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**PUBLIC MANAGEMENT** 

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# TOO LITTLE Time to Wear All THOSE Hats?

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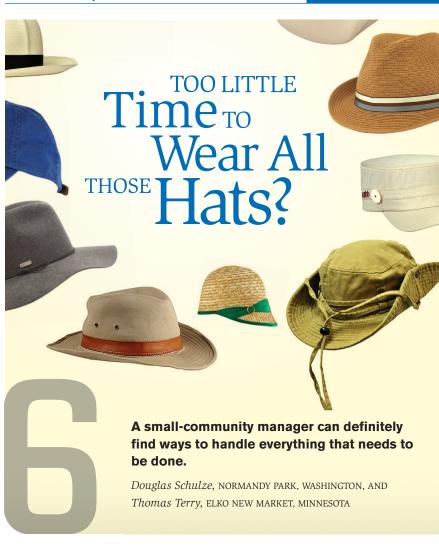
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#### ethics matter! | on the job candor

### BY MARTHA PEREGO THE DUTY OF CANDOR In homosty o eliding cools?

Is honesty a sliding scale?

Being candid brings to mind that awkward point in a conversation. It's the moment when someone chooses, perhaps with a bit of trepidation, to cross over into sensitive territory. As in, "Can I be candid with you?"

But candor really equates with being forthright and fair in any discussion, whether it is personal or work related. It is more than just being honest or telling the truth. To be truly candid means that you are not being deceptive in both what you say and what you don't say. Correctly answering the questions asked—that is, not lying—meets the standard of honesty but may fail to meet the higher standard of being candid.

#### **An Honest Example**

Consider this example from the for-profit world. Warren Buffett, CEO of Berkshire Hathaway and legendary financial wizard, faced the situation no leader desires: a dishonest second in command. Let's face it. Wrongdoing at any level is embarrassing and harmful.

But when it's your handpicked assistant or deputy who is not honest with you, it's harmful and hurtful. You work



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closely with the second in command to create a relationship built on trust. When that person isn't honest, your trust and confidence are lost.

Your ability to work together successfully is gone as well. After all, as the philosopher Nietzsche remarked: "I'm not upset that you lied to me; I'm upset that from now on I can't believe you."

In the Buffett case, his heir apparent was assigned the task of scouting for potential acquisitions. Final decisions about what to acquire would be made by Buffett and approved by the board of directors. An investment firm suggested several potential opportunities. After researching the list, the Buffett employee selected one company and worked with the investment firm to open the lines of communication.

Buffett's employee then personally purchased a small amount of stock in the company. As talks among the three parties continued, the employee sold the small amount of stock and personally bought \$10 million in stock in the very same company. He then proposed to Buffet that Berkshire Hathaway acquire this company.

During that meeting, Buffett was skeptical about the proposal and inquired how his staff member knew about the company. The aide replied that he owned stock in the company. Period.

That was actually a truthful response. But it lacked the critical information that Buffett required. It lacked the candor demanded of the situation. And given his position in the organization, it is reasonable to conclude that this wasn't just an oversight but an intentional effort to mislead.

How is that conclusion valid? The heir apparent was senior and experienced enough to understand the consequences of not being forthcoming with Buffett about the timing of his stock purchase. Without knowing that his right-hand man violated the company's insider trading policy and therefore tainted the deal, Buffett proceeded with the acquisition. Cut to the chase. All the information regarding the stock purchase and acquisition efforts was publicly disclosed. The company's reputation is dinged. The heir apparent resigns. A full investigation concludes that the employee did intentionally mislead Buffett.

As noted in the report, for employees in this organization "the duty of loyalty includes a duty of candor, which requires them to disclose to the corporation all material facts concerning corporate decisions, especially decisions from which they might derive a personal benefit."

#### **Acting With Honor and Candor**

Clearly, in Buffett's organization being candid is the gold standard and not an option. The same holds true for some professions. For attorneys, the "general duty of candor" *requires* them to be honest and forthright with courts. The bar association states that attorneys should also refrain from deceiving or misleading courts either through direct representations or through silence.

Which raises an interesting question: Why don't all professions require or approach candor as a duty? ICMA's Code of Ethic requires members to act with honor and integrity to merit the trust of those we serve. That is an aspirational target. But is it safe to assume then that acting with honor and integrity *obligates* local government professionals to be forthright and candid?

If a foundation of trust with those we serve is the desired outcome, then being candid about the facts is not an option. The next time you are quizzed about your organization's financials, performance metrics, or community satisfaction with services, just consider this: Are you just answering the question asked? Or are you being candid? **P**A



MARTHA PEREGO Ethics Director, ICMA Washington, D.C. mperego@icma.org

### on point | social media

### WHAT GUIDELINES DO YOU PROVIDE EMPLOYEES REGARDING THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA USE?



DARYL DELABBIO County Administrator/ Controller Kent County, Michigan Daryl.Delabbio@kent countymi.gov

Kent County does not have a social media policy at this time, but an employee work group is in the process of developing a formalized policy and procedures aimed at promoting the county and its services. Consequently, the county blocks access to social media sites for most employees because of the possibility that sites could be misused, especially when a policy isn't in place.

Those few who have access to social media sites use them to accomplish specific job-related responsibilities, which include limited county promotion of the parks and zoo on Facebook, law enforcement, health department, and human resources for job announcements. Employees who are not blocked are trusted to use social media for Kent County value.

Because social media communication is considered public record, it will be important for Kent County to complete a policy that is crafted properly so that social media are used to serve our community.



GREGORY DOYON City Manager Great Falls, Montana gdoyon@greatfallsmt.net

I received a wake-up call about a year ago when a resident asked me about the Great Falls Parks and Recreation Department's Facebook page. Someone (not a member of the staff) had independently created a page for the city. The site reflected poorly on the parks and recreation department and, thus, on the community. Because the site was not sanctioned by the city, something needed to be done about it.

Great Falls initiated two pilot social media sites designed to connect, inform, and educate users. A social media policy was drafted to guide participating departments. The guide outlines responsibilities of a department's content manager and specifies appropriate content.

Content is restricted to department news, frequently asked questions, and approved links. The use of social media for the two departments has been well received and adds another creative and effective way to connect with the community.



BOLA AKANDE City Clerk/Administrator Brentwood, Missouri cityadministrator@brent woodmo.org

In Brentwood, most employees are prohibited from conducting such activity during work hours and are not allowed to use city equipment or property to do so at any time.

Those who do use social media on behalf of the city must have all content approved by the appropriate supervisors prior to posting to ensure compliance with our policies and communication objectives.

Employees are also discouraged from making online disclosures about where they work. If it is mentioned, they are asked to make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the city.

