

# PM

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

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# HOW THE WORST PUBLICITY CAN BRING OUT THE BEST IN A COMMUNITY



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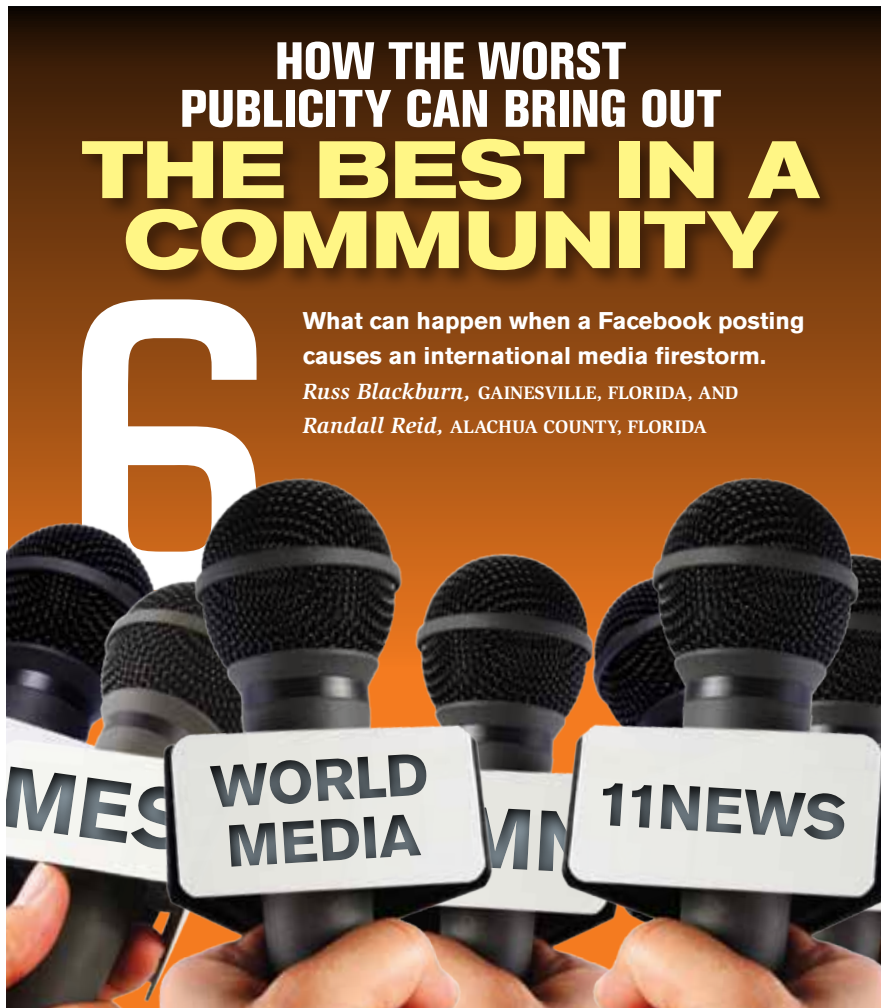
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## cover story



**HOW THE WORST PUBLICITY CAN BRING OUT THE BEST IN A COMMUNITY**

What can happen when a Facebook posting causes an international media firestorm.

*Russ Blackburn, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, AND  
Randall Reid, ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA*

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This issue of *PM* is available online at [icma.org/pm](http://icma.org/pm) March 1, 2011.

BY MARTHA PEREGO, ICMA-CM

# BUILDING AN ETHICAL CULTURE

Strategies that make a difference

*Ethics Awareness*

# MARCH

**M**arch reminds us of spring, St. Patrick's Day, baseball, and ethics. Ethics? Well, perhaps not so much. By some authority, March is now National Ethics Awareness Month. As members of a profession with a long, dedicated track record of ethical conduct, let's make the most of this declaration to improve the ethical culture of local government. Here is a straightforward approach that works:

**1. Lead by example.** In the mundane everyday activities as well as in the challenging moments, you set the standard and tone for the organization. Want to inspire your staff to the highest standard of conduct? Then model the conduct you want to see in others. And when errors or missteps happen, demonstrate true accountability by taking personal responsibility and fixing the problem.

**2. Be clear about values and acceptable conduct.** ICMA members can look to the ICMA Code of Ethics for values-based guidance on the right course of action. Staff members who belong to other professional associations with a code of ethics get similar assistance. But absent

membership in a professional association that has adopted a code of ethics, employees are left without any guidance if the organization fails to define its core values and the behaviors that support those values.

Defining the values not only provides individuals with some essential guidance on what's expected and what's right but also gives them the platform to raise a challenge when the conduct of others falls out of alignment with the values.

The city of Mountain View, California, just completed a successful process based on the correct assumption that for values to be truly accepted by the employees the process must be bottom-up. Although the effort was coordinated from the city manager's office, a team of 20 self-selected individuals led the effort.

After receiving some training on ethics and facilitation, team members led workshops that included ethics education along with exercises to define the city's code. Some 25 percent of the workforce chose to participate actively in the process.

As Kevin Duggan, city manager of Mountain View, noted, "While we ended up with a clear and simple code that

# PM

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

*Public Management (PM)* aims to inspire innovation, inform decision making, connect leading-edge thinking to everyday challenges, and serve ICMA members and local governments worldwide in the pursuit of excellence in local governance.

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**Public Management (PM)** (USPS: 449-300)

is published monthly except February by ICMA (the International City/County Management Association) at 777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-4201. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. The opinions expressed in the magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of ICMA.

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**REPRINTS:** Apply to the editor for permission to reprint any part of the magazine.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** U.S. subscription rate, \$46 per year; other countries subscription rate, \$68 per year; single copies, \$10. Printed in the United States.

Contact: 202/289-4262; subscriptions@icma.org.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Public Management*, ICMA, 777 N. Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20002-4201.

**ARTICLE PROPOSALS:** Visit [icma.org/pm](http://icma.org/pm) to see "Editorial Guidelines" for contributors.

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**ADVERTISING SALES**

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**LOS ANGELES:** 213/228-1250

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**ATLANTA:** 800/699-5475

**PHOENIX:** 480/538-5021

**PRINTING**

**Westland Printers**

Laurel, Maryland

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## DEFINING THE VALUES NOT ONLY PROVIDES INDIVIDUALS WITH SOME ESSENTIAL GUIDANCE ON WHAT'S EXPECTED AND WHAT'S RIGHT BUT ALSO GIVES THEM THE PLATFORM TO RAISE A CHALLENGE WHEN THE CONDUCT OF OTHERS FALLS OUT OF ALIGNMENT WITH THE VALUES.

we are proud of, we also ended up with a substantial part of our organization who is better informed regarding ethical issues and potential pitfalls and has ownership (and pride) in the code. While you can never be precise about the outcome, and there are no silver bullets to avoid ethical problems, we have many more staff members informed and aware of the ethical issues that abound in our everyday activities.”

**3. Have good internal policies.** Common ethical missteps can be avoided by simply having management put into place clear, simple policies for staff. And elected officials should follow suit. Does the organization have in place policies to address:

- Conflicts of interest.
- Political activity... how and when it is okay.
- Limitations on accepting gifts.
- Merit-based hiring.
- Credit card use.
- Use of local vehicles, computers, cell phones.
- Social media.

Are there others that you have found essential?

**4. Conduct training.** Like the many other topics organizations regularly cover in their mandatory training regime, ethics training is part of a preventive, not reactive, strategy. Regular training builds awareness of common ethical issues, provides tools for effective problem solving, and, yes, can even inspire someone

to do the right thing when faced with a difficult ethical dilemma.

Training includes both formal organization-wide efforts and informal opportunities at the department and team levels. Remember that it is a myth that good people always make wise choices.

An effective training program answers these two key questions: “Where do I go for advice? Where do I go to report a problem?” Leadership is responsible for creating a safe and responsive environment, outside the chain of command, for staff who want guidance or need to report an issue. Do this right and you might actually decrease the need for someone to blow the whistle by giving leadership advance warning and the opportunity to address ethically troubling activities that are under the radar.

The linchpin for any successful effort to build an ethical culture is the leadership. Remember Enron? The company had an impressive code of ethics for the organization, but leadership failed completely at modeling the conduct expressed in the code—with disastrous results.

Ethics Awareness Month is a good time for local government leaders to demonstrate that they take ethics and the culture of the organization seriously. **PM**



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## WHAT BOOKS THAT YOU'RE CURRENTLY READING WOULD YOU RECOMMEND TO YOUR COLLEAGUES?



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Although I usually read nonfiction and leadership books, right now I am reading mystery novels and magazines! I am certain this is a result of an intensive reading stretch that I had last summer after participating in the Harvard Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program.

One book that we studied was *Leadership on the Line*, written by Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky. The authors describe two things that I believe would be particularly helpful to local government managers—what an “opportunity for leadership” really is as well as what “getting on the balcony” means.

Another book that we used is Oren Harari’s book, *The Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell*. What is engaging is that the chapters are filled with value-based leadership strategies that provide an opportunity for lively discussion and help define who we are as leaders of a community.



