary worked in the emergency operations center and considers herself fortunate to have been invited to participate in an extensive staff development program that the county sponsors.

Mary was attracted to the LGMF Program by the breadth of experience it offered. She saw the program as a way of gaining knowledge of the many facets of local government so she could begin to develop big-picture thinking on community issues. Her challenge, like that of the other fellows, is learning to manage her fellowship. She has been given free rein to become involved in the projects that she values, but this is a little daunting at the same time as it is gratifying.

She says she would recommend LGMF as an opportunity to learn in a practical way how to manage and lead in a political environment. This knowledge cannot be taught, she says: "It can only be experienced and observed, and the fellowship provides a bird's-eye view from which to do this."



**Jamie Privuznak** (serving in Charlotte, North Carolina) graduated with an M.P.A. degree in 2004 from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Before graduate school, Jamie worked internships in the Florida state attorney's office; in the sheriff's office of Martin County, Florida; and at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport in Charlotte. Her goal is to be a leader in city management, and her internships have helped to solidify her long-term commitment to a life of public service.

Jamie's work in Charlotte has included serving as project coordinator for the transfer of Mecklenburg County's zoning services to the city of Charlotte, providing staff support to the transportation committee and transportation cabinet, and supporting the work of the ethics review committee. In these tasks, Jamie has worked with several departments and has prepared proposals for the city council and county commission.

Jamie has seen her academic work come to life in the fellowship program. She has taken advantage of the chance the



program affords, to watch which policy issues develop and which seem to be ignored. She enjoys the opportunity to seek out projects that will add value to the city.

Like the other fellows, Jamie prizes the chance to work with higher-level officials who have the knowledge and willingness to guide her. She recommends the fellowship as giving excellent access to just about all the "moving parts" and processes of local government.



**Tameika Leslie** (serving in Catawba County, North Carolina) graduated with an M.P.A. degree from the University of North Carolina- Greensboro in 2004. Tameika's goal is to become a city manager. After earning her undergraduate degree, Tameika worked in the private sector for two years, then returned to school to satisfy her interests and fulfill her commitment to public service.

She says, "My own desire to give back to the community stems from the fact that I have had several positive female role models in my life encouraging me to realize all of my own dreams and goals and helping me recognize my own worth. I know that I will continue to seek opportunities that will allow me to give back."

Tameika is a management analyst in the county manager's office in Catawba County, where she has worked on a variety of projects. In the preparation of budget recommendations, she conducted outcome audits of several departments, analyzed and made recommendations regarding additional staffing in the district attorney's office, worked on the capital improvements budget process, been involved as the county's liaison with the NAACP in helping to coordinate county services, and completed an economic impact analysis.

Tameika saw the LGMF Program as an opportunity to launch a career from a base where she would have a variety of experiences and access to top-level administrators. This is being accomplished as she fulfills her work assignments because she has been given enough latitude to actually "own" the projects she is working on.

The challenge for her is learning to think "big picture," having discovered that, even with good information and the right people at the table, the dynamics of policy development are complex. She says that being an LGM fellow has confirmed her "desire to establish a career in public service." She continues, "Participating in the program has been one of the most challenging and rewarding opportunities I have ever been involved with."



**Jamie Lantinen** (serving in Minneapolis, Minnesota) graduated in August 2004 with a master of science degree in public policy and management from Carnegie Mellon University. Jamie spent a year abroad as an undergraduate at Oxford in the United Kingdom.

Jamie works out of the office of the city coordinator (CAO) in Minneapolis. His assignments have included service as project manager for the city's community engagement effort, assisting city departments in results-oriented business planning, helping to coordinate the development of budget pages and the collection of performance measures for the city's annual report, and serving on a task force to analyze and present the results of a citywide employee survey.

Jamie says that as soon as he heard about the LGMF Program, he knew it was a perfect match. "I had the skills from graduate school and work experience, but I needed the high-level exposure and hands-on experience of being in a government to tie it all together. LGMF offered that." Most challenging to him is finding the time to fit in all of the opportunities that have been made available.

Most satisfying is being able to "talk with and learn from so many talented, dedicated, and caring public servants in diverse areas of the organization." Jamie contrasts his fellowship with a typical entry-level job, which may be limited in scope. He comments that the LGMF Program "can give fellows the opportunity to see the practical applications of their studies unfold before their eyes."