We also find it helpful to remind all our employees from time to time that any online communications bringing embarrassment to our city should not be posted—whether they are blogged, tweeted, or displayed on a Facebook account.



MICHELE MEADE, ICMA-CM Township Manager Livingston, New Jersey mmeade@livingstonnj.org

Members of the management staff realize that controlling or monitoring social networking of employees is virtually impossible; however, my community does have a policy relating to employees' personal use of blogging and social networks.

The purpose of the policy is to prevent unauthorized use of the township name, logo, or photos of township work online. The policy also prohibits using township equipment, time, or facilities to conduct personal social networking.

Although the township does not actively monitor the web, it expects that employees will report abuse because the policy precludes the use of social networking to harass, threaten, discriminate, or otherwise harm other township employees. Employees must state, if they identify in a blog they are township employees, that views expressed are theirs alone and do not represent the township. **FM** 

# LIFE, WELL RUN

Find out about ICMA's *Life, Well Run* multiyear campaign showcasing the value professional local government managers bring to building great communities.

LifeWellRun.org



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icma.org/rampup

### FALENT Management



Keene, New Hampshire, is ensuring that its employees are well trained and productive.

icma.org/keene

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# TOO LITTLE Time to Wear All THOSE Hats?

Let strategy help you find the **right fit** 

#### By Douglas Schulze and Thomas Terry

ho knew that fueling an airplane was a skill a local government manager should have? One author of this article (that would be me, Doug!) discovered this during the first few weeks as a brand new sity administrator in a small much sity.

brand new city administrator in a small rural city, population 2,200.

One evening early in my tenure the telephone rang while I was having dinner with family members. My wife answered the phone and, after a brief moment, informed the caller he must have dialed a wrong number. The man insisted he had the correct number, so I talked with him.

Much to my surprise, the caller said he was at the municipal airport and needed fuel for his airplane. I found out that my name and telephone number were posted at the office as the contact for fuel!

This example shows that serving as a manager of a small community can often mean working with limited time, resources, staff, and in-house expertise. The job requires unique perspective, skills, flexibility, and willingness by both manager and staff to wear many hats.

The ability to meet the needs and expectations of residents may be enhanced by employing such commonsense and effective strategies as establishing priorities, providing policy perspectives for elected officials, providing professional development for the manager and staff members, collaborating, contracting and outsourcing, and using volunteers and interns.

#### TAKEAWAYS

> Find out the skills, techniques, and strategies needed for survival in a small organization with limited resources.

 > Learn that good management and breadth of experience is essential in small organizations.
 > Discover that being a manager in a small orga-

nization can truly be a "hands-on" experience.

Here's a closer look at the strategies that smaller community managers can use to handle everything that needs to be done:

**Prioritization and Flexibility.** These may seem to be commonsense strategies but acknowledging them as strategies is much easier than actually using them. In small organizations, the manager also can be responsible for one or more departments. Spending the day putting out proverbial fires can't always be avoided, but unless you have a strategy for prioritizing issues, each day will turn into firefighting.

Using well-known time management strategies, for example, to prioritize your workday is important. Finishing a priority project first thing in the morning before opening e-mail or listening to voice messages sounds simple, but it works. Think about how many times the productivity of your day has been completely lost because of one telephone call or one e-mail message.

**Policy Perspective for Elected Officials.** Elected officials need a perspective on the everyday workings of the local government. Every function an organization serves and every service it provides is important. The reality is, however, that in an environment of finite resources and unlimited demands it is necessary to establish policy priorities.

Policy can be a difficult topic of discussion with elected officials, especially for managers in small communities who are expected to do it all. It may be a frightening prospect to openly discuss limitations of your organization and you as manager. In spite of this, working with your elected officials to understand the limitations and to focus finite resources is the foundation for improving organizational effectiveness.

The capacity for a comprehensive discussion may not currently exist in your organization because such a discussion hasn't taken place before or the current political environment may not be conducive to one. If so, keep a discussion simple.

# TOO LITTLE Time to Wear All THOSE Hats?

An annual SWOT analysis and goalidentification process is a good place to begin. It may be necessary to use an outside facilitator for this task. Retired managers are often willing participants and the cost of hiring one might be within your budget.

The city of Elko New Market, Minnesota (population 4,100), engages annually in visioning and goal setting. The overall process involves four steps: (1) developing a common vision for the community, (2) identifying community issues, (3) establishing goals, and (4) implementing them.

Although rather quick and dirty, this process has been successful in developing consensus on community vision, issues, goals, and priorities. We use the vision as a mental image of a desirable and feasible Elko New Market 20 to 30 years in the future.

The vision is not so much an end product as it is a direction in which the council feels the community should be moving. This vision serves as the foundation for the rest of the process, with councilmembers then identifying the most important issues facing the community within the next 10 years.

The vision and issues serve as the context or backdrop as councilmembers develop goals and an action plan. The council establishes a number of priority goals, which are projects or activities that merit special attention and focused resources. The goals are intended to be easily defined and measurable for progress and completion.

The goals also are expected to be reasonably achievable within a five-year time frame. They provide a framework for shaping policy, setting priorities, and budgeting. Finally, an implementation or action plan with a 12- to 18-month time frame is developed to move each of the goals forward. Because action items necessary to achieve the identified goals may require funding, this exercise serves as an excellent lead-in to the city's annual budget process.

The visioning and goal process has proven to be as valuable as the outcomes in developing council consensus and focus. The exercise has allowed Elko New Market to move from being reactive to being a more proactive organization.

**Professional Development.** For managers and staff members, professional development can be done for minimal cost without leaving the office by using webinars, electronic newsletters, and professional blogs. The difficulty can be finding the time to listen to a webinar or read a newsletter without interruption.

Using the ICMA Credentialed Manager program is a great way to plan your professional development. Set aside two to three hours every two weeks, perhaps during lunch, to read newsletters, blogs, websites, or books.

If your community or personal budget allows, attending annual state association and municipal league training events and ICMA's annual conference not only is a great way to learn how other managers are doing the job, but it can also be a feasible way to develop a management network.

Developing a circle of fellow managers allows the small-community manager to stay current and bounce ideas off of others who understand local government management. Having monthly or quarterly lunch meetings with managers from nearby communities is also an easy and inexpensive way to stay current. Encourage and provide similar opportunities for staff members.

**Collaboration.** Working with other people and other communities is an excellent way to pool resources and achieve efficiencies and levels of service that would not be possible individually. Collaboration doesn't just happen on its own. It requires an investment in time and resources, which can be a difficult proposition when both are in short supply.