**GAYLE MABERY, ICMA-CM**  
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I recently read the book *Shackleton’s Way: Leadership Lessons from the Great Antarctic Explorer*, written by Margot Morrell and Stephanie Capparell. The book focuses on the leadership style of explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton and the epic voyage of the crew of the *Endurance* in 1914.

Shackleton’s actions during the two years that he and his 27-member crew were stranded in Antarctica were documented in the diaries of the crew and by Shackleton himself. Shackleton’s success at team building and performance management are highlighted, as well as his extraordinary crisis management skills.

The book is written to highlight leadership skills and qualities in everyday terms and is instructive about operating through crisis. If you have an affinity for history or leadership based on real-life experiences, you’ll enjoy reading about the voyage of the *Endurance*!



**PAM ANTIL**  
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I am currently reading a series of books about what makes for good working relationships and communication. A new title I would recommend is *Working Together: Why Great Partnerships Succeed*, by Michael Eisner, former CEO of the Disney Company.

Eisner highlights 10 unique and great relationships including his own partnership with Frank Wells at the Walt Disney Company, Bill and Melinda Gates at the Gates Foundation, and Joe Torre’s successful partnership with Don Zimmer leading the New York Yankees major league baseball team.

The stories are applicable to the public sector since partnerships internally and externally in the community are so critical to our success. The true nature of the best partnerships is built on not only trust and hard work but the work between two people, which creates a sense of accomplishment and achievements.



**LARRY PAINE**  
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So many books, so little time! I am currently reading *Leadership Lessons of the White House Fellows*, which describes the formation of the White House Fellows (WHF) program under the Lyndon Johnson administration and continuing through the recent Bush administration.

The book tells how WHFs are selected and how they work with their “principal” (i.e., office of the vice president or secretary of state). Various stories tell how they are put in positions of great responsibility. Most interesting to me are the examples of how a manager should run an internship program.

The second astonishing point I learned is about the work experience that WHFs had when they came into the program. Many were accomplished managers in their organizations before being selected as a WHF. **PM**

BY PAULA DOHNAL, ICMA STAFF



# 1

## IN THE TREES

Clayton, Missouri's Parks and Recreation Department's new Shaw Park treetop playground includes a custom tree house theme, with its equipment designed to be accessible to children of all abilities.

► [icma.org/claytonplayground](http://icma.org/claytonplayground)



# 2

## BETTER BORROWING

ICMA Latinoamérica is pairing U.S. local governments with municipalities in Mexico, Costa Rica, and Argentina that are committed to improving their creditworthiness. The ability to borrow at favorable rates will support projects expected to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development in the Latin American jurisdictions.

► [icma.org/credit](http://icma.org/credit)



# 3

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY RULES

Local governments are managing energy efficiency and conservation projects with funding from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program. Find project and program details that meet EECBG guidelines at <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/solutioncenter>. Join ICMA'S Knowledge Network Group on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency for more information.

► [icma.org/en/icma/knowledge\\_network/groups/group/1149](http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/groups/group/1149)

# 4

## TOTAL COMMITMENT

In order for an organization to thrive in today's economic climate, it's important to ask employees at all levels what they think and then listen to what they have to say.

► [icma.org/totalcommitment](http://icma.org/totalcommitment)

HOW THE WORST  
PUBLICITY CAN BRING OUT  
**THE BEST IN A  
COMMUNITY**

Facebook posting causes  
International media firestorm





It all started with a Facebook posting. Somewhere in the Middle East a tweet deeply offended a reader. The tweet conveyed a Facebook posting from an obscure clergyman in the United States. This provocative message proclaiming September 11, 2010, as International Burn the Koran Day passed from reader to reader, country to country, enflaming passions as it flew at the speed of digital bits throughout the Middle East and Europe.

For many recipients of the tweet and viewers of the Facebook posting, the message confirmed their suspicions—held by many in the world—that America is anti-Muslim and intolerant of Islam. The same United States that has spent years fighting for democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan and that proclaims its people are accepting of Muslims and tolerant of all religions was now believed to have clearly demonstrated its bigotry and intolerance toward Islam and its holy book, the Koran.

Terry Jones, pastor of the Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville, Florida, was skilled at stirring up controversy and drawing attention to the beliefs of his conservative church. Just one year earlier, on the church's front lawn, church members hung in effigy a mannequin dressed to resemble a Muslim. Pastor Jones planted signs along the boundaries of the church property proclaiming that Islam was of the devil.

Children of church members went to school wearing T-shirts proclaiming "Islam is of the Devil." Neighbors near the church were offended and demanded that the Gainesville or the Alachua County courts require that the hateful messages posted by the church be removed. After many code enforcement visits and a review by the city attorney, church messages were deemed constitutionally protected free speech, and residents were forced to live with the inflammatory message espoused by the church and its members.

## Outrage Ensues

Feeding upon media attention on the "Islam is of the Devil" tagline, Pastor Jones embarked on a social media campaign calling for International Burn the Koran Day. The Facebook posting prepared by the church was polished and did not convey that the Dove World Outreach Center consisted of a mere 50 members. Most important, the message conveyed a set of values that contradicted those espoused by the United States through its leaders.

Indicators of the outrage generated by the proposed Burn the Koran Day started with a few e-mails from the Middle East and Europe; then, over a two-week period, the situation became a firestorm in both the new social media as well as the traditional media. Gainesville officials knew that they were being affected by actions beyond their control when they received a copy of a news article from the *Mumbai Times* chronicling the angry reaction of Islamic leaders in India, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq.

A *Wall Street Journal* article covering the controversy quoted a Middle Eastern imam who stated that Gainesville's streets would "run red with blood" if church members burned the Koran.

Members of the church applied to the city for a permit to build a bonfire so

## TAKEAWAYS

- › Early situational awareness and surveillance of possible local terror threats increases opportunities to prepare and implement an appropriate and timely response to a crisis.
- › Adapt, use, and revise existing local emergency response plans and partnerships as necessary to counter terroristic threats to the community.
- › Prepare communities to respond to terrorist threats while maintaining the public health and welfare by providing consistent, accurate, and timely public information and education.
- › Enable local elected officials and other appropriate community leadership groups to articulate the values and vision of the community to the media.



they could burn copies of the Koran. The thought of church members throwing Korans into an open fire, broadcast by national and international media, caused great anxiety in our progressive university community.

Gainesville and Alachua County are traditionally tolerant communities, and both have the reputation of embracing diversity of thought and individuality. Community leaders were concerned that Gainesville would falsely acquire an international reputation as an intolerant community.

A recent update of Gainesville's fire code prohibited open burning of any type, which allowed the city to deny a permit for an act that was beginning to have international ramifications. Despite

being informed that the city would not issue a burn permit, Pastor Jones stated his intent to burn the Koran with or without a permit. He continued his relentless barrage of interviews with national and international media.

E-mail and Facebook postings were pouring into the city. The tenor of many of these communications was threatening to the Dove World Outreach Center and to the community. As tension mounted, the chiefs of police and fire convened officials from several agencies to assess the level of threat to our community and to plan responses to possible scenarios. The county and city all-hazard emergency operations plan served as a road map for responding to a potential natural or man-made disaster.



**LOCAL COMMUNITIES EVERYWHERE MUST BE PREPARED TO FACE NOT ONLY NATURAL DISASTERS BUT, INCREASINGLY, MAN-MADE EMERGENCIES AND TERRORISM.**

## **Emergency Operations**

Because the church and most of the threatened locations were located in Gainesville, the city's police chief served as the incident commander for the impending event. The city's emergency operations center functioned as the unified incident command to share information and engage collaborating agencies to ensure that our residents were safe.

Alachua County activated its emergency operations center at a level 2 and began preparing with Gainesville for ramifications of a September 11, 2010, that could take on countywide characteristics. Pressure was increased by the fact that more than 91,000 visitors and potential targets were expected to flood into the city to watch the University of Florida play a home football game on the same day.

Collaboration and teamwork characterized our community response. Gainesville's resources were tasked to respond to an event that could easily turn into a catastrophe. Due in no small part to the city and county experience in responding to natural disasters, the resources of the Alachua County Sheriff's Office, the University of Florida Police Department, and numerous state agencies were focused on preparing for the worst on September 11.

As the event escalated further, the city was contacted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, an encounter that confirmed our past experiences with natural disaster response: the federal government offered to share information but took no direct responsibility for preparing our community or its law enforcement and fire agencies to respond to terrorist threats or the impact of counter demonstrators. As cities and counties have seen through countless disasters, local government must be prepared to respond to threats at the local level.

Communication to community residents in a threatening environment is crucial. A communication team led by the Gainesville police public information officer (PIO) and composed of the city and county directors of communication



Last year, more than 30 satellite broadcast units representing worldwide media descended upon a small church in Gainesville, Florida, to cover a controversial Koran burning.

and the sheriff's PIO met regularly to discuss communication strategy and to provide information to the dozens of media outlets following the story. In the days leading up to September 11, more than 40 satellite trucks were camped out near the church.

The city's telephones rang constantly with media inquiries from all over the world. Gainesville's newly elected mayor made himself available to respond to national and international media inquiries. The mayor's comments were particularly effective in helping the public understand that the actions of Pastor Jones did not reflect the values of Gainesville and Alachua County.

