

ICMA: A 10-Year Review

During the annual business meeting at the 1993 conference in Nashville, I noted that I would complete 10 years of service to ICMA on October 1. It has been an amazing decade, and as I told the Executive Board members last summer, "It's been a great ride." My partner, Connie, and I have enjoyed it immensely, and it clearly has been the highlight of our personal and professional lives.

I would like to tie all readers who have known ICMA in one way or another into the past 10 years' accomplishments of the Association. The leadership of 12 different presidents, almost 100 different board members, and the outstanding colleagues who serve on the ICMA staff have been key to its success.

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1994 Marks

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ICMA's

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80th

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Anniversary

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Bill Hansell

So, What's Different?

In the first place, ICMA had over 1,148 more members in January 1994 than it did 10 years ago, for a total of 8,117. Thirteen percent of our members are minorities, and 14 percent are female. While those figures still are too low, they represent significant increases over a decade ago.

There are more jobs for those folks to fill. Council-manager form-of-government recognitions have increased by 209 over the decade, for a total today of 2,945; general management recognitions have increased by 353, for a total of 1,414. ICMA now recognizes 4,359 places that provide positions for managers either in a council-manager or in a general management system.

We have expanded service to members significantly

during the past decade. In 1983, the Range Rider Program had 16 Range Riders in 7 states. Today, we have 60 Range Riders in 23 states, and the program continues to do well.

We now are offering new services to our members in transition. Sadly, the number of members in transition topped 216 in January 1994. Executive board members, senior members of the staff, and many of the state association committees offer counseling to members in transition and try to reach out to them on a regular basis. ICMA dues are waived in six-month increments for one year. We offer free conference registration for members in transition, and each year nearly a dozen members take advantage of that opportunity for networking. Recently, we initiated a new program in which these members can serve as special advisers to ICMA. They do meaningful work for their professional association and receive some compensation or reimbursement of expenses. We hope that this modest program will help boost their morale while enabling them to continue making a professional contribution.

ICMA's Partners Program, which many see as new in the last decade, in fact has formalized ICMA's long-term commitment to partners of people in public service. A regular newsletter for partners, sessions at the annual conference, and partners' programs in many states have given significant attention to the special needs of those who give so much personal support to professional local government managers.

The council-manager form of government continues to be under attack, and ICMA's defense of this form has become more aggressive and personal in the last decade. Beginning in 1988 in Toledo, Ohio, we have organized panels and speakers to support it; I participated in such a program at the University of Cincinnati Law School this past fall. Attacks on council-manager communities probably are more vicious and personal than they ever have been. In some ways, it has become more difficult to defend this form, as we have lost the attention of the National Civic League, the League of Women Voters, the U.S. Chamber of Com-

merce, and some of our traditional allies. It is ironic that one of the major components in the success of American local government—the strongest system of local government in the history of the world—is under attack at a time when it is most needed.

Expanding Services

Our efforts at promoting diversity in local government have continued and been expanded. We now publish a *Job Opportunities Bulletin (J.O.B.)* that is distributed to over 4,000 minorities and women in public service. This newsletter lists jobs that are published in the *ICMA Newsletter*, as well as others that have been targeted for affirmative action by the employer.

We have established a Hispanic Network within ICMA that has a separate board of directors and a professional staff director, who serves as a member of the ICMA management team. More than 500 Hispanic professionals who serve in local government and individuals working in

ICMA Timeline

1984

1984: ICMA, the National League of Cities, and Public Technology, Inc., signed an agreement pledging long-term cooperation.

1985

1985: The first ICMA Strategic Plan was adopted. The ICMA Sports Consortium program was organized.

1986

1986: The ICMA Endowment Fund for the Profession was established. ICMA's Partners Program was created to promote communication and establish support networks.

1987

1988: ICMA's FutureVisions Consortium was established. ICMA's Environmental Programs received initial funding from the Environmental Protection Agency.

1988

1989: The first issue of the *Job Opportunities Bulletin for Minorities and Women in Local Government (J.O.B.)* was published. ICMA received its first contract with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

1989

J.O.B.

communities with growing Hispanic populations are part of this significant effort. We have a formal affiliation agreement with the National Forum for Black Public Administrators, which has more than 2,500 members. This agreement allows us to engage in many cooperative efforts and will be a major factor in the continuing development of African-American leadership within the profession of local government management.

ICMA's traditional role as an information clearinghouse also has expanded. The Practical Management Series of paperback books, which began a decade ago, now is a regular part of the publications program. We have initiated a series of specialized newsletters ranging from *Microsoftware News*; to *CitCom*, with news on citizenship education and public communication; to our popular new entry, *HR Report*, for human resources and personnel managers. These newsletters are targeted to the special interests of professionals who serve in a variety of local government positions, and they continue the tra-

dition of ICMA as the leader in information distribution for the improvement of local government.

The Government Services Television Network (GSTN), a videotape subscription service, had more than 650 subscribers by its ninth month of operation. It brings news, information, and training into city halls and county courthouses and should be a valuable tool for developing the skills of local government public servants. This kind of service is greatly needed, as air travel and related training expenses are frequently being reduced in local government budgets.

ICMA has worked hard to make the "international" in our title more significant in the past decade. We have formal affiliation agreements that spread our contacts with professional managers in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, Colombia, and Turkey. The International Management Exchange Program has expanded this year and involves 15 to 20 pairings of professionals between the United States and other countries.