**Patricia Dossett** (serving in Winchester, Virginia) served on the board of supervisors in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, before earning her M.P.A. from Virginia Commonwealth University. With a strong commitment to public service, Patricia was a community organizer, political activist, and mother of four before donning her knapsack and returning to campus. A self-labeled "late bloomer," she says she is committed to the empowerment of all voices in the governance process.

Since her selection, she has implemented an executive leadership program, researched employer-assisted housing, developed a community engagement program with CDBG-entitlement neighborhoods, completed a SWOT analysis of the relationship between a nonprofit organization and the Winchester government, and helped hire a new police chief.

Patricia applied to the LGMF Program to gain experience and exposure to the administrative workings of local government, and she considers herself an "island survivor" after having completed the several hurdles in the selection process.

The most challenging aspect of her experience has been the recognition that she is in charge of her future. She is learning to adapt to a fast-paced environment where she is expected to define her goals and objectives while completing challenging assignments. Most satisfying for her is the opportunity to gain knowledge of the nitty-gritty of local government-looking inside out, in contrast to her experience as an elected official, where she already possessed a broader community perspective.

She values the variety of assignments she has been given, and she recommends the LGMF Program to other M.P.A. graduates who want to get an inside look at how local government operates and the opportunities that are available.

#### 2005 Local Government Management Fellowship Program (LGMF)

Created through a partnership involving ICMA, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, the National Forum for Black Public Administrators, and the International Hispanic Network, the LGMF Program was created to generate interest in local government careers among recent master's program graduates.

This highly competitive, career development opportunity places fellows in a full-time, full-access local government management track position shaped by direct mentorship under senior government leaders and rotational assignments.

To date, the LGMF coalition has received commitments from these local governments to host fellows during the 2005-2006 program year:

- Arlington County (Arlington), Virginia
- Catawba County (Newton), North Carolina
- Charlotte, North Carolina (continuing participation with 2004 fellow)
- Dakota County (Hastings), Minnesota
- Hampton Roads, Virginia (accepting two fellows)
- Henderson, Nevada
- Mesa, Arizona
- Miami Beach, Florida
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Montgomery County, Maryland
- San Jose, California
- Sarasota County (Sarasota), Florida
- Tucson, Arizona
- University Place and Puyallup, Washington
- Washoe County, Nevada
- Wichita, Kansas
- Winchester, Virginia

More than 90 graduate-level students submitted applications to the 2005 program. Six members of the LGMF Program Advisory Board have completed evaluating those applications, and finalists' applications are being sent to the host local governments for review and to set up interviews.

Members of the advisory board are John Nalbandian, professor of public administration, University of Kansas (board chairman); Frances Gonzalez, assistant city manager, San Antonio, Texas; Sylvester Murray, director, Public Management Program, College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University;

Tim O'Donnell, city manager, Brea, California; Michael Rogers, executive vice president, Corporate Services, MedStar Health, Inc.; and Bonnie Therrien, town manager, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Student applications for the 2006 Fellowship will be available on ICMA's Web site in late August, 2005. Local governments interested in hosting a fellow should contact Rob Carty at 202/962-3560; e-mail, [lgmfprogram@icma.org](mailto:lgmfprogram@icma.org).

## A Solid Beginning

If we can judge by the experiences of the first class of fellows in the Local Government Management Fellows Program, it looks like the program is off to a solid start. All placements seem to be providing the fellows with valuable experiences and exposing them to the nitty-gritty of administrative work, as well as of policy making, in local governments nationwide.

Several of the fellows appear surprised that they have as much freedom as they do to craft their own programs. In this sense, their work is different from graduate school, where projects and assignments often are laid out clearly. This takes some getting used to, and the fellows seem to be meeting this challenge well.

The initial placements have spread the program nationwide, and next year, with about a dozen placements and fellows, the LGMF Program is expected to become a more visible response to the goal of preparing a new generation of local government executives.

San José, California, decided to participate in the program because its design is similar to that of its own management fellow program, which has operated for a number of years. Peter Jensen, assistant to the city manager, says that this design involves fellows in completing four rotations of about three months each in different parts of the organization, which allows them to get a rare overview of how the locality works. It also allows them to infuse energy and new thinking into different parts of the organization.

"If everything works well, San José winds up with a candidate for permanent employment who has true insight into how the city works and has already built credibility and staff relationships," Jensen says. And the program has been successful in the past. There are former San José fellows who are assistant directors and deputy directors in the city's departments, and there are others who fill various leadership roles in the organization.