### **Community Support**

As during the early civil rights demonstrations decades earlier, Gainesville relearned the lesson that in periods of increasing religious intolerance or threatened violence, the faith community has a vital role to play in nurturing the spirit of community and our cherished traditions of religious freedom.

Mending the fraying fabric of community and calming the religious tension caused by the Dove World Outreach Center was not solely a story

of a governmental response but of our diverse religious and faith communities coming together to build bridges of mutual respect and understanding. After the 2009 effigy episode by Dove Outreach, religious leaders of the Jewish and Christian faiths joined with Muslim and Hindu representatives to begin to meet and plan how to counter the divisive rhetoric.

These dialogues led to the creation of the Gainesville Interfaith Forum. Beginning with private small-group dinners, this group soon expanded to sponsor several visible interfaith events cooperatively, assisted by Alachua County, around the themes of "gratitude" at Thanksgiving in 2009 and "creation care" on Earth Day 2010. A sincere dialogue and focused effort was made to build ecumenical bridges of respect and understanding among the diverse Gainesville faith communities.

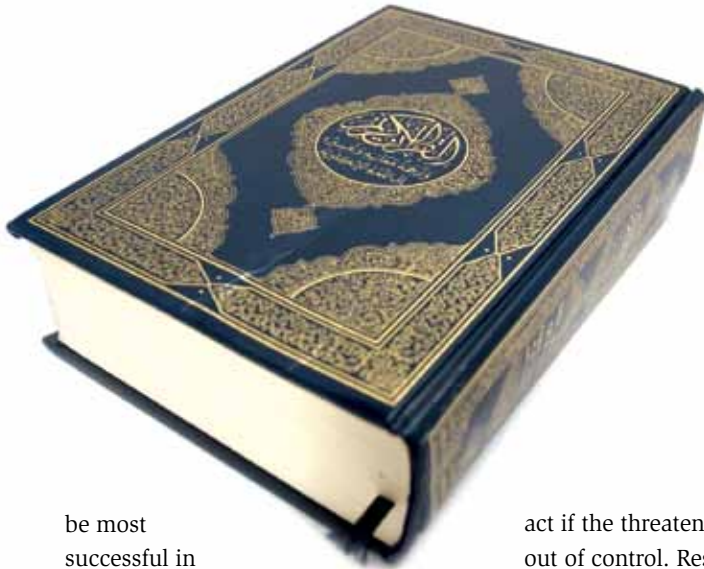
As a result of Dove's activities, an ecumenical network among the local faith communities and governmental officials was strengthening. In the weeks prior to the threatened Koran burning, this network emerged to advocate religious harmony and alternative images of people of faith living in our

community. Local clergy joined to speak publicly to condemn Dove's actions and to sponsor several well-attended and unifying ecumenical services. Each service involved representatives of the world's major religions, whose adherents make up the diverse population of our university community.

Visiting members of the media, including Al-Jazeera, reported these events, which stood in stark contrast to Dove's planned activity. Local government leaders and managers assisted with the promotion of these ecumenical events and encouraged supportive statements by leaders of community organizations such as the university, the chamber of commerce, and tourism groups.

### **Outcome**

From the beginning of the emergency caused by the threat to burn the Koran, the desired solution—both locally and nationally—was to convince Pastor Jones that this action was not in the best interest of the community or the nation. Special agents from the FBI, police officers from the city of Gainesville, and deputies from the Alachua County Sheriff's Office consulted often to determine who would



INDICATORS OF THE OUTRAGE GENERATED BY THE  
PROPOSED BURN THE KORAN DAY  
STARTED WITH A FEW E-MAILS FROM  
THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE;  
THEN, OVER A TWO-WEEK PERIOD,  
THE SITUATION BECAME BOTH A SOCIAL  
AND A TRADITIONAL MEDIA FIRESTORM.

be most successful in persuading Pastor Jones to back away from his pledge.

The Gainesville police chief was identified as the local individual who would have the greatest chance of success in appealing to the pastor's personality profile and persuading him to not follow through with his proposed actions. After days of contemplation, Jones announced in another news conference that he still intended to proceed with burning the Koran.

Preparations to maintain public safety during the church's proposed International Burn the Koran Day involved a number city departments and local government agencies. One of our goals was to reduce points of conflict between church members and protesters opposed to the burning. Police and sheriff's office personnel staffed a checkpoint on the main street near the church to control access to those individuals who had reason to be in the area.

Public works employees placed "No Parking" signs on adjacent rights of way, further restricting access. Traffic management cameras were focused on the church and nearby intersections to monitor counter protesters and law enforcement activities. Members of the City of Gainesville and Alachua County Fire Rescue Services stood by, ready to

act if the threatened burning spiraled out of control. Responders from the city and county totaled more than 500 local government employees.

On September 9, 2010, Terry Jones abandoned his plan to burn the Koran. City, county, and national officials breathed a sigh of relief. A personal call from Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates and security warnings from the FBI to Pastor Jones finally persuaded Jones to reevaluate the danger his actions could bring. Although hundreds of counter protesters staged demonstrations near the church and in the city's downtown public plaza, September 11 passed without major incident.

Gainesville and Alachua County demonstrated again that by calmly following the responsibilities and relationships outlined in our emergency operations plan, local governments and our residents could respond to many types of emergency. City and county employees worked thousands of hours in response to the threatened Koran burning to ensure that our community remained safe and that Pastor Jones's right to free speech was protected.

Our elected leaders stood tall, stating plainly and repeatedly that the image of burning Korans did not reflect the values of our community. Gainesville's reputation as a city of tolerance and diversity withstood international media scrutiny. A reporter from Al-Jazeera acknowl-

edged as much while blogging after the event. He stated that Pastor Jones's actions were contrary to the values of the people in Gainesville with whom he had personally interacted, and he apologized for the media frenzy foisted upon our community.

### Be Prepared

Local communities everywhere must be prepared to face not only natural disasters but, increasingly, man-made emergencies and terrorism. Social media networks make instantaneous global communication possible for every individual with access to the Internet. These expanding forms of media are able to amplify the acts or the threatened acts of a few individuals for good or evil and rally others to participate or protest.

This can enhance or damage the image of an entire community. In a new world dominated by social media and diversifying religious demographics, Gainesville, Florida, learned firsthand how quickly a provocative media posting and threatened images of intolerance can simultaneously become the flashpoint of an international incident and bring a diverse community together. **PM**



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By Alan Brown

# Investing in Effective Social Service Programs

Know which social service programs **work best**

## TAKEAWAY:

- › Understand why evidence-based programming is important.
- › Learn the key elements of an accountability system.
- › See how use of return on investment to measure the success of programs is growing.

Public sector policymakers, including elected officials and local government managers, often make decisions about which public sector social service programs—for example, crime, substance abuse, violence prevention, education interventions—should be funded, at which levels, and for how long. Usually, however, these policymakers have little or no impartial evidence on which to base their investment decisions. Consequently, billions of dollars are being wasted on programs that aren't improving the well-being of communities.

In light of the limited availability of rigorous evidence about program effectiveness, how can policymakers and administrators determine whether their funded programs actually produce the desired results? What can managers do to assure that resources are invested in programs that work? What can managers do to help policymakers establish funding priorities? What must managers understand about the change process in order to effectively promote a new culture of evidence-based programs among policymakers, citizens, and staff?

This article highlights the development of what is called the accountability system. The system is a resource and performance management program that provides the needed infrastructure to determine which intervention programs are working best, identify the cost and benefit of each program, and reveal what's not working. This article also briefly touches on return on investment (ROI), which will help introduce a new way of identifying effective programs.

Underlying the accountability system is a portfolio of evidence-based programs—that is, programs that have been carefully researched and meet these five criteria:

1. Show strong effects.
2. Are built on research designs.
3. Are sustainable.
4. Are replicable.
5. Are cost beneficial.

The overriding goal of the accountability system is to enable the most effective use of public resources to prevent substance abuse, crime, and violence; to intervene when necessary; and to treat the effects of these problems. This is done in a manner that supports community-based efforts to assist children, families, and communities to remain healthy and free of substance abuse and violence.

### Why Is Evidence-Based Programming Important?

Although human services funders finance successful programs and providers deliver many effective services, we also know that funders overfund programs with little evidence of effectiveness, underfund effective programs, and fund programs that continue fragmentation of services.

The reality is that there has been little success—or evidence of success—to date, despite a multitude of programs and billions of dollars. A program may appear on the surface to work and logically should work, but when evaluated formally it may show no results or may in fact be harmful to the population it serves. In fact, some of the most widely used crime, substance abuse, and education interventions have been shown to be ineffective or harmful, according to Jon Baron in a personal communication written on April 4, 2008.

These points are quoted from Baron's presentation to the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, Florida:

- Widely used crime prevention programs such as boot camps have been found ineffective, and Scared Straight programs have been determined to be harmful to participants.
- The United States has made no significant progress in preventing drug or alcohol abuse since 1990, and commonly used programs in schools, such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) and Project Alert, have been found to be ineffective in preventing substance use.
- The United States has made almost no

progress in raising K–12 educational achievement during the past 30 years, according to the respected National Assessment of Educational Progress, despite a 90 percent increase in public spending per student. Many programs aimed at increasing student performance (for example, select 21st Century Community Learning Centers for students in elementary school) have demonstrated no positive effect and have shown adverse effects on student behavior.