Perhaps most significantly, our International Municipal Development Program, which was initiated with a contract from the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1989, has made ICMA a worldwide name in strengthening local government in emerging democracies. The department staff totals 20, and more than 100 local government practitioners including seven resident advisers, three of whom are ICMA members, have served on technical assignments in South Africa, Central America, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Africa, and the Middle East. Our efforts are recognized and appreciated, and I believe they have recaptured the reform spirit that led to the creation of the council-manager system and the development of the profession of local government management in North America.

The Old and New

We have continued the tradition of research and development funded by grants and contracts from agencies of the federal government and have

1990

1990: In January, ICMA moved into its own office building at 777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Washington, D.C.

1991

1991: The final report of the ICMA FutureVisions Consortium, *Future Challenges, Future Opportunities*, was released. ICMA members approved a name change for the Association to the International City/County Management Association. The Hispanic Network became an ICMA affiliate organization. The ICMA Executive Board proposed and the membership adopted a statement of policy with a year-long action plan on *Valuing Diversity*.

1992

1992-1993: The Dialogue on the Profession began at ICMA's Annual Conference in Reno, Nevada, to examine how competencies might be defined and measured for local government professionals.



1993

1993: A videotape information and training resource, the Government Services Television Network (GSTN), was established as a partnership between ICMA, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, Public Technology, Inc., and Westcott Communications.



1994

1994: CD-ROM technology is used to produce new professional development tools. ICMA's Range Rider Program celebrates its 20th anniversary.



significantly expanded our outreach. We now have a major presence in the area of environmental management, trying to bridge the gap among the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state departments of the environment, and local governments. Our work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Institute of Justice reflects the diversity of interests of our members and our ability to make the expertise of those members available to federal agencies charged with improving the quality of domestic life in our country.

Our name has changed. We now officially recognize one of the changes of 1968, and since 1992, the "C" in our acronym has stood for "city/county." The reform of county government is real. ICMA has more than 130 council-manager form-of-

government recognitions and 204 recognitions of general-management, county administrator-type positions among the slightly more than 3,000 counties in the United States. The National Association of County Administrators is a formal affiliate of ICMA that regularly provides leadership nominations and actively helps set ICMA's agenda.

ICMA's two major subsidiaries, the ICMA Retirement Corporation and Public Technology, Inc., which were both established in 1972, have flourished and done extraordinarily well. RC currently manages over \$3 billion in assets of public employees devoted to retirement. This represents more than 170,000 public employees and over 4,000 local governments and local government agencies. The financial relationship between ICMA and the Retirement

Corporation has been formalized through a major agreement, approved in 1991 by the boards of the respective organizations.

Public Technology, Inc. (PTI), continues to play a lead role in research and technical assistance in the telecommunications field and in improving the use of computers in decision making for local governments. PTI will remain a small, focused research and technical assistance arm, now sponsored not only by ICMA and the National League of Cities but also by the National Association of Counties. A partnership was established with the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators to form a PTI-Canada, which gives a new dimension to the outstanding leadership afforded to PTI over the last several years by Costis Toregas, one of the first employees of the corporation.

What is the status of ICMA's financial resources—our capacities and capability as an institution? Our fund balance has increased over 29 percent in total for the Association, and the ICMA Endowment Fund has increased over 440 percent, for a total of \$454,000 in mid-September 1993. The cash position of the Association has more than doubled in the last 10 years. We closed the past fiscal year on June 30, 1993, with \$887,000 in the bank.

We are, of course, one-third owners of our office space in Washington, D.C., and in the process have achieved our objective of stabilizing office-space costs (the second highest cost component of an association's budget). ICMA's space costs are significantly under the market rate for first-class office space in D.C. We have a home that should last us for many years to come.

And some things remain the same. We still publish 26 issues of the *ICMA Newsletter* and 12 issues of *Public Management (PM)* magazine. The Green Books remain strong as the textbooks that chronicle and document the body of knowledge on managing a local community. Our annual conference continues to be rated highly, with attendance topping 3,500 at two recent conferences. We have extensive member involvement—a tradition at ICMA. This year, we have 12 committees and task forces, with more than 200 individual members serving the Association. This seems to reflect the trend toward participatory democracy that has been present throughout our society.

We continue to flirt with public policy. As I mentioned at the business meeting, public policy really excites and energizes about 25 percent of the membership and really angers about 5 percent.

The Dialogue on the Profession, which was conducted over the past two years, recently concluded with new directions for professional development for all ICMA members.

Guidelines suggesting that members periodically assess their competencies and devote at least 40 hours per year to professional development were approved. The ICMA University also was established as a framework within which each member may assess progress against professional development goals.

What's Next?

As Mark Keane must have felt after he completed 10 years as executive director of ICMA, I believe that much has been done but that much remains to be done. The challenges to the council-manager form of government are only symptoms of our need to recognize that the true work of reform is never over and that the true nature of reform is always to be ready to change. Professionalism is under attack in all aspects of our society, and we must be alert to this state of siege.

I now have served 12 presidents of ICMA, and I want to thank each of them. They each have made a distinctive contribution to the Association, and I treasure their friendship and leadership. The board members whom I have been privileged to serve have given guidance and direction, paid appropriate attention to our finances, and been expansive when it was appropriate to meet our members' needs.

The challenges of the next decade will engage all of our members as we strive to make the ICMA University a powerful force in improving the quality of public service, to continue our promotion and defense of the council-manager form of government, and to pursue our goal of making ICMA *the international* professional association for appointed managers of local governments. It will be an even more exciting time. **PM**

Bill Hansell is executive director of the International City/County Management Association, Washington, D.C.