As with any investment, the returns can outweigh the initial cost. By necessity, successful collaboration depends on developing relationships. Certain levels of comfort and trust are required to build a good foundation for any relationship. Again, setting up monthly or quarterly meetings with managers from nearby communities is an easy way to begin developing those relationships.

As a manager, you will likely have to cultivate a culture of collaboration within and outside your organization. The tendency of people and organizations is to identify reasons why collaboration will not work. As a result, most collaborative concepts are passed over before truly being vetted. Work to foster a culture that looks to collaborative opportunities first and that encourages flexibility and consideration of nontraditional areas of collaboration.

Finally, you and your organization will have to be willing to "pay it forward," to take the first step and make an investment for future return. This has been especially successful in Scott County, Minnesota, and has been formalized in the establishment of the Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency (SCALE). More information on SCALE can be found at the website www.scaleinfo.org.

SCALE was formed in 2003 to encourage greater efficiencies and leadership in public service through enhanced communication, collaboration of services, and sharing of resources. Members include elected and appointed officials from the cities, schools, and townships within Scott County, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, and Scott County.

SCALE members meet monthly to discuss ways in which local governments can continue to maximize the value of taxpayers' money through cooperating in such mutual service areas as public safety, parks and recreation, transportation, community development, and general government. These are some successful SCALE initiatives:

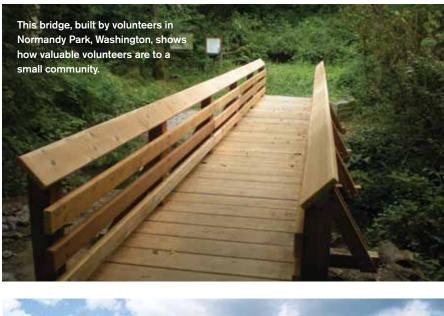
- The Unified Economic Development, Land Use and Transportation Charter has led countywide coordinated economic development efforts.
- The SCALE Regional Public Safety Training Facility, established in 2008, provides training opportunities for law enforcement, firefighting, emergency management, emergency preparedness, military, public health, and public works groups serving Scott and Carver counties, along with the Minnesota River Valley Region.
- The countywide equipment sharing agreement provides for the sharing of equipment resources among the local government jurisdictions in Scott County.

Another example of successful collaboration is the Scott County Joint Prosecution Association, a joint-powers organization whose membership consists of all of the cities in Scott County. The organization provides prosecution services for the cities for nonfelony cases.

Elko New Market also has an agreement with the neighboring city of Savage (population 27,000) for receiving management information services on an as-needed basis. This has resulted in a higher level of expertise, with experience in local technology needs and applications at a reduced cost compared with the options available through private contractors or in-house staff.

Administrators in Scott County have been meeting monthly for several years. All of the collaborative efforts mentioned have been the result of relationships, concepts, and collaboration developed through those meetings. This practice can serve as a good example for other local governments.

**Contracting and Outsourcing**. Contracting and outsourcing are often necessities in small communities. When you have limited internal resources and expertise,





contracting and outsourcing can provide a level of expertise that cannot be maintained internally as well as the flexibility to respond to a changing workload.

A common concern can be the premium that is paid for the external expertise. In smaller communities with limited resources, there might be a philosophical resistance to paying for external expertise—perhaps a certain degree of sticker shock exists. This can result in a strong desire to "make do" with internal staff resources. The alternative, however, can be reduced efficiency due to the lack of internal capacity and the increased burden on internal resources that are more efficiently focused on core competencies. Staff members are often required to be more generalists, without the luxury of time or resources to develop high degrees of expertise and efficiencies. The organization, in some instances, may find it better to use external resources and allow the manager and staff members to focus on what they do well.

Aside from the obvious cost-benefit analysis, keep certain points in mind when exploring options for contracting and outsourcing: be creative and flexible, use external resources that can function as an extension of city staff, and seek external resources that have depth.

Elko New Market has effectively used contracting and outsourcing in a number of areas:

# TOO LITTLE Time to Wear All THOSE Hats?

- Snow and ice removal on all of its streets. This allows the city to provide a more cost-effective level of service than can currently be provided with in-house resources.
- Management services for the public works department by contracting with an engineering consulting firm. This allows the city to maintain flexibility while it benefits from much greater experience and technical expertise than could be obtained if the position was internal.
- Planning services that allow the city to maintain flexibility as it benefits from much greater experience and technical expertise than could be obtained if the position were internal. The city also has a joint-powers agreement with the neighboring city of Lonsdale to provide part-time zoning administrator services, resulting in flexibility and service at a lower cost than the use of a private firm.
- Administration and management of recreational programming. Establishing an agreement with one of the two school districts serving Elko New Market has allowed the service to be provided at a much lower cost than if the city had to provide it in-house.

Volunteers and Interns. Here is an inexpensive and effective way to supplement staff. Small communities are frequently full of talented, retired people who welcome opportunities to share their talents. Engaging community members to work with local government staff also can build trust and support.

Volunteers can be used for a broad range of tasks depending on needs of the organization and skills of the volunteers. In 1993–1994, volunteers in Sandstone, Minnesota (population 2,200), converted a derelict municipal golf course into a beautiful nine-hole course with a new clubhouse, including a full bar and banquet capacity for 100 people, for less than \$250,000.

In Normandy Park, Washington (population 6,800), volunteer programs have been developed to help with maintenance and special projects in parks and public rights-of-way. An adopt-a-spot program is available to individuals or groups, and volunteers are recognized by a plaque installed at the site of their "spot."

Volunteers recently constructed a footbridge that provides access to a nature preserve. The bridge would have Normandy Park has two successful internship programs. The police department offers a six-month internship program, which gives interns an opportunity to work closely with the police chief and assistant chief on administrative functions.

An internship in the community development department that is available for students working on GIS certification was recently established through a partnership with Green River Community College. This program has helped fill a staffing need the city could not otherwise afford.

#### Make the Investments

A common attribute of successful managers of small organizations is that they take time out of an already busy

A common attribute of successful managers of small organizations is that they take time out of an already busy schedule to make investments that result in a return of personal development and organizational development.

cost the city some \$150,000 if the work had been contracted out; however, the city paid only for materials because volunteers provided the labor and a local licensed engineer volunteered to design the structure. Total cost of the project, including a dedication plaque to recognize the volunteers, was less than \$15,000.

If a volunteer program is established or volunteers are used for a small project, do not waste their time. Be clear about the objectives, budget and resources available, and safety and supervision. Volunteers will not return if the experience is unproductive or unrewarding.