This is a problem not only for social services. Many fields have implemented programs and practices that, when rigorously studied, also have shown ineffective or harmful effects. Here are just three examples from the extensive list provided by Baron:

- Hormone replacement therapy for postmenopausal women: one trial found that it increased risk of stroke and heart disease for many women.
- Stents to open clogged arteries: a rigorous trial has shown the procedure is no better than drugs for most heart patients.
- Beta-carotene and vitamin E supplements (antioxidants) to prevent cancer: trials have shown them to be ineffective and harmful in some cases.

Because so many programs are being implemented without sound research showing effectiveness, and because much of the conventional wisdom about “what works” is probably wrong, it's imperative that practitioners and funders turn to evidence-based programming.

If prevention programming does not begin to move in this direction, vast sums of money will be wasted and, more important, the very people programs are meant to help may actually be harmed. According to Del Elliott, a University of Colorado faculty member and director, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, in his personal communication of January 11, 2007, the benefits of using evidence-based programs are simple and can be described in these four ways:

- Harmful effects can be avoided by being ethical.

- Stronger and more consistent positive outcomes are possible.
- The well-being of our children can be improved.
- Cost savings can be provided to taxpayers.

### Key Elements of an Accountability System

Here are the benefits of an accountability system:

- Promotes the use of resources to invest in and implement the most effective programs available.
- Assists communities to build the capacity to select and deliver the best programs.
- Targets resources to those areas of highest need.
- Assists policymakers to establish funding priorities.
- Promotes a culture of evidence, allowing science to inform and serve public policy.

Your leadership can guide the creation and implementation of these five important benefits.

**Develop a strategic policy agenda to arrive at priorities.** To provide policymakers with unimpeachable data for making important decisions, it's important to understand key strategies of accountability:

1. Know that underlying the development of the accountability system is a policy agenda. Essential ingredients of a policy agenda include:

- Priorities—a short list—that matter more than other things.
- Deliberate connections among programs that affect children and families, rather than isolated projects.
- A budgetary dimension that answers the question, What does policy mean to the budget?
- Specific articulation of the intended results.

2. Start with a strategic plan and vision that focus on priorities and the future.

3. Determine the scale and scope of prevention, as well as the scale of intervention and treatment.

**Develop and implement a system of measurement.** What program metrics need to be built into your portfolio of evidence-based prevention programs so that you know the programs are making a difference? Community indicators must be selected and measured periodically to see whether changes occur.

The data from a metric system will inform elected officials about statewide trends regarding, for example, pressing needs, current resources, the ability of community-based service providers to deliver services effectively, and the ability to monitor the impact of state-funded efforts.

Likewise, this data system will reduce duplication of effort by state agencies, align resource delivery with community needs, support the development of a centralized community capacity-building training system, identify and promote evidence-based programming, and measure the impact of state agency programming for

children and families.

For community-based service providers, this data system will help in the development of strong proposals that are based on data-driven needs assessments. It will also help local communities track local progress on targeted issues, reduce fragmentation, increase local collaboration, and measure impact for children and families.

**AT FIRST PEOPLE REFUSE TO BELIEVE THAT A STRANGE NEW THING CAN BE DONE, THEN THEY BEGIN TO HOPE IT CAN BE DONE, THEN THEY SEE IT CAN BE DONE—THEN IT IS DONE AND ALL THE WORLD WONDERS WHY IT WAS NOT DONE CENTURIES AGO.**

—Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*

**Establish reporting programs.** Here are items you should take into consideration when developing a reporting system:

- **Focus community strategies for action.** Monitoring such indicators as infant mortality, school dropouts, and adolescent suicide can help you develop and monitor your community strategy and determine where to focus your efforts.
- **Track the impact of new policies and programs.** When programs and policies are associated with favorable changes in indicators, community groups may be able to build or strengthen local support for these activities. When programs and policies are associated with unfavorable changes, they need to be cut back.
- **Address community perceptions.** Indicator monitoring can change the way communities perceive such problems as addiction and also how they take action.
- **Provide a common information base.** Although there will always be different interpretations of what the data show, indicators will provide a common starting point for collaboration and action planning.
- **Compare the level of local problems with other programs in similar communities.** This comparison can help detect relationships between substance use and other community characteristics or policies.

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**May 11-13** ICMA Gettysburg Leadership Institute

**June 1-3** 2011 Transforming Local Government Conference  
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**March 10-11** Southeast Region, Asheville, NC

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**March 31-April 1** Midwest Region, Novi, MI

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**March 9-10** Southeast Region, Asheville, NC

**March 23-24** Mountain Plains/West Coast Regions, Albuquerque, NM

**March 30-31** Midwest Region, Novi, MI

**April 13-14** Northeast Region, Portland, ME

## Return on Investment

The final section of this article touches on ROI in the public sector. In Joshua D. Bigam and Thomas R. Goudreau's 2004 master's thesis, "Return on Investment in the Public Sector" (Storming Media Publishing, [www.stormingmedia.us/69/6969/A696924.html](http://www.stormingmedia.us/69/6969/A696924.html)), the authors indicate that in an environment of scarce resources and rising federal deficits, people not only expect but also demand greater accountability for the spending of public funds. This demand has created a trend in the public sector—in the United States and worldwide—toward the importation of private sector business practices to improve accountability-oriented analysis.

One example is increased emphasis on ROI analysis in public sector organizations. Development and application of ROI analysis is challenging in the public sector since most government organizations do not generate profit necessary for calculation of ROI as is done in the private sector. Properly designed ROI analysis reveals how, and for what goods and services, money is spent; it provides a means for comparing the value derived from investment and work performed.

Government organizations, unlike the private sector, often do not have a choice in whether to initiate a project. Government agencies cannot assess their portfolios and promote or kill projects simply on the ROI or the value to the organization. Most public sector projects are prescribed either by law (e.g., legislature, Congress, or other law-making body) or by political influences.

The use of ROI as a tool to measure the success of programs, processes, and initiatives in federal, state, and local government agencies is growing. Dispelling the myths of ROI is the first step toward improving the evaluation processes within your organization.

Government organizations may not be able to assess ROI to the same degree as the private sector. But they are responsible for justifying their projects—if not to internal customers, then to constituents. Public servants must be able to defend their decisions. The

decision to proceed with a project, while subjective, must be justified—if not with a percentage or objective measurement, at least with subjective measurements.

## Closing Message

The current policy environment—that is, fundamental fiscal scarcity at all levels of government, partisan deadlocks in state and local political settings, and public skepticism about government—often leads to the expression of negative attitudes toward government. In such a climate, leadership is necessary in at least three realms:

- Leadership is needed to seek and accept accountability for better results from government.
- Leadership is needed to frame and make decisions about scarce resources available to state and local governments.
- Leadership is needed to take the risks to make the hard choices that now face local and state governments.

As a manager of your local government, your role in establishing the community's portfolio of social service programs entails:

- Promoting the use of resources to invest in and implement the most effective programs available.
- Assisting communities to build the capacity to select and deliver the best programs.
- Targeting resources to those areas of highest need.
- Assisting policymakers as they establish funding priorities.
- Promoting a culture of evidence, allowing science to inform and serve public policy.

In this manner, we can together make an impact in the seemingly intractable problems confronting our communities. **PM**



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By Jim Schutz

# Lincoln's Laws

10 Lessons for Today's Local Government Executives

## TAKEAWAY

› Not only one of our most popular American presidents, Abraham Lincoln has a surprising amount to offer today's local government executives. Lincoln's day-to-day decision making and leadership remains relevant and inspirational in contemporary local government.

Despite the fact that the license plates on my parents' cars always proclaimed "Land of Lincoln," merely growing up in Illinois did not give me any inherent insights into its favorite son. It wasn't until one of our longtime, retiring city councilmembers presented the mayor with Doris Kearns Goodwin's book, *Team of Rivals*, that my interest in President Abraham Lincoln bloomed.

As an assistant city manager, I was curious about why this book on Lincoln would be a valued gift from one veteran elected official to his closest colleague. After I read it, I was surprised and delighted to find a distinct set of traits, practices, and beliefs that guided Lincoln's day-to-day decision making and leadership. What emerged for me was a sort of handbook of best practices

for local government managers and other top local government executives.

Lincoln, of course, was an elected official and not a manager. How he led his life has much to offer elected officials, including how to win an election, but his life may have even more to offer city and county administrators. Here I have assembled 10 "Lincoln laws" that are as relevant today as they were in 1860 when Lincoln was elected president, eggs were 18 cents a dozen, and the top iTunes download would have been "I've Been Working on the Railroad."

### 1. Create Your Own Team of Rivals.

After Lincoln first won the presidency, he made the surprising decision to fill his cabinet with his fiercest rivals, whom he had just outmaneuvered to win the top position. Goodwin notes, "Every member of his administration was better

known, better educated, and more experienced in public life than Lincoln. Their presence in the cabinet might have threatened to eclipse the obscure prairie lawyer from Springfield.”