He adds that the city shows that a fellowship is a win-win situation: it can attract the best and the brightest to the organization, while it offers fellows an experience they couldn't get by being hired into an entry-level analyst position.

### 2005 Local Government Management Internship Program

Between May 23 and July 22, 2005, the town of Meredith, New Hampshire (Carol Granfield, town manager), will host 10 undergraduate students as part of Wittenberg University's 2005 Local Government Management Internship (LGMI) program.

Participating students will work in the Meredith town offices on a variety of projects for nine weeks while they gain insight into daily local government operations. The group will be accompanied by two professors from Wittenberg University, who will advise the students on their projects and course work.

This LGMI program is a component of ICMA's Next Generation Strategy, and the Association has partnered with Springfield, Ohio's Wittenberg University to market the program to potential host communities. The nine-week program combines an unpaid undergraduate internship with a class/seminar component.

Students from Wittenberg are placed as interns in a host local government and given one or more projects to complete by the end of the program. Onsite Wittenberg faculty advise students on their projects and required coursework. Students also attend class two nights per week and participate in local government meetings.

Students who participate in the Wittenberg LGMI program are not paid; instead, they receive six to eight hours of college credit for successful completion of the program. The total cost to the student is \$2,700 to \$3,000 and includes tuition, transportation to and from the host city, and two extended weekend excursions during the course of the program.

Host communities are responsible for providing the housing costs. Local governments interested in hosting a group of interns during the 2006 program year can learn more by visiting the Web site at [www.localintern.org](http://www.localintern.org). Or contact Rob Carty at ICMA, 202/962-3560; e-mail, [rcarty@icma.org](mailto:rcarty@icma.org)

Joellen Daley, assistant county manager, Catawba County, North Carolina, speaks of the county's commitment: "As active members in ICMA, County Manager Tom Lundy and I knew that participation in the LGMF Program was important and necessary to promote ICMA's strategy to encourage and train the next generation of city and county managers. Catawba County has regularly offered internship opportunities in many of its departments.

Participation in the program more formally recognizes this practice and dedicates an opportunity within our

organization to someone interested in local government management. We are pleased with the program thus far and look forward to continuing to participate in the future."

Ed Daley, city manager of Winchester, Virginia, another sponsoring city, notes that the LGMF Program offers a national pool of prescreened, elite candidates from the nation's accredited graduate schools of public affairs and administration. He says, "The LGMF Program is one way we can give back to our profession and continue ICMA's tradition of promoting excellence in local government management as we help prepare our successors."

**John Nalbandian is a faculty member in the department of public administration, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas ([nalband@ku.edu](mailto:nalband@ku.edu)). He was a Lawrence councilmember for nearly 10 years, including two terms as mayor. He is chairman of the LGMF Program Advisory Board.**

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# PM MAGAZINE

## FEATURE

# Ethics

## Her Boss Serves on the Interview Panel

**Q:** The assistant to the city manager was delighted to learn that she is a finalist for a position in a nearby city. When the city staff called to set up the interview, they told her that her current boss, the city manager, is serving on the interview panel. The assistant expressed concern about the situation to her boss, but the city manager said that he saw no reason for him to resign from the interview panel. The assistant remained uncomfortable about the situation and sought advice on how to handle it.

**A:** The assistant has no ethical issue, as it is clear to the hiring organization that her current boss is serving on the interview panel. The city manager, however, has an appearance of a conflict of interest. A reasonable person may not believe that the assistant's current boss would be objective in assessing his subordinate, compared with other finalists. If the assistant is recommended for the position, other candidates could complain that she had an unfair advantage over them.

Because the city manager has not offered to step aside, the assistant's best recourse is to contact the human resources director to explain her concerns about the interview panel. If the human resources director does not change the process, the assistant could consider withdrawing her application for the job. The assistant agreed that withdrawing her application could be a good option in that case. She does not want to accuse her boss of unethical conduct; nor would she be comfortable in accepting a position if the selection process were tainted.

## The County Commissioner Wants to Help Interview

**Q:** A county manager is recruiting for a new assistant to oversee the county's housing programs and plans to use an interview panel to screen candidates. One of the county commissioners has volunteered to serve on the panel because he is on the board that oversees the county's housing programs. He also works in the housing and community affairs department in a neighboring local government.

The county manager feels that the county commissioner is well qualified to serve on the interview panel but wonders if it is appropriate to involve an elected official in a process that the charter stipulates is part of the manager's authority.