Typical internships through graduate programs encourage employers to provide some compensation for interns to demonstrate a commitment to providing the interns with a beneficial experience. Even if your budget doesn't give you an opportunity to offer compensation to an intern, it is possible to find good interns who are willing to work without compensation just to gain experience. schedule to make investments that result in a return of personal development and organizational development.

Although the impact of taking time to make these investments may result in a short-term personal or organizational burden, these investments will help you and your organization to become more efficient and more capable of wearing many hats. If these investments are not made, it is extremely difficult to accomplish anything more than frantically putting out those proverbial fires.

Finally, it is also important to take time for your family and your own health. Don't let work consume you! If your personal life is not in order, you cannot perform at your best professionally.



DOUGLAS SCHULZE, ICMA-CM, is city manager, Normandy Park, Washington (dougs@ci. normandy-park.wa.us),

and **THOMAS TERRY** is city administrator, Elko New Market, Minnesota (tterry@ci.enm.mn.us).

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# LESS E E D

Case analysis of the intersections of infrastructure improvement expenditures

**By Daniel Rosemond** 

#### TAKEAWAYS

> Explores the impact that residential subdivisions, considered private communities, are having on local government.

> Identifies the challenges now faced by local governments due to many defunct homeowner associations (HOAs).

>Answers the question: Should local government play a role in addressing infrastructure improvements in these private communities?

#### It goes without saying that in the midst of the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression, the value of the U.S. dollar has never been lower. Table

1 shows changes in prices of all goods and services purchased for consumption by urban households. The rate of inflation has been calculated since 1913.

#### IN 2008, FOR EXAMPLE, it

took \$21.57 to buy what \$1.00 bought in 1913. Note that in 1920 this number was \$2.02, and then it declined in 1925, a decline that persisted during the 1930s, showing the effect of the Great Depression when prices slumped. Prices did not pass \$2.00 again until 1950.

The attention given to the use of tax dollars by the government has arguably never been as high profile and newsworthy as it is today. Every line item and expenditure is being questioned, and rightfully so. After all, taxes are the monetary means by which the provision of public services is attained.

Therefore, when tax dollars are used to fund a project that is used by a limited number of individuals, it can be argued that a public good is not being provided.

#### Background

The project area in this case is composed of private subdivisions developed in the mid-1970s. Like many similar residential areas, these subdivisions were developed with the understanding that they would be self-managed through the vehicle of homeowner associations (HOAs). The project area, part of Miami Gardens, Florida, is in excess of 220 acres of land, and it comprises three neighborhoods. It is noteworthy that many of the residential units in these neighborhoods are multifamily or townhouse units, comprising more than 2,000 households.

As in many suburban developments of this kind, the housing units were clustered together for a maximum unit-toacre ratio. Although the roads were built to sufficient width to accommodate vehicular traffic, they did not meet required traffic standards to be considered a public right-of-way. These standards would also require appropriate drainage systems.

Also excluded in the original development was street lighting along most of the residential streets. Sidewalks in these subdivisions are also sparse. The roads within the project area function more as alleys than as public streets. Nevertheless, they are the only access—both pedestrian and vehicular—to the housing units in these neighborhoods.

The drastic decline of the housing market has not only affected real estate values but has also financially crippled many

TABLE	1. Inflation in the United
States,	1913–2008.

States, 15	10 2000.
Year	Amount It Took to Equal \$1.00 in 1913
1913	\$1.00
1920	\$2.02
1925	\$1.77
1930	\$1.69
1935	\$1.38
1940	\$1.41
1945	\$1.82
1950	\$2.43
1955	\$2.71
1960	\$2.99
1965	\$3.18
1970	\$3.92
1975	\$5.43
1980	\$8.32
1985	\$10.87
1990	\$13.20
1995	\$15.39
2000	\$17.39
2001	\$17.89
2002	\$18.17
2003	\$18.59
2004	\$19.08
2005	\$19.73
2006	\$20.18
2007	\$20.94
2008	\$21.57

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, database, http://stats.bls.gov. HOAs. Consequently, the inability of the associations to collect the dues needed to maintain common areas within their boundaries has recently prompted an outcry by residents to their public officials.

The expectation by residents in this project area is that their local government should provide the needed improvements. A large majority of the units in these neighborhoods are rented, with the actual property owners living outside the community. This is a critical dynamic as it relates to the issue of resident expectations and owners' obligations.

If a local government chooses to use public funds to build a new park in the community, residents who don't use park facilities might be critical of such a decision by their elected officials. The addition of a public park could result in increased property values, however, and could spur economic development that would not otherwise have been secured without the expenditure.

Thus, the residents who don't use the park will nevertheless realize a direct benefit. Of particular importance is the specific designation of certain public funds. Most taxpayers are ignorant of the fact that options for the use of public funds are limited to the funding designation. This means that dollars with a public safety designation, for example, can be used only on projects that are related to this type of designation (that is, on police or fire rescue services).

The federal stimulus plan passed by Congress in February 2009 has been the source of angst to many communities as a result of this funding designation approach. Some taxpayers are unaware that the Obama administration set forth specific uses for the \$787 billion federal stimulus (See table 2).

Since early 2007, local government leaders have made concerted efforts to meet with residents from all three affected neighborhoods in order to inform them of the locality's sensitivity to their plight. Given the fact that the roads are privately owned, however, the local

#### TABLE 2.

Purpose of \$787 Billion Federal Stimulus	Dollars (billions)	
Tax relief	\$288	
State and local governments	\$144	
Infrastructure and science	\$111	
Protecting the vulnerable	\$81	
Health care	\$59	
Education and training	\$53	
Energy	\$43	
Other programs	\$8	

government is legally prevented from allocating public funds to their repair.

The only way that the roads could be improved using public funds is if the roads were conveyed to the locality and designated as rights-of-way. The easiest and most cost-effective manner to perform the road conveyance would be through the formal actions of the HOA governing board, in accordance with its bylaws.

In this particular case, however, there exists an antagonistic history between the HOA and residents of these neighborhoods. Residents are looking to the local government to act on their behalf. Many believe that because they pay taxes, they are entitled to conditions that constitute a better quality of life than what currently exists.

Another dynamic surrounding this case that perpetuates resident expectations is the newness of Miami Gardens as a local government. For many years, residents of this community felt disenfranchised because they believed they suffered from a lack of services from county government. This frustration led to constituent support for incorporation. When approval was finally granted, Miami Gardens residents believed that their concerns would finally be addressed.

These expectations were articulated loud and clear in a community meeting held in the spring of 2007 at the campus of Florida Memorial University. Regardless of the fact that the roads are a private asset, regardless of the fact that the city does not regulate the actions of HOAs, and regardless of the fact that these blighted infrastructure conditions existed long before the city's incorporation, residents demanded that their local government act and act quickly.