But Lincoln’s self-confidence allowed him to choose the best and brightest for this crucial time in American history instead of surrounding himself with sycophants or yes-men. He often felt his policy or intended direction was not truly ready until it was dashed against the rocks a few times by his challenging cabinet.

He would then be quite confident in his final version because it had already been scrutinized from every perspective. No matter whom a manager thinks of as a local government cabinet—such as department directors or key community leaders—it is important to seek out and listen to advisers with dissimilar backgrounds, insights, and opinions.

**2. Don’t Sweat the Detractors.** Lincoln is not unlike today’s managers in that he was revered and adored by some but was constantly under fire and ridiculed as incompetent by others. Even the man who would become his secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, said of Lincoln after their first meeting, “Why did you bring that gawky, long armed ape here? . . . He does not know anything and can do you no good.”

Stanton later became one of Lincoln’s truest friends and admirers. Managers make decisions every day that are popular with some and reviled by others. Lincoln tried not to get caught up in negative sentiments. He remained focused, resolute, and calm, and he once said, “If I do get up a little temper I have no sufficient time to keep it up.”

**3. Allegiance Pays Dividends.** As Lincoln managed his political career leading up to the presidency, his successes provided him with followers, but how he handled his defeats created his most loyal supporters. In 1855, the Illinois state legislature was charged with choosing, by majority vote, one of its members for the U.S. Senate.

The legislature was deadlocked with Lincoln in the lead, only four votes shy of victory. After nine ballots, he still had

the most votes but could not reach the majority mark. Although he wanted the Senate seat for himself, he had even more allegiance to the antislavery cause, and therefore he swung all the votes for himself to his like-minded colleague, Lyman Trumbull. This gave Trumbull enough votes to secure the majority.

Trumbull and his key supporters never forgot Lincoln’s magnanimity, and they developed a devoted allegiance to him. They went on to support Lincoln in his U.S. Senate bid in 1858 and played a critical role in his selection as the presidential candidate in 1860.

Local government managers also experience victories and defeats, and it is important to remain true to the cause and to elected officials, senior staff, community leaders or groups, and so on. As they did for Lincoln, integrity and sense of duty come back to help when they are needed the most.

**4. Proceed Only When You Can Succeed.** Lincoln was keenly aware of public opinion. Goodwin writes that Lincoln long believed that “with public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed.” For this reason, he strategically unveiled his concepts to the public only when the time was right.

Lincoln waited for the right time to release his Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the slaves within all states fighting the Union. Lincoln feared that if this proclamation had been issued even six months too early, he would have lost the support of the border states and therefore he would have lost the war.

If he had waited six months too long, he would have lost the morale boost that the proclamation provided. Managers must also constantly gauge public perception to know when to hold back and lay the foundation and when to take action.

**5. Drop the Bureaucratic Language.** Lincoln’s orations were the opposite of a dry political monologue. A colleague of Lincoln once said that his audiences were always riveted, “his anecdotes were always exceedingly apt and pointed, and socially he always kept his company in a roar of laughter.”

When Lincoln wanted to illustrate the difference between accepting slavery where it was but not allowing it to spread further, he used a masterful story about finding a snake (slavery) in a bed with children. He wanted to be careful to strike at the snake but not hurt the children.

He also certainly did not want to let the snake get into any more beds (new territories). He strove, as should we all, to use common language to reveal the plain truth behind complicated issues.

**6. Be Honest.** This one is only slightly less obvious than “bring extra bodyguards to the theater.” But Honest Abe’s personal integrity was built on a lifelong sense of fairness, truth, and decency. Innumerable endearing stories are told of Lincoln walking a long distance to return a few pennies he accidentally overcharged when working as a retail clerk or returning legal fees when his clients needed the money more than he did.

**7. Remember to Laugh.** Lincoln would advise today’s managers to seek out humor and joy in the executive role as a way to combat the difficulties. He sometimes irritated his colleagues, and enlivened others, when he took out a joke book and started reading it during stressful times.

Once, when Lincoln was taking a navy flagship to meet with his generals near the front, he refused the admiral’s quarters and chose, instead, an extremely small room. After one night, the admiral got carpenters to knock down a wall and also increase the size of the bed. Goodwin writes, “When Lincoln awoke the next morning, he announced with delight that ‘a greater miracle than ever happened last night; I shrank six inches in length and about a foot sideways.’”

**8. Don’t Cloud the Right Decision with the Personal.** Salmon P. Chase was a longtime member of the Lincoln cabinet. He was a champion of many of the ideals Lincoln held dear, and he did a superb job running the U.S. Treasury. He also thought himself better equipped for the presidency and was constantly scheming to advance his personal

interests. This caused Lincoln irritation and embarrassment.

When a vacancy arose on the Supreme Court for the position of chief justice of the United States, which Chase coveted, Lincoln appointed him to the position. Goodwin writes that Lincoln later commented that he “would rather have swallowed his buckhorn chair than to have nominated Chase.”

But, he remarked, “to have done otherwise I should have been recreant to my convictions of duty to the Republican party and to the country.” Local government administrators also serve their community better when personal feelings are set aside.

**9. Spend Time with the Troops.** In local government, employees on the “front lines” are street maintenance crews, building inspectors, public safety officers, and the like. Lincoln visited the front lines of the Civil War as often as he could. The soldiers most often greeted him with heartfelt cheers.

Lincoln justified his presence by say-

ing he “was not afraid to show himself among them, and willing to share their dangers here, as often, far away, he had shared the joys of their triumphs.” The triumphs of local government are many, and it is usually the troops who bring them about.

**10. Leave a Legacy.** Early in Lincoln’s career, in the winter of 1841, Lincoln experienced a devastating depression after a series of grave personal and political losses. Goodwin writes that his good friend, Joshua Speed, warned him “that if he did not rally, he would most certainly die.” Goodwin writes that Lincoln replied “that he was more than willing to die, but that he had done nothing to make any human being remember that he had lived” and he yearned to distinguish himself in a memorable way.

Although few of us will be able to claim a Gettysburg Address, an Emancipation Proclamation, or a 13th Amendment, we are uniquely positioned to leave a lasting impression in many ways. Our individual legacies might be

working with elected officials on a new community center or library, a child care program or affordable housing, safer streets, or an exciting entertainment district. The potential legacies are as varied as the administrators creating them.

One person can’t do these things alone. Even someone with Lincoln’s talents knew he needed to surround himself with winners. When the top-ranked Union general, Ulysses S. Grant, first met Lincoln in person, the crowds showered all their affections on Grant. Goodwin writes that a young colonel present at the occasion noted that Lincoln was pleased and fully aware that the path to victory was wide enough for both men to “walk it abreast.”

And so it is in local government. The path to success is less strenuous and more rewarding when walking shoulder to shoulder with others. **PM**



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BY RAYAN COUTINHO

# USING SATELLITE IMAGES TO IDENTIFY ZONING VIOLATIONS

## A useful tool or too much Big Brother watching?

A town in New York created some buzz revealing that it was using Google Earth to search backyards for swimming pool violations. The town found 250 non-permitted pools, and it collected \$75,000 in fines. The rationale provided by the town was one of safety. Critics decried it as another tactic to close budget gaps in a difficult economy, and they cited privacy concerns.

Because any building official can use such services right now as a tool, it is appropriate to examine the issues and consider enactment of guidelines, if necessary, in a proactive manner.

The purpose of this article is to open up for discussion the potential use of such powerful new technologies that may aid in recognizing and enforcing zoning violations and to provide the pros and cons to enable your community to make an informed decision about using them.

It is not illegal for any governmental body to use such technologies, and no court, to my knowledge, has ruled that it is illegal. In fact, the data and the information are compiled by private companies and are freely available for use.

### The Issues Involved

Historically, zoning violations were reported by a party with knowledge, namely neighbors. This resulted in an inspection, sometimes after obtaining an administrative search warrant. This procedure involves effort and money, even in situations where a false complaint may have been made by a disgruntled neighbor.

These new technologies could help zoning inspectors identify violations using information available in the public domain. Proponents of their use argue that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy in such cases because someone could fly over the property

and take the image.

Similarly, there is nothing that prevents someone from walking on the street and taking a picture of a house or a car parked in the driveway. These technologies level the playing field for those who comply with the law by obtaining a permit and those who do not. There are other valid uses of the technology, including travel planning, scientific research, emergency response, and rescue and relief.

The arguments against use rely on privacy concerns, unreasonable searches, and the notion that government as Big Brother is watching everyone. Others rightly point out that just because something isn't illegal doesn't necessarily mean it is a good idea to do it.

Such privacy concerns are, however, not completely unwarranted. Backyards are usually not readily visible from the street. In at least a few cases, satellite images involved some details—women sunbathing in the backyard, automobiles, children's toys, and so forth.

It has been argued that these details enable criminals and predators to identify specific target properties in the same way an expensive car in the driveway may signal a target for a burglary. Some companies have attempted to address these concerns by providing a mechanism for removing images with objectionable information.

### Technology Is Available

One company is now selling technology installed in a van that allows a user to x-ray passing cars, something akin to a full body scan at an airport.