**A:** There may be advantages to involving the elected official in the interview panel because he has housing expertise and will work closely with anyone who is hired. The county manager retains full authority to hire the candidate that he feels is best for the job. There is no "encroachment" on the manager's official responsibilities because the interview panel's role is limited to providing advice.

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### Meeting Service Delivery Challenges and Increased Expectations

Throughout the nation and around the globe, service delivery challenges continue. Local governments are being asked to improve the way they legislate, deliver critical services to the public, manage internal operations, and interact with constituents. Citizens and businesses are demanding more convenient services, such as Web-based transactions and direct links to policy makers. Political leaders are mandating accountability for performance and use of public funds. And most government officials want to boost economic development by using the Web to attract new businesses, resources, and educational opportunities.

At the same time, expectations about where, when, and how these demands can be met are being reshaped by new technologies. Mobile computing is enabling fundamental changes in the nature of human interactions. Technology that enables citizens to attend public hearings remotely are more common today, and local government leaders are beginning to use new technology to collaborate through community dialogues. Local elected officials attending formal sessions can even communicate silently with their office staffs and conduct real-time research on the Internet as political debates are under way.

### The Current Transformation

Driven by greater demand for such capabilities, local governments have begun to transform their technology foundations and improve internal efficiencies in order to deliver citizen-focused services faster and more conveniently. To succeed, services, processes, management, and delivery channels must be integrated and linked to internal departments and outside stakeholders. A strategy for short-term and long-term integration goals is the cornerstone of a successful plan to build for the future. This strategy must be directed by strong leadership, a commitment to transform, a willingness to adapt to change, and an experienced and proven partner.

IBM can be your partner, helping to enable governments and improving efficiency and effectiveness by streamlining processes while enhancing security and resiliency in the face of new threats—helping localities become an On Demand Government.

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# Profile

## TEN YEARS AT THE CITY'S HELM

About 10 years ago, Pete Stalker reached a crossroads in his life. On one hand, Stalker had come to love Cadillac (Michigan), where he had worked as a member of the city government since 1987. On the other hand, Stalker was ready to advance his career, yearning to become a city manager.

Already, Stalker was a finalist for another position. Fortunately, that decision never had to be made, as then-Manager Bob Hamilton was moving on. The opening in Cadillac gave Stalker the opportunity to stay in town and keep in line with his goal to advance his career.

## Planting a Seed



Pete Stalker is city manager of [Cadillac, Michigan](#)

In 1995, councilmembers gave Stalker the official vote and welcomed its 17th city manager, dating all the way back to March 9, 1914.

The roots of a career in public administration began growing while Stalker was enrolled at the University of Michigan-Flint, heading down a general studies path. An adviser at the school introduced Stalker to an internship with the city of Flint.

Although Flint has historically been operated by a mayor instead of a professional manager, Stalker said that the experience opened up an intriguing world. Stalker found the diversity of issues in government, the interaction with people, and working through major municipal projects very appealing.

"I really liked the idea of a city manager form of government, bringing a business approach to government instead of a political one," Stalker said. The internship in Flint led Stalker to the U. of M.'s Horace H. Rackham School, where he earned a degree in public administration. During this time, he worked as assistant to the manager of the village of Holly, further crafting his trade. "I stayed on the job about a year and a half before moving on, but that's when it really gelled," Stalker said.

An opening for director of administrative services brought Stalker to Cadillac for the first time. After spending many summers at his family getaway in the Harrisville-Alpena area, Stalker felt comfortable with a life in northern Michigan. The opportunity in Cadillac expanded quickly, to assistant city manager and then to city manager just eight years later.

Looking back, Stalker said that it's somewhat funny that Cadillac eventually became his home because of its rich history as a city manager-run government. Adopting this style in 1913, Cadillac was among the first cities in the country to become professionally, not politically, operated on a day-to-day basis.



## Ten Years' Experience

The arrival of 2005 brings Stalker's experience as Cadillac city manager to the 10-year point. Only three managers in Cadillac history have been in the position longer. Stalker describes his position as having two key parts: dealing with internal issues such as finance, staff, and so forth, and development of the city proper.

It took little to no time to test Stalker's mettle in his new position. Bob Hamilton had worked hard before leaving on establishing the Local Finance Development Authority (LFDA) to clean up industrial contamination. For starters, when Stalker arrived, there was a lot of controversy regarding the city's role in cleaning up groundwater. Funding the venture was another matter hotly debated in the city. Eventually, the city paid for the project through bonds and special assessments. The beauty of it, looking back, Stalker said, was that despite all the controversy the project was funded at little cost to the taxpayers. As of this year, the bonds that funded the project have been fully paid off.