Arguments have also been made by opponents of community redevelopment agencies. Opponents contend that spending tax dollars on roads that are accessible to only a few residents is not an appropriate use of public funds. For the residents of the neighborhoods in need, however, the local government presents the only hope for providing the resources to perform much-needed infrastructure improvements.

The city's public works department has noted that the infrastructure in these areas is the worst in the entire city. During Hurricane Wilma, flooding in these areas was so severe that even emergency vehicles were unable to get through to many of the households. Improving these areas is more than an aesthetic concern; it is a public safety issue.

# Funding and Restrictions on Use of Funds

Consideration also must be given to the primary funding source being used by the city to tackle this project. Because the types of funds often used for public expenditures have specific designations assigned to them, the city chose to use in this case community development block grant (CDBG) funds.

CDBG funds are federally appropriated funds that flow down to state and local governments. Although states and units of local government can exercise discretion regarding the types of projects carried out with these funds, CDBG dollars must always meet one of these three national objectives:

- **1.** Activities benefiting low- and moderate-income persons.
- **2.** Activities that aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight.
- Activities designed to meet community development needs having a particular urgency.

#### THE DRASTIC DECLINE OF THE HOUSING MARKET HAS NOT ONLY AFFECTED REAL ESTATE VALUES BUT HAS ALSO FINANCIALLY CRIPPLED MANY HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATIONS.

Because of the relatively low average household income in these neighborhoods, improvements to the roads would be considered an area benefit according to regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. If and when critics raise questions about the city's expenditure decision for this neighborhood infrastructure improvement project, a comprehensive overview of all factors (primary funding source, public safety issues, and desired economic development) needs to be put forward.

During the preliminary planning and site work, it was discovered that a portion of the roads within the project area were in fact owned by the county. The conveyance of these particular roads thus became a somewhat routine government-to-government transaction. Once conveyed, the city of Miami Gardens moved forward with the development of the construction drawings and subsequent infrastructure improvements.

Notwithstanding this step in the right direction, the completion of a portion of the roads within these neighborhoods prompted discord among residents of the areas where roads and drainage were not yet improved. Trying to explain the nuances of government-owned roads versus privately owned roads was at best an exercise in futility.

#### **Outcomes**

The commitment of funds to this project was predicated on the underlying objective of the city's leadership to enhance some of the most blighted neighborhoods in the community. But will these improvements yield the desired results in spurring future economic development activities?

Those results remain to be seen over the span of several years. If economic development occurs, it would seem that the improvement of neighborhood infrastructure such as described here

is important enough to justify such public expenditure. It is understood that neighborhood improvements, specifically infrastructure improvements, always result in increased property values in the impacted neighborhoods.

As the city's commitment of CDBG funds to this project shows, city leaders clearly believe that this expenditure will ultimately serve as an overall public benefit for all residents by raising the values of properties in selected neighborhoods.

Finally, another noteworthy issue in this particular case is the local government decision to seek ownership of rightsof-way that are or have been privately owned. In addition to the city encumbering additional roads that it would need to maintain, the larger concern that this case presents is an increased role of government intervention in private property.

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It is foreseeable that if the remainder of this project should move forward through the conveyance by the residents of the remaining roads, the city will undoubtedly be tasked with pursuing a similar approach in other private subdivisions. This anticipated demand will not only create a potential cost burden to the city but will also set a public policy precedent that private property that cannot be maintained by its owners will ultimately be pushed to the local government to absorb.

In light of recent federal administrative policy decisions, it would seem that public debate on the issues outlined in this case is just beginning. PM



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By Alan Shark and Christopher Brady

1001

# RETHINKING TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP A VIEW FROM A CIO AND A CITY MANAGER

0100

OCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGERS ARE DISCOVERING THAT KEEPING, FIRING, OR SEEKING A TECHNOLOGY LEADER IS A GROWING CHALLENGE. THE TOPIC IS ALL ABOUT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DECI-SION RIGHTS: WHO ULTIMATELY DECIDES?

A manager once stated that when he had to replace a purchasing officer or a chief financial officer, he knew exactly what to look for. But when he needed to hire a chief technology manager, he was at a loss. He said, "So many speak a different language, and I'm not sure what I should be looking for. Should I be looking for a fixer, a leader, a strategist, or all of the above?" Most IT functions had their origins in the accounting and finance offices in the business and government departments of 25 or more years ago. Technology took hold with the advent of electronic payroll processing, timesheets, and program budgets.

Today, it is estimated that 20 percent of IT managers are still reporting through a high-level finance manager. In some cases, particularly in small cities and counties, the local government manager also serves as the chief information officer (CIO) in function if not title. In other cases, assistant managers either manage technology or

#### TAKEAWAYS

#### Readers of this article will learn

How they can better organize around technology.

> What they should be looking for in a technology staff person.

> If they are satisfied with their technology governance.

> If their localities are optimized for the new technologies coming down the pike. manage the top staff person in charge of technology.

#### **Change and Adapt**

Clearly, the new focus on technology solutions and innovation usually leads to changes in business processes. The CIO (or equivalent) ideally plays an important role in identifying opportunities that change existing systems and practices. The soft side of technology is about change and one's ability to adapt.

No manager or CIO would disagree that, often enough, the most difficult part of embracing new technologies is employee acceptance. Managers and CIOs would also agree that this is also an area that can easily be sidelined or ignored until employee frustrations erupt.

It's important to never underestimate the need for change management strategies and intervention. This is a great opportunity for local government managers and CIOs to work closely in planning for change.

We recognize that in today's challenging environment, we have often been asked to do more with less, and this is not a sustainable strategy. Yet both CIOs and managers are faced with resource constraints in their efforts to introduce technology changes to an organization. Therefore, they are tasked with demonstrating that the life-cycle cost for technology will benefit the local government in the long term.

While change is occurring internally, it is always occurring externally; and

perhaps external change will have a greater impact. With today's new devices come such terms as BYOD (bring your own device) or even BYOT (bring your own technology). These relatively new terms help illustrate an amazing shift from total central IT control and suggest a more democratic form of IT thinking and governance.

As a result, IT leadership needs to change and adapt. The consumerization of technology is a growing phenomenon that takes into account the growing adoption of mobile devices that get smarter with each model. One manager lamented recently, "As I look around, I see more computing power in the hands of our residents than I do on the desks of our city employees."

#### **Resident Expectations**

With every technological advancement in the consumer realm comes increased resident expectations. For less than \$10, a resident can equip a smartphone with a credit card reader that can take credit card payments from just about anywhere at any time. Checks can now be deposited using a smartphone's camera.