Similarly, using satellite photography, one company analyzes the types and numbers of cars in the parking lots of retail establishments. The company then sells the data to managers of various funds that

trade in that retail establishment's stock. These applications, although currently legal (unless changes to the law are made), do have a Big Brother feel to them.

It is unlikely that anyone condones illegal construction or unpermitted buildings. But it is a generally accepted principle of zoning that a government is not supposed to go on fishing expeditions looking for violations. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why such protections as administrative search warrants are built into the system.

Therefore, if your community intends to implement such a process, debating the issue is recommended. Debate should be followed by setting up guidelines for the use of such images. A sweeping review of satellite images of all properties in the community covers everyone, including those who have complied with the law. Such a review may not mollify propriety or privacy concerns, whether legally warranted or not.

A good starting point would be to use the satellite images to determine whether a violation has occurred only after a complaint of a violation has been received. That may save the zoning official the time and effort in actually visiting the property if a violation—for example, a nonpermitted swimming pool—is clearly visible. Because satellite images can be several months old, if a violation is not featured in the image, it obviously does not mean that no violation has occurred. The zoning official would then have to rely on the traditional methods of investigation and enforcement. **PM**



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Author retains article copyright.

BY JOAN MCCALLEN

# TARGET-DATE FUNDS MAKING RETIREMENT PLANNING EASIER

With so many options in the marketplace, selecting the combination of mutual funds that will best meet individual goals can prove challenging for many investors. For those retirement plan investors who are looking for a straightforward way to invest, target-date funds continue to be a popular option.

Target-date funds, also known as life-cycle funds, provide an all-in-one strategy that simplifies investing by incorporating automatic aging and rebalancing into the design. Investors simply

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pick a fund with a target date closest to the year in which they want to retire or to begin withdrawals. The investment portfolio and associated risks are aligned with that specific target date.

Over time, target-date funds age to reflect an increasingly conservative asset mix (that is, an increased amount of the fund's assets are moved from equity to fixed-income funds) as the target date draws near. Rebalancing—maintaining a target balance between equity and fixed-income funds—helps the fund's allocations to remain on track.

Many retirement plan providers, including ICMA-RC, offer a wide range of target-date funds. For investors in or near retirement, funds that are typically more conservative, such as one focused on preserving retirement income or one with a target withdrawal date as early as 2010 are available. Investors with longer retirement time frames or distribution dates have a selection of funds going out to 2045 and sometimes even further.

Our experience tells us that public employees regard target-date funds as an attractive investment option. Our target-date funds have been well received by

plan sponsors, and most plan sponsors have selected them as their qualified default investment alternative (QDIA).

With target-date funds, participants get a simple, streamlined approach to investing that offers a long-term investment strategy overseen by investment professionals. Plus, participants have a diversified portfolio that may help reduce the impact of the market's ups and downs. That said, target-date funds are just one option available to those planning for retirement. Other investment options may help plan participants meet their goals.

Plan sponsors benefit as well. By adding target-date funds to the investment lineup, you offer participants another way to reach their retirement goals without adding any administrative burden to your workload. That's something we all value in our shared goal of helping public employees build retirement security. **PM**



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## HERE ARE RESPONSES THAT ICMA RECEIVED TO THE "VOICE YOUR OPINION" QUESTION POSED ON PAGE 3 OF THE DECEMBER 2010 PM: WHAT REFORMS ARE NEEDED TO CURB EXCESSES WHILE RETAINING COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS PACKAGES?

### OPINION: REFORMS NEEDED

Having had the recent experience of being an expert witness for a small city where the fired manager sued the city for more than \$5 million because of his termination, I have the following insights to offer.

Most important, I think a manager must make full disclosure to elected officials and to the public about his or her contract and severance package, in other words, how the severance is calculated and a detailed example using current wage and benefit package information. An amendment to the ICMA Code of Ethics is necessary to provide a clear enforcement responsibility for the ICMA Board of Directors, declaring that the failure of the manager to provide the foregoing full disclosure and information on how severance is calculated will be grounds for public censure and even expulsion from the profession. By the way, the manager who worked in the small city noted above is still working in our profession.

ICMA has received a black eye in the public's view because of several recent salary, benefits, and severance package reports. The association must not be part of a cover-up by refusing to act on the two recommendations above. Otherwise, our Code of Ethics is meaningless.

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### OPINION: NO REFORMS NEEDED

In my opinion, no reforms are needed. The Bell, California, misappropriation of public funds was the result of a criminal conspiracy of appointed and elected officials—an extremely rare occurrence, judging by the media's inability to cite a previous example of this sort. The Bell crimes are an unusual example of what happens when no consistent form of government is followed; they are not a shortcoming of the council-manager form of government.

Far too often we see laws adopted at the local, state, and national levels in response to a single shocking example of system breakdown. Typical new laws impose reporting requirements to a higher level of government, more training for staff, and additional legal expense on every entity to which it applies, regardless of their individual track record. Eventually almost everyone forgets why the law was adopted, the higher level of government does little with the reports, and local government officials resent submitting them because they are seen as another unfunded mandate. If legislators are hell-bent on passing a law in response to Bell, let it be one that imposes additional penalties on the criminal, not on the local government "victim."

Council-manager government has gained popularity as an efficient and effective alternative to the strong mayor form of local government, in part because of the many examples of malfeasance in local governments under that form. C-M government continues to be a reform movement. The checks and balances of this form work well in communities that follow the plan closely. As we've seen with Bell, California, however, no form of government can function effectively when those sworn to protect it conspire for personal gain.



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BY MIKE LETCHER AND MICHAEL LETCHER

# THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Here is one way to define what a local government manager does.

How many times have we heard this question “What does a local government manager do?” asked either during cocktail hour conversation or from a member of our family? The work of a manager is not readily understood by residents the way the work of a doctor, lawyer, teacher, or another recognized profession is.

A recent speaking engagement with high school seniors made my son, a student of the profession, and I, rethink how to describe the manager’s job. I titled my approach “The Three Dimensions of Public Management.”

## Not Exactly an Easy Discussion

The three dimensions are (1) identifying stakeholders, (2) assessing their conflicting values on issues, and (3) developing an environment in which to create the strategies, structures, and systems to address conflicts and build consensus. These three dimensions are both interactive and dynamic.

Stakeholders are committed and highly focused groups in communities and organizations. They are often the hub of any significant policy formulation process and require considerable attention from the political body and manager. The discussion started by asking the students to identify the stakeholders a manager must deal with in any community. They came up with the usual list of suspects: neighborhoods, businesses, government entities, nonprofits, employees, and the mayor and council.

One of the unexpected stakeholders mentioned by the students was the manager’s family. This makes sense since our families are often with us in the eye of the hurricane of conflict that is sometimes generated by other stakeholders.

The second dimension is identifying the conflicting values that the stakeholders bring to the public discussion and decision making. In class, a quick brainstorming session to list the conflicts resulted in the class identifying conflicts among average citizens and also between developers and neighborhoods, developers and environmentalists, department heads and city or county management, management and employees, unions and management, and management and mayor and council.

A discussion followed about how the values and beliefs of these stakeholders often result in conflict, and the potential conflict between business and neighborhoods was used as an example. The business community believes economic growth needs to be facilitated and should not be constrained by local development standards. In contrast, neighborhoods are concerned with impacts of businesses that spill over into the neighborhoods and affect the quality of life.

Both groups in this vortex of conflict are highly motivated by the values of their group. The challenge is that both groups often recognize that small businesses generate up to 80 percent of the economic power in most communities. The key is to develop strategies around this common-ground value.

After 30 minutes of identifying stakeholders and their conflicting values and beliefs, students began looking for the “Google search solution” for resolving conflicting values and issues with stakeholders. Our discussion at this point centered on a solution that was not about having the right answers to address the conflict. Instead, we wanted to find the right plans.

The third dimension of management

discussed is based on having the right strategies and plans for designing good structures and systems for balancing and resolving stakeholder conflicts. The key is all about having the time to focus on developing the right plans.

Investing 20 percent of your time in developing good strategies and plans will give you an 80 percent result in reducing conflicts and creating better public policy. We discussed the community dialogue that occurred in Tucson during the summer and fall of 2009. The dialogues were an example of a great sweet spot for building consensus with the right plan.

The mayor and council developed the community dialogue as part of their extensive FY 2010–2011 strategic work plan. The dialogue provided great neutral ground for various stakeholder groups to focus on the current and future financial challenges for the city. By the summer of 2010, the lessons learned in this dialogue were used to develop financial strategies for both the short and long term and addressed the city’s structural deficit.

## The Right Stuff

At the end of the presentation, the students asked, “Do you walk the talk?” They were referred to Tucson’s website and the strategic work plan. The strategic work plan was to give Tucson an opportunity to plan in all three of the dimensions. **PM**



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BY MARK MEDLAR

# A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

As an aspiring city manager, I often wonder what kind of leader I will become. Many local government leaders motivate their employees by using the Golden Rule. That is, they motivate subordinates using tactics they would prefer from their own supervisors. While this “what’s good for the goose is good for the gander” mentality is logical, it is a dangerous trap to fall into.