From his start in the city, Stalker said, there have been a lot of changes. Foremost among these is the difference in the overall atmosphere for cities. As states deal with tough financial times, the burden for cities has become heavier.

Stalker said that developing a proactive approach to financial management, with a heavy focus on grant procurement, has helped the city maintain services and spending in some areas. One major example is the James E. Potvin Industrial Park. The city built the park to attract new manufacturers or accommodate growth among its existing base.

Thanks to job creation and some state grant dollars, the city's total investment on this \$1 million-plus project has only been about \$250,000. And even this amount will be covered with the sale of the first three lots in the park.

Looking back at the bankruptcy of Outboard Motor Company, the former parent company of Four Winns, Stalker said that many people did not understand the negative impact that immediate job losses would have on the community. Fortunately, Four Winns was able to rebound and grow within the city, thanks to help from the state and city. Grants have led to significant improvements of streets, water, sewer, and other public works projects.

In the last 10 years, recreation in the city has reached near-Renaissance levels. The addition of walkways, the skate park, CASA, and other opportunities has created more choices for citizens.

## The Next Decade

Thanks to a progressive city council that is very representative of the constituency, and a community that puts volunteerism among its top priorities, Stalker said the city already has a solid foundation for continued growth. The key, he said, is to keep spending in check because of the uncertainty of revenue sources while the city is still growing.

"There is an awful lot of positive news in Cadillac that counters the state, but we're still a small community. If one plant closed, it would hurt tremendously," Stalker said. "(2005) looks very good right now, but we also know that things can change very quickly.

"If you're stagnant, you're moving backward," he added. The city must continue to deal with the possibility that state revenue sharing will be cut while the city is also handling the burdens of Proposal A and the Headlee Amendment. The combination of these two has cost Cadillac nearly \$1 million.

The key for the city, Stalker said, is to continue to work smarter, harder, and longer and to implement technology. Keeping a quality city staff that provides professional expertise in its area will remain critical to keeping the city running smoothly. Grants will continue to be a major asset for the city in the future.

One thing is for sure, the city plans to continue its path of steady growth, sound fiscal management, and expertise in all city departments, he said.

—Matt Whetstone  
 Staff Writer  
*Cadillac News*  
 Cadillac, Michigan

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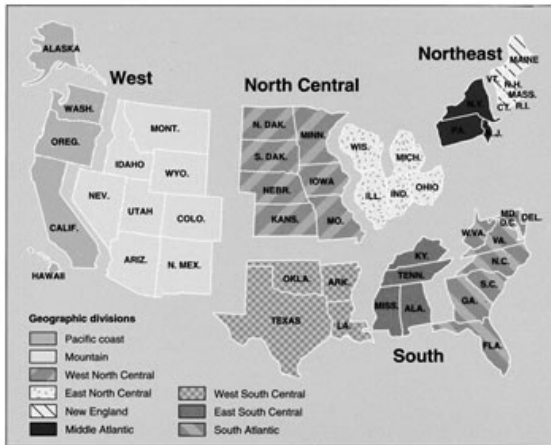
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## FYI: 2004 Manager Salaries



### AVERAGE CITY MANAGER/ CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER SALARIES

A 2004 survey of local governments revealed that city managers and CAOs working in the West and the South regions make the most money. The number of local governments reporting for each region is shown in parenthesis.

Region	Average	Respondents
North Central	\$65,222	(502)
Northeast	\$87,252	(242)
South	\$91,305	(523)
West	\$117,770	(294)

### AVERAGE COUNTY MANAGER/ CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER SALARIES

The 2004 survey shows that county managers and CAOs earn higher salaries in the West and South regions. The number of respondents for each region is shown in parenthesis.

Region	Average	Respondents
North Central	\$91,667	(69)
Northeast	\$91,016	(16)
South	\$106,107	(167)
West	\$116,820	(47)

Average salaries are for all survey respondents, including ICMA members and nonmembers. The communities that employ managers and CAOs include all forms of government.

The geographic regions are consolidations of states in divisions: Northeast: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont; North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; South: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia; and West: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Source: Results of ICMA's 2004 Salary Survey, conducted by The Waters Consulting Group, an ICMA Corporate Partner, Dallas, Texas. For information on salary and benefits comparisons, visit the Web site at

[www.surveynavigator.com/icma](http://www.surveynavigator.com/icma).

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