Video one-to-one conferencing is exploding everywhere. Skype, the personal video conferencing service, claims 300 million minutes of video calls globally per day, which is a 900 percent increase since 2007. Skype also claims that in the United States alone, on Sunday mornings some 30 million are logged in on average. Are public managers prepared to face their residents and customers by video? Most we have spoken with say, "No way!"

Caught up with the ease of use of tablet computers, many city and county boards are seeking to trade out their laptops for the newest and greatest. There is no end in sight regarding the growth of technology and the need for innovation. While technology used to be likened to a car engine with the hood closed, today's government systems are now exposed.

Public managers are increasingly looking for new ways to engage the public

tablets, website developers are being forced to rethink their website designs and functionality to best accommodate the new medium of mobile devices.

### WITH TODAY'S NEW DEVICES COME SUCH TERMS AS BYOD (BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE) OR EVEN BYOT (BRING YOUR OWN TECHNOLOGY).

as a means of improving communications and restoring trust. We know, for example, that at the end of 2010 in the United States there were 302,947,098 mobile phones; this is a 97.4 percent penetration.

The research firm Nielsen predicted that 2011 would be the year when smartphone penetration would surpass regular mobile phones. That prediction was offered even before the unexpected and explosive growth of the iPad and additional tablets that have emerged. With the growth of iPad 2 and other Location-based social media applications will present new and exciting opportunities for citizens and local governments. Web-centric strategies need to be rethought in terms of the explosion of apps.

#### **The Latest Word**

IT governance is all about who decides. Because technology is dispersed into every business activity of government, having a strong centralized IT department may not work as it has in the past—nor should it. There is already talk about rethinking the responsibilities of a CIO as no longer the chief information officer but instead becoming the chief innovation officer, where the innovation replaces information.

Even with the consumerization of technology, someone has to be in charge of network integrity and security, storage, and retrieval solutions, cross-platform systems, and coordinated approaches to problem solving and innovation. Everyone cannot be allowed to simply spend and do their own thing without some form of criteria and review.



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Virginia (ashark@pti.org). His research combines seven years experience working with local government CIOs. **CHRISTOPHER BRADY** is city manager, Mesa, Arizona (chris.brady@mesaaz. gov), and serves on the PTI board of directors as the ICMA designated director.

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# Create a following...... with GIS.



Governments are using Esri's geographic information system (GIS) technology to improve communication with citizens. The trend began with simple apps that let people report problems like potholes. Increasingly, governments are delivering maps with information citizens can use to improve their daily lives, and citizens want to visit the apps again and again. The mapping apps are lightweight and diverse, addressing the interests of a broad range of citizens. In a sense, governments are creating a following just as they would with social media.

Delivering voting information with a mobile app, using Twitter<sup>®</sup> to announce maps of new building permits, and helping citizens take advantage of park resources are a few ways that organizations are delivering relevant maps that people want to revisit and share with their friends. To improve access to these kinds of maps, governments like the State of Kentucky are creating map and app galleries, one place where people can expect to find the information they need on a broad range of topics.



Advertorial



#### Vanderburgh County, Indiana, directs voters to shortest lines on election day.

By moving from traditional polling places to vote centers, Vanderburgh County, Indiana, saves \$85,000 each year. Voting centers allow citizens to cast their votes at the most convenient locations instead of only in their designated precincts. To make voting even easier, the county offers a free mobile app that provides immediate details on the nearest voting centers, including poll hours, wait times, and directions. During the 2012 primaries, more than 300 citizens have downloaded the app on their iPhones or Android phones, and the county expects use to grow significantly as the word spreads and major elections approach.

The county leveraged its existing geographic information system, based on Esri® technology, to create a map service that includes all vote centers. A custom mobile app was then built using Esri's ArcGIS® API for Flex to support deployment on both iPhone® and Android® platforms.

"It's simple, it's easy, and it does what we need," said Susan Kirk, Vanderburgh County clerk. "This app is going to become more and more useful and popular as we ramp up for a busy election season."

To promote public use of the app, the county works with local media and offers free downloads from Apple's App Store and Android Market.

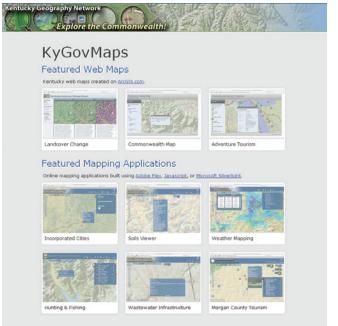
# Marco Island, Florida, finds new ways to communicate.

The City of Marco Island, Florida, worked with Esri partner EnerGov® to deliver permit information through social media and mapping. Now, when the city issues a new building permit, a Tweet from the Building Services Division notifies citizens of the news along with links to the permit and a map of the permit location.

Now contractors, planners, and interested citizens don't need to stop by the city's office to inquire about new building plans. It's available for them from any smartphone or computer.

"This is another way to communicate with the public and give them a way to track the latest permit updates in near real time," said Gretchen Baldus, information technology director, City of Marco Island. "It's an added layer of transparency."





# King County, Washington, makes it easy to plan a day at the park.

Not scared off by the Pacific Northwest's traditionally rainy weather, many of the residents in King County, Washington, are outdoor enthusiasts who look for activities to do all year round. To help these citizens know about close-to-home places to participate in their favorite activities, King County created ParkFinder, an interactive map of the county's 200 parks, 175 miles of regional trails, and 26,000 acres of open space that is searchable by activity or type of park or trail. When a site is selected, a pop-up box displays site information, such as acreage; address; links to printable PDF maps; and available facilities like ballfields, picnic shelters, and restrooms.

Part of a healthy incentives campaign for King County employees, the Fitness Challenge section of ParkFinder features information about high-, medium-, and lowintensity activities available at certain facilities. For example, the summary of a high-intensity ride along the Cedar River Trail includes a description of trail conditions, distance, the amenities available, and driving directions. By equipping people with information about what to expect, King County hopes that more people will be encouraged to get out and enjoy these parks and trails.

"King County Parks tries to be innovative in our approach to providing parks and trails, so the ParkFinder map has been an excellent tool, allowing us to put easily accessible, interactive, and online information into the hands of King County's active and tech-savvy residents," said Kevin Brown, division director of King County Parks. 

#### Kentucky creates a map gallery.

The State of Kentucky created a public portal at kygeonet.ky.gov/govmaps to provide citizens with quick access to maps, apps, and data for a better understanding of statewide issues and trends. Using the Public Maps Gallery template from ArcGIS<sup>™</sup> Online, the state created one place for citizens to find a variety of maps including land-cover change, adventure tourism, and wastewater infrastructure.