Every employee is different, and all have different needs for their well-being in the workplace. Using the same methods on every employee ensures fairness, but it will prevent you from awakening the true potential of each employee. By being able to use multiple styles of leadership, depending on the situation, a local government leader will be able to navigate myriad human resource situations.

Both of the full-time positions in which I have worked have placed me outside of my comfort zone. My first position immediately out of graduate school was in a city manager’s fast-paced office. My current position is financially oriented despite my lack of a finance-specific degree.

Finding my groove in each position was a challenge. What I needed was a supervisor who was able to guide me through the initial learning periods although I certainly didn’t expect to have my hand held every minute. An element of mentoring is essential, I believe, to help the inexperienced through the early trying times.

## The Contrast

In contrast with my experience, coworkers of mine who have had significant education and experience relating directly to their current positions have appreciated supervisors who are able to step back and give them the freedom to make decisions for themselves.

I have also met employees who enjoy

a fast-paced and high-pressure environment. For these people, a supervisor reminiscent of a drill instructor will keep their adrenaline pumping throughout the day. But assigning a drill-instructor type of person to someone who instead needs a mentor may cause that person to feel inadequate and defeated. Giving someone who wants a drill instructor a mentor type of person could seem like coddling.

One of the most impressive examples of flexible leadership I have experienced came early in my time as a budget analyst. A cabinet-level supervisor had an assignment that needed to be done, and she called me into her office. I was quite nervous because this supervisor had the reputation of being no-nonsense.

Instead of sitting at two opposite ends of the desk (both literally and metaphorically), we sat on the same side of a table where she explained the assignment and what importance it held for the organization. A more intense and combative approach would have added unneeded stress on an employee who was already trying extremely hard to learn the trade. This manager supervises a department with more than 200 employees, but she was able to switch gears to help motivate a single individual.

As a former professor of mine would often note, the rules are always changing. This is true of employees, too. Now that I have several years of experience under my belt, I know that a trusting supervisor is more important to me than one serving as a mentor. Treating me as though I do not know a debit from a credit would probably lead to bitterness and alienation on my part.

## The Change

If my needs as an individual employee have morphed in just a few short years, imagine the influence that this type of



change could have on a large organization with hundreds or thousands of employees. Performance evaluations that include face-to-face discussions can help managers keep track of the evolution of individual employees.

My wife is a middle-school teacher and has learned the value of flexibility while trying to educate sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Discipline and grading are the same for every student, but how my wife reaches students is often very different. Some students learn just by listening to a lecture, while others need visual aids to help them understand the material.

My wife and I were in our car one day when she said something about her situation that could be applicable to any public sector workforce. She wondered, “Why would we expect everyone to become exactly the same after they get out of school?”

Every position that we hold in our lives has an impact on what kind of leader we will become. A manager who, after evaluating all personal and job-related experiences, settles on just one school of thought about leadership would be doomed to failure. It is only by being flexible and drawing from all of our experiences that we can truly become outstanding leaders at the local level of government. **PM**



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**S**olar energy has received a lot of attention in recent years as communities look for alternatives to fossil fuels and as local governments, homeowners, and businesses look for ways to reduce increasing energy costs and reduce their carbon footprints. Investing in solar power can have a number of benefits for communities, including increasing energy reliability and security, reducing carbon emissions (by up to 23 million metric tons per year by 2030 nationwide),<sup>1</sup> and creating jobs and promoting economic growth.

Most communities in the United States are well situated to harness the

power of the sun. As a result, solar power offers communities a clean, reliable, and renewable alternative to fossil fuels.

Solar power also offers another benefit to communities: job creation. The solar industry currently employs some 100,000 people across the country,<sup>2</sup> and the Solar Energy Technologies Program in the Department of Energy (DOE) predicts that the solar industry will add an additional 250,000 jobs.<sup>3</sup> Many of the jobs created from increased investment in solar energy are local, including jobs installing and maintaining photovoltaic (PV) systems on homes, offices, and government buildings.

## Industry Growth

The solar energy industry is growing rapidly. According to the Solar Energy Industries Association, installed solar capacity increased 37 percent, from 351 megawatts (MW) in 2008 to 481 MW in 2009, bringing total installed capacity of PV and concentrating solar power (CSP) to more than 2,000 MW, or enough to power 350,000 homes. Venture capitalists invested over \$1.4 billion in the solar industry in 2009.<sup>4</sup>

As installed capacity grew in 2009, the price of PV modules fell by more than 40 percent and the price of installed capacity decreased by more than 10 percent.<sup>5</sup> DOE has indicated that PV and CSP have the potential to reach cost competitiveness with fossil fuels by 2015.<sup>6</sup> As installed capacity increases and prices continue to decrease, solar energy becomes an increasingly viable renewable energy option for American communities.

## Solar America Communities Outreach Partnership

ICMA, in partnership with DOE and ICLEI-USA Local Governments for Sustainability, is now working to increase awareness of solar energy and its benefits at the local level. Through the Solar America Communities Outreach Partnership, DOE, ICMA, and ICLEI-USA are working to increase the use and integration of solar energy technologies in communities across the country through a multiyear outreach effort.

Through this partnership, ICMA and ICLEI-USA teams are providing timely and actionable information to local governments, community groups, and other solar energy stakeholders in order to accelerate the adoption of solar energy at the local level. This outreach effort is focusing on three key areas:

- Reducing permitting, interconnection, inspection, and incentive processing time.
- Improving building and zoning codes by updating them to accommodate solar energy.
- Increasing access to local solar financing options.

## TYPES OF SOLAR POWER

DOE identifies four main types of solar energy technologies:

**Photovoltaic (PV) systems.** PV systems are made up of PV cells containing semiconductor materials (usually silicon) that directly convert sunlight into electricity.

**Concentrating solar power (CSP).** CSP uses reflective devices, including parabolic trough systems and mirror panels, to convert solar energy into heat. The heat is used to power a steam turbine or heat engine, which generates electricity.

**Solar water-heating systems.** Solar water-heating systems contain a solar collector that faces the sun. The collector absorbs energy from the sun and either directly heats the water or heats a “working fluid” that heats the water.

**Transpired solar collectors.** Transpired solar collectors, also known as solar walls, use solar energy to preheat ventilation air for buildings.

The partnership is using a mix of educational workshops, peer-to-peer sharing opportunities, and web-based resources that help share best practices among communities. Through these outreach efforts, DOE, ICMA and ICLEI-USA teams, and participating local governments are working together to make solar a mainstream energy resource in U.S. communities by enabling local governments to replicate successful solar practices and quickly expand the adoption of solar energy.

For more information on the partnership and the benefits that communities are seeing from investing in solar energy, visit <http://solaramericacommunities.energy.gov>. Also on the site are *Solar Powering Your Community: A Guide for Local Governments* and other resources to help your community advance solar energy adoption. To see what other communities are doing, to ask questions, or to share information on solar energy in your community, visit the solar energy

topic page on the Knowledge Network at [www.icma.org/solar](http://www.icma.org/solar).

Upcoming Solar America communities events are:

- Brownfields 2011, April 3–5, Philadelphia.
- American Planning Association annual conference, April 9–12, Boston.

Solar America Communities is a DOE program designed to increase the use and integration of solar energy in American communities. ICMA and ICLEI-USA Local Governments for Sustainability were competitively selected by DOE to conduct outreach to local governments in the United States, enabling them to replicate successful solar practices and quickly expand local adoption of solar energy. For more information, visit [www.solaramericacommunities.energy.gov](http://www.solaramericacommunities.energy.gov). **PM**



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## VENTURE CAPITALISTS INVESTED OVER \$1.4 BILLION IN THE SOLAR INDUSTRY IN 2009.

### ENDNOTES

- 1 "About the Program," Solar Energy Technologies Program, U.S. Department of Energy, 2010, [www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/about.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/about.html).
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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN HARD TIMES

One of the greatest challenges to state and local economic developers is to be tasked with developing their communities in times of economic recession. Here is a discussion of measures that can be taken to combat difficult economic times.

**Engage in economic development strategic planning.** All too often public and private organizations faced with fiscal or financial challenges stop planning, arguing that it is a luxury they can no longer afford or that they must apply their precious financial resources to their core business. This is unfortunate and shortsighted. Of all the times that planning can be a highly valuable activity, difficult economic times rank first.

**Find partners and build networks.** For many economic developers, the globalization of the economy means intense competition. While this is true, it does not necessarily mean that this competition must be undertaken alone. In fact, it makes considerable sense to share the risk with others. This is particularly true in economic hard times. Poet John Donne once wrote that “No man is an island, entire of itself.” This is equally true for communities. Each community is part of a regional economy. Each regional economy is a component of the national economy, which in turn is a player in the global economy.

This suggests that communities that share boundaries and economic realities and build social capital among themselves can benefit from what Brandenburger and Nalebuff<sup>1</sup> call “co-competition,” or collaborating to compete. Sharing economic development resources can actually increase the impact and reach of those resources.

The impacts of economic development are not constrained by jurisdictional boundaries; why should human, financial, or physical resources be?

**Invest in entrepreneurship.** The original and continuous builders of the U.S. economy are entrepreneurs. They create the new companies—in their garages, basements, and barns—that become the corporations of tomorrow. They create wealth by building business assets. These are not merely assets to themselves and their families but to the entire community as well. In this way, a community’s entrepreneurs collectively create community wealth. Entrepreneurs contribute jobs and tax revenue to the community.

Entrepreneurship can be a low-cost, bottom-up strategy for fostering economic development. It is economically sustainable because it is small scale, draws largely on local resources, and produces homegrown businesses that tend to be loyal to the community in which they were spawned.<sup>2</sup> These qualities help make entrepreneurship assistance, or enterprise development, an attractive economic development strategy for hard times.

**Engage in bootstrapping.** Entrepreneurs not only can help build economies but also can be role models for how to do more with less. In the world of entrepreneurship, this is called *bootstrapping*.

By definition, entrepreneurs are not constrained by the resources they have in hand when they pursue business opportunities.<sup>3</sup> They understand that they do not have to own resources to make good use of them; they need only have control over them. Thus, bootstrapping involves a variety of techniques for attracting and using other people’s

resources to help entrepreneurs accomplish their goals.

Translating this approach into economic development, planners need to attract investors who will provide resources that the entrepreneurial economic developer can control and use to achieve the community’s development goals. The investor may be a private company that has a vested interest in the community’s development. It may be a government agency at a higher level in the federal structure. It could be a foundation—national or community—that can be convinced that the community’s economic development strategies are in keeping with its mission.

Bootstrapping strategies need not involve elaborate or large financing deals. They can be composed of simple arrangements. For example, a small rural community in the Midwest wanted to start a kitchen business, but the community could not afford to buy a building and outfit it with the kitchen equipment needed by the clients who were in the food-processing industry (e.g., the local bakers, confectioners, salsa makers). Community planners negotiated with the local high school to give their clients access to the school’s home economics lab when school was not in session. **PM**

1 Adam M. Brandenburger and Barry J. Nalebuff, *Co-Opetition: A Revolutionary Mindset that Combines Competition with Cooperation* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1997).

2 Thomas S. Lyons, *The Entrepreneurial League System: Transforming Your Community’s Economy Through Enterprise Development* (Washington, D.C.: Appalachian Regional Commission, 2002).

3 Jane Wei-Skillern et al., *Entrepreneurship in the Social Sector* (San Francisco: Sage, 2007).

Source: Steven G. Koven and Thomas S. Lyons, *Economic Development: Strategies for State and Local Practices*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: ICMA, 2010), extracted from pages 66–68. Available from ICMA at the special member price of \$66 by calling 1-800-745-8780 or online at bookstore.icma.org.



## COULD A MUSTACHE SAVE CHRISTMAS?

**W**oodridge, Illinois, Maintenance Worker Brian Evans wanted to do something to try to help improve the holidays for some families by helping to purchase gifts for kids in the community. Brian convinced his supervisor, Ron Roehn, and the director of public works, Chris Bethel, that the power of the mustache would be a great way to raise funds.

Selling candy bars and popcorn tins is probably a more common way to raise money, but it doesn't result in nearly as many laughs as growing a mustache for charity. Seventeen staff members started—clean shaven—on October 1, and week by week, photos documented their growing experience. As the “Stache for Cash” mustaches evolved, participants gathered sponsors and donations. At the end of the program the money was aggregated and the best mustache chosen.

The Woodridge Public Works Department worked with Gina Pogue Reeder, a social worker from School District 68, to coordinate the process to identify the neediest children in the community who could be helped through this fundraiser. Collectively, the program raised more than \$6,500, and the public works department was able to buy presents for more than 40 children.

Brian Evans has hopes of expanding the program and encouraging other public works departments to start their own “Stache for Cash” fund-raising efforts in the future. Several public works departments in nearby communities have already expressed an interest in running similar programs next year.

The village of Woodridge is a full service community of 35,921 located in DuPage County, Illinois. Woodridge was recognized by *Money* magazine in 2007 as one of the Top 100 communities, and it celebrated its 50th anniversary in August 2009. For more information, visit the website at [www.vil.woodridge.il.us](http://www.vil.woodridge.il.us). **PM**



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## INTERIM MANAGEMENT... FILLING A GAP

**L**ocal government departments are often faced with gaps in management personnel, either through retirements, employees changing jobs, or forced resignations. This creates an administrative vacuum until a replacement is hired. The search and recruitment process can often take up to nine months or more before the administrator or department head moves to the community and begins work.

During this time, employees are often left without leadership, supervision, and direction. The result can be ineffective and inefficient service delivery, increased risk of lawsuits, morale problems, and lack of day-to-day direction and answers to employee's questions. A local government may also need management assistance with developing the next year's budget, assisting with labor negotiations, applying for time-sensitive grants, and a variety of other management responsibilities.

An interim manager can fill temporary voids in operations. The interim assignments can be for as short as one month to as long as a year or more (one community is currently going into its third year). The community can expect the interim administrator or department manager to handle the daily operations of the local government or department and provide necessary leadership to department employees.

Some local governments also use interim management as an opportunity to assess a department's operations and management, seeking an analysis by the interim department manager on what is working well and what could be improved to maximize the return on investment in the department. This is not only a cost-effective means of assessing department operations; it also assists the locality in determining the skills needed for the full-time replacement.

Who are the interim managers? They can be retired individuals who are willing to take on temporary assignments. Because they are retired, they have years of experience to call upon, thus reducing the learning curve for managing the department. They can also bring in fresh ideas and new perspectives on operations.

Almost any department or community can benefit from and use an interim manager, including the manager's office, police, fire, public works, library, and other departments. It can be a cost-effective way to continue department operations while the local government conducts the recruitment process to fill a vacancy. **PM**



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California's economic and downtown model was identified as one of the best places to emulate.

- The 100-year-old Windsor town hall, which took a direct hit in the tornado, has been renovated through the use of grants, including energy efficiency-related funds to upgrade the entire building insulation, along with new windows and solar power.
- The Windsor police department building was built using grants and a loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This partnership was cemented during the tornado recovery. A new fire station is also under construction and will open in late 2011 to serve the community in an area of new growth.
- Construction for one of the key entryways to the community and a much-needed Interstate 25 interchange project is now ready to start. The shared partnership with the state of Colorado and the city of Fort Collins, Colorado, made this possible.
- The Windsor four-field baseball complex was completely rebuilt through donations by area contractors and assistance from the Colorado Rockies major league baseball club. Community volunteers planted hundreds of donated trees to help reestablish our urban forest.
- The August 2010 issue of *Family Circle* magazine cited Windsor as one of the best family-oriented communities, specifically recognizing the tornado recovery.

The past three years show that when a community is ready, action can be taken. As managers, it is our responsibility to help provide the planning and the relationship building. When it is time, a community and its partners will provide the impetus for accomplishing the lasting dividends of all our efforts. **PM**



**KELLY ARNOLD, ICMA-CM**  
Town Manager  
Windsor, Colorado  
karnold@windsorgov.com

**D**uring 25 years of municipal service in several communities, I have gained a perspective that has proven valuable in anticipating issues in managing a community. Despite my experience, there have been three notable items that I suspected were true but couldn't confirm until recently:

1. A natural disaster is devastating, but handled correctly through the help of partnerships, a community can become stronger.
2. Steady, positive motion toward strategic goals can lead to positive results.
3. There are several "Windsor" communities in the United States! These informal sister cities were resources.

Windsor, Colorado, is more than 120 years old and has a long agricultural and family-oriented history. During the past 20 years, Windsor increased diversity and more than tripled in size to its current population of 19,000. The past 10 years provided new challenges.

Residential growth made Windsor one of the fastest-growing communities in northern Colorado. Growth was accommodated by annexation through agreements with surrounding communities, with the premise that partnerships would lead to positive relationships. Windsor also developed a comprehensive plan to anticipate growth that has led to quality industrial, retail, and residential development jointly supported by our partners.

I was selected as town manager in early 2007, just at the time Windsor was

growing out of being a "teenager" and entering "adulthood." The community was starting to feel the strains of growth, particularly as related to a sense of one community. New residents weren't connecting with the community, and long-term residents didn't necessarily want to connect with all the changes that growth was bringing.

Also, such critical services as town hall, public safety, and key transportation corridors were not able to keep up with the growth. This led the Windsor governing leadership to engage the community in a visioning process and develop a strategic plan.

May 22, 2008, was a fateful day that proved a strong, forward-thinking community that is a good neighbor can make the best of a natural disaster. A severe, F3 tornado with winds of 158–206 miles per hour took direct aim at most of the older section of our community.

Neighboring communities, the state of Colorado, and the federal government came to assist in a manner that was extremely helpful and beneficial. Even Windsor, Virginia, arrived with cleaning materials gathered through community effort. Fiscal and technical partnerships available prior to the tornado were expedited, and Windsor was poised to take advantage. Some direct results during the past three years have been:

- Old downtown Windsor has emerged as a place to redevelop and create a special historic place. Windsor,

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Visit [icma.org/awards](http://icma.org/awards) or check the January 3rd edition of the *ICMA Newsletter* for more information.

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