

Dr. Craig Waldron is the City Administrator of Oakdale, Minnesota. He has held this position since April of 1993, after working for the City of Roseville, Minnesota, for eight years. Since making the transition to a City Administrator's role from Roseville's Community Development Director, Craig has quickly ascended into the top ranks of the local government management profession, both in Minnesota and regionally as well. He is widely recognized for his dedication and passion with which he approaches his role in public administration and his service to the City of Oakdale. In addition, Craig has quickly become one of the region's most prolific and steadfast promoters of the profession to the next generation of local government managers. He is well known and widely respected for his ability to constantly encourage, mentor, and support his colleagues, staff, interns, and students to strive for excellence in serving others.

Interns and Entering the Profession

Craig has consistently been a top proponent of providing talented young individuals the opportunity to get their "foot in the door" in public service. Upon his arrival in Oakdale, Craig immediately started up a strong internship program that he had already developed in his prior role in community development, with the goal of providing valuable insight and experience in the management of a dynamic public organization. This led to the establishment of Oakdale's Administrative Intern position, which to date has provided the opportunity for eighteen individuals to work at the city. For most, this was their initial exposure to the city management profession. Many of these talented individuals have gone on to careers in public service, obtaining city and county positions in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, greater Minnesota, and regionally in neighboring states. In addition, several have transitioned into full time positions at Oakdale, in a variety of roles and departments. Craig has also strongly supported and

encouraged Oakdale's department heads to establish numerous internship positions at the city in areas such as community development, economic development, engineering, code enforcement, and parks and recreation. The positions have employed graduate, undergraduate, and high school students, and have often provided additional talented young individuals with the opportunity to obtain their first tangible experiences in local government. In addition, through the Oakdale Administrative Intern position, Craig's philosophy is to "totally immerse" the intern into the field. He continually encourages individuals in internship positions to develop connections by gaining first-hand experience with prominent decision makers and issues. He also provides the opportunity for interns to fully experience and gain an understanding about the pertinent concerns affecting Oakdale and the state. All of this training is designed to provide the intern with the necessary experience to smoothly transition into an assistant or entry-level position in local government administration.

Mentoring the Next Generation of City and County Managers

"When the Minnesota City/County Managers Association began specifically focusing on developing the next generation of management in the state, the obvious and unanimous choice to chair the committee focused on one individual: Craig Waldron," notes Heather Worthington, Assistant City Administrator of Edina, Minnesota, and current MCMA President. The choice came naturally, due to Craig's continual encouragement to his peers to develop new talent and establish their own internship programs, and his past record of providing numerous internship opportunities at the City of Oakdale.

In forming this committee, Craig immediately undertook an aggressive agenda to attract and develop young professionals in undergraduate and graduate programs towards local government management. The committee developed the Minnesota City/County Managers

Association's Internship Program, which provides matching grant funding for the development of new internship positions. The program is now in its second year, and supplies critical funding for jurisdictions to continue internship programs during tough budgeting and economic times. Under Craig's leadership, the committee also worked to strengthen ties with local universities and graduate schools; developed a peer Mentoring and Coaching Program, loosely modeled after the Cal-ICMA initiative; and have sponsored networking events to engage and attract new talent to the profession.

Teaching the Next Generation

Craig strongly advocates to his peers, colleagues, and staff to actively impart their knowledge, skills, and experience onto future generations in the field of public administration. He emphasizes this by not only in pursuing his own academic achievement of obtaining a Doctorate in Public Administration from Hamline University in 2003, but also in giving back to the profession through teaching in a number of capacities. He has served as an adjunct professor or has taught course work in public administration, economic development, public finance, and public ethics at Hamline University, Metropolitan State University, University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Minnesota State University Mankato, and St. Thomas University. In all of his classes, Craig is quick to stress the critical importance of public service and to convey a wealth of real world experiences to his students. As Hamline MAPA graduate, former intern, and current Oakdale Community Development Specialist Logan Martin notes, "Craig is the consummate teacher. While many city managers blame busyness for not establishing intern positions, Craig never fails to take the time to provide me with 'teachable moments' on a daily basis. The opportunity to have Craig as a mentor at work and as a professor for three of my courses has been incredible, he's absolutely solidified my interest in city management." Craig's

efforts were recognized in 2007 when he was selected by the student body to receive the Hamline University Graduate School of Management's "Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year Award."

A Record of Strong and Ethical Leadership in Public Service

Craig has quickly established himself in the top of the Minnesota local government management ranks through his tireless work in promoting both the City of Oakdale and the value of professional local government management. He is a tireless promoter of the profession, and has taken on several leadership roles, serving as president of numerous organizations, including: the Minnesota City/County Management Association, the Economic Development Association of Minnesota, the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities, and the Metro East Development Partnership. Craig's leadership and accomplishments were specifically recognized in 2005, when he received the Minnesota City/County Management Association's Robert A. Barrett "Manager of the Year Award".

Throughout his tenure at Oakdale, and his leadership in various organizations, Craig has continually been a staunch advocate of ethical and open public leadership. Former interns, assistants, and managers throughout the region know to contact him for guidance when a difficult situation arises in their community. Craig is widely known in Minnesota local government management circles for his strong ethical compass, and his perspective in methodically analyzing multiple views and thoughtfully discussing critical situations. In addition, he is steadfast in his desire uphold the utmost trust and fidelity to public and community values. Notes Bart Fischer, Assistant City Administrator of Chaska, Minnesota, "Whenever I am faced with an ethical dilemma on any level, my first call is to Craig. His experience as well as high ethical standard is second to none, and his advice on ethical issues is

highly regarded by not only me, but by many others.” When a difficult ethical issue comes up, Craig is *the* person to turn to for support and advice.

Recent Events

In late May of 2009, Craig underwent significant surgery to repair a leaking blood vessel in his brain. Though the recovery took several months, upon his return to the City of Oakdale, Craig bounced back with increased motivation to expand his efforts to mentor the next generation of local government managers. One of the first events Craig attended upon his return to work was the Association of Public Management Professional’s (the “assistants group”) annual meeting. He quickly took up his usual mantle, participating in speed mentoring sessions where he thoughtfully listened to up-and-coming assistant city and county managers, and provided advice on a number of topics. Since his recovery, he has also continued his broad teaching regimen, with an increased perspective on how critical it is to train the next generation to skillfully address serious issues in light of difficult economic times, tight budget constraints, and a need for innovative and forward looking leadership.

Above all, Craig pursues the development and promotion of effective new leaders with an intense, enthusiastic, and yet humble determination. This has produced lasting, tangible benefits in both the community of Oakdale, and in local governments throughout the region. It has also generated long-term results, and assisted many communities and jurisdictions through the hiring of quality, dedicated, and thoughtful individuals who got their first start with the City of Oakdale, and who now work diligently on behalf of the people that they serve. He has also consistently encouraged all those around him to do the same, by working to prepare the next generation to thoughtfully and skillfully address serious issues through their service in local government administration.