Providing a map gallery empowers citizens. They know exactly where to go to find the information they need when planning hunting or fishing trips or working on projects that involve soils data.

"This portal has allowed us to make valuable information available to a much broader group of citizens than ever before. People with no mapping skills at all have commented on how useful the site has been and how they'll look to it in the future as a resource," said Kent Anness, GIS manager in Kentucky's Division of Geographic Information.

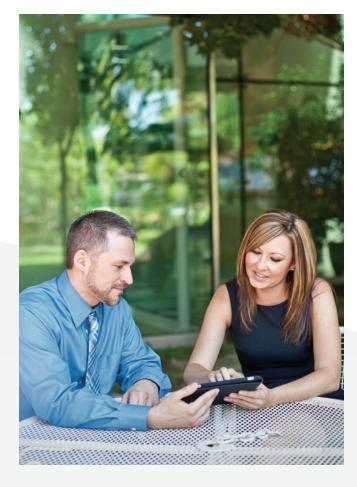


. .

Governments have many ways to communicate with citizens, from informative websites to town hall meetings, but the question arises, Which is the most effective? Though there are many choices, governments are turning to the Esri ArcGIS technology that they have had in their organizations for years, and citizens are responding positively to locationcentric civic engagement apps.

Seeing information in the context of a map shows how government activity relates to people in their communities. It delivers a transparent solution that engages citizens, demonstrates accountability, and fosters collaboration.

To explore free templates for innovative applications and galleries, visit **esri.com/PM2012**.





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### professional support | 2011 contributions

ICMA FUND FOR PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT AND *LIFE, WELL RUN* CAMPAIGN

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stablished in 1985, the ICMA Fund for Professional Management is committed to supporting initiatives that explain and promote the role and benefits of local government management. Over the

years, investment interest from the Fund has supported many communities across the United States as they organized to adopt or retain professional local government management.

Annual contributions ensure that the Fund can continue its good work for the future of the profession.

*Life, Well Run* Campaign. *Life, Well Run* is an ambitious national campaign to raise awareness of the value professional managers bring to building effective local governments and great communities. The campaign aims to bring new energy and momentum to the profession by emphasizing the real benefits professional management delivers, reaching important stakeholders in many ways.

The total estimated cost of the campaign is \$5,000,000. In 2011, significant progress was made toward this goal, which included a generous \$200,000 pledge by the state associations in ICMA's Midwest Region, a \$250,000 matching grant made by ICMA-RC, and a \$100,000 pledge by the Texas City Management Association.

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#### BY KAREN THORESON AND PAMELA MUSE

# SIX QUALITIES LINKED TO INNOVATION

#### Start the qualities conversation with staff members

nnovation is recognized as the cornerstone of success for local governments that are navigating through these uncertain times.

The luxury of simply cutting budgets by predetermined percentages is no longer the norm. Studies indicate local governments that will successfully survive the economic crisis will be ones that find innovative ways to provide high-quality services through their professional staff.

The Alliance for Innovation and Arizona State University, School of Public Affairs, have developed the Six Qualities of Innovation, which is the result of hundreds of case study reviews of local governments across the United States and Canada. Here are the six qualities:

#### **1. Inclusive Leadership:** "Never before in history has innovation offered promise of so much to so many in so short a time." —Bill Gates

Innovation is a word that we all use and most would agree it is a positive, but difficult to describe, idea. The word "innovation," like "leadership," however, seems to defy a commonly accepted definition. This is evident as innovation and leadership are closely related.

Leaders in innovative organizations are visionary, inclusive, proactive, and organization centered, rather than leader centered.

Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great*, expressed this as "level five leadership," expressing the qualities of the leader to be focused on the organization's success rather than personal benefit. Although all six qualities of innovation are important, perhaps the most critical is leadership as it sustains the effort, rightly manages risk, and propels the morale of the group at all levels in order to achieve greater and greater success.

**2. Relentless Creativity:** "Problems cannot be solved by the same kind of thinking that created them."

—Albert Einstein When leadership is welcomed from all levels in an organization, creativity likewise will be found at every level within an organization.

In organizations where creativity is encouraged, more staff members develop an appetite for trying new ways of undertaking everyday activities. These organizations are always looking for new internal leaders, new ideas, new solutions, and ultimately better practices.

Creative organizations learn to manage risk and plan to mitigate consequences; they expect some failures and learn from their mistakes. The innovative local governments we reviewed were never satisfied with a single success. They were constantly looking for improvements, revisiting what they had already done, and examining new methods to address a problem.

Creative organizations also multitask by looking at a series of issues and problems simultaneously. They take a holistic approach and find that problems are connected by common internal processes or related external factors.

#### 3. Extensive Internal Collaboration:

"The secret is to gang up on the problem, rather than each other."

—Thomas Stallkamp Significant improvement in local government's ability to generate solutions is realized through internal collaboration and problem solving across departments. The organization that identifies a problem in public works, for instance, will experience a direct benefit in bringing in non-public works staff to brainstorm solutions.

It is surprising how often a diverse team of insiders and outsiders can provide the right recipe to collectively review, ask probing questions, suggest, and implement change.

Collaborative communities, according to Paul Adler, Charles Heckscher, and Laurence Prusak in an article in the July-August 2011 issue of *Harvard Business Review*, are organizations "that encourage people to continually apply their unique talents to group projects and to become motivated by a collective mission, not just personal gain or the intrinsic pleasures of autonomous creativity."

#### 4. Robust External Partnerships:

"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team." —Phil Jackson

While external partnerships in local government are nothing new, innovative partnerships that look beyond one another's boundaries—beyond the quid pro quo—are quite different. Successful external partnerships look at a variety of commonalities:

- Do they further one another's goals?
- How do they expand beyond the simple economic-benefit criteria?
- Can they develop common missions, visions, and values for the project?
- Do they focus on common interests rather than focus on differences?
- Do they address ground rules, evaluation, and how to manage conflict? Organizations that use these more

unusual criteria are frequently able to craft partnerships with one or more external partners that benefit each other and the community as a whole. Such organizations are also able to tackle much more complex problems than a single entity would be able to address.

**5. Authentic Community Connections:** *"A dream you dream alone is only a*  dream. A dream you dream together is reality." —John Lennon

Following a hundred years of the reform movement that created a system of nonpolitical, professional management, are we becoming victims of our own success? There certainly was a time when residents happily embraced the formation of their city or county because it symbolized improved safety, security, utilities, or improved public transport.

Today, however, many residents feel cut off from their community and perhaps rightly perceive that the local government would prefer to have its own experts solve local problems.

The innovative organizations we have studied have shown communitywide and organizationwide successes when citizens are authentically welcomed into the deliberations on community priorities or neighborhood improvements. The fundamental questions to test your organization against are: "If I come, will you listen?" "If I speak, will you consider what I said?" and "How and when will I see action?"

Employees, citizens, and business alike need to connect not only with their local government but also with each other. Local governments can provide the connection points, the tools, expertise, and resources.

#### 6. Reality Focused, Results Driven:

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

—St. Francis of Assisi *Results-Based Leadership* by authors Dave Ulrich, Jack Zenger, and Norm Smallwood advances that effective leaders do more than master the attributes of leadership. They know how to connect their attributes with results.

We found in studies of local governments that effective leaders focus on outcomes; they care much less about whose fault it is when things go wrong. It has been said that innovation is only *play* unless you measure the results of your efforts. Leaders who focus on re-

#### RESOURCES

Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't, by Jim Collins, 2001.

Results-Based Leadership, by Dave Ulrich, Jack Zenger, and Norm Smallwood, 1999.

"Building a Collaborative Enterprise," by Paul Adler, Charles Heckscher, and Laurence Prusak, in *Harvard Business Review,* July– August 2011.

sults concentrate on innovations that will make a difference, that are sustainable, and that are constantly being reviewed, changed, and updated.

In closing, we provide questions that you and your teams might ask in order to start the conversation about innovation qualities in your organization:

• Which of the six qualities is our strongest?

- Where do we see the most opportunities for change and innovation?
- Who are the leaders in our organization? Can they be found at all levels?
- Where are we successfully collaborating internally?
- Can we identify unique external collaborations?
- How do we engage the community? How do we measure results?

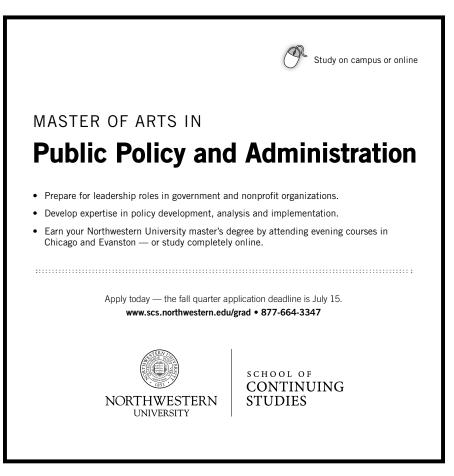
We know organizations can implement change and improvement by focusing on one or more of these areas. By making these areas an organizationwide focus, local governments can reinforce the rewards of innovation. It only takes the will to start the process. **P1** 



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#### BY RICHARD BROWN, ICMA-CM

# IN TRANSITION: WHAT YOU DIDN'T LEARN IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

#### And what no one wanted to tell you about job loss

n December 7, 2010, I was terminated "without cause" by the newly elected city council of East Providence, Rhode Island. This was the first substantive action taken by the new council and was accomplished without any discussion with me during the transition process.

In fact, I had been pretty conscientious about sending the new councilmembers briefing materials and other materials that they would need as they assumed office. I had been concerned (correctly, as it turned out) that only one of the five members took me up on my offer to meet during the transition.

When I began my management career, a number of experienced managers used to say that you really weren't a manager until you had been fired. Intuitively I knew the statement was false, but as it happened to me I realized that was like saying you had to have your legs broken to learn how to walk properly. I hope the current generation of managers is forthright when they discuss this possibility with their peers and emerging leaders.

#### **Emotions**

Initially, my reaction to being terminated was relief that the rumors and uncertainties that had been a part of this local election had been resolved. And, of course, I was looking forward to having time off without being tethered to the office. Taking a vacation had never been one of my top priorities while employed.

For a while, I even enjoyed the phone calls from former department heads

telling me how much better it had been when I was manager. Later I told friends that I had given up working for Lent. All of that masked a deep disappointment at the loss of both my job and, unfortunately, a good part of my identity.

Being a local government manager is a profession, but it is not like being a doctor or an attorney. There is no independent examination or certification that determines who is and is not a city manager. Regardless of the variety of our educational and work experiences, that title is determined by members of a local governing body. If they hire and retain you, you're a manager. If you leave or are fired, you're not.

When facing termination, many of us feel fairly confident that we have a contract, but we need to disabuse ourselves of the idea that the employment agreement is enforceable in all communities. And, let's face it, if we have to resort to litigation we are using our diminished resources to challenge a government body that has attorneys on the payroll and a fairly unlimited ability to engage in this fight.

Litigation against a former employer, even to uphold the terms of an employment agreement, does not help you get your next position. The day you and the council sign your employment agreement is probably the best day of your relationship with council.

Even then, you probably haven't thought of everything that should be in the agreement, or you avoid certain issues based on the strength of your new relationship with your council. Often the council that terminates you is not the council that hired you and agreed to the terms of a possible separation.

What happens when they tell you to leave? Here is my list of life changes, and I'm sure readers can add to it.

#### Self-Image

**1. You lose your professional identity.** You no longer have business cards, an official ID, or a government e-mail

address. 2. As a manager, you served on state

and regional boards and commis-

**sions**, some of which you truly enjoyed. In most cases, that ended when you lost your job.

3. Even though you may have been terminated without cause, your former governing body often refers to your tenure in negative terms; they almost always blame their current problems on the decisions of the former manager.

4. You will be sensitive to those who

reach out to you during this period. You will keep score and rate your interactions with your friends, and they may not be aware of the criteria for rating. This is certainly news to your friends and peers. I was deeply touched by the friends and peers who reached out to me during this period. Some went beyond the norm, staying in touch and ensuring that I was okay. The contacts from managers whom I hadn't met yet were especially appreciated and helped me accept that the group "in transition" was larger than just me, myself, and I.

#### 5. Even though "the profession" says

that new councils understand that managers get terminated, you have to explain the circumstances on each application and during each interview. And for the first time on an application you have to answer yes to the question: "Have you ever been terminated from employment or asked to resign?"

6. You want to maintain your relationships with friends but recognize that the usual and perhaps more expensive means of social encounters have less acceptability now than before.

#### **Benefits**

#### 1. You are too emotionally involved

to negotiate effectively, and the city attorney represents the client (the council) and is no longer your friend and colleague. My advice: get your own attorney to act as your representative to negotiate the separation from your organization. Having an attorney negotiate your initial employment contract is also a good idea.

**2. In separation you usually are not paid** for unused sick time or compensatory time. Those dollar amounts can be substantial.

**3. You usually no longer have** life insurance.

4. If you were required to participate in a state or local retirement system

and are not vested, you get your accumulated contributions returned to you without interest. You also lose the value of what the jurisdiction paid on your behalf as well as the period of time you had accumulated toward vesting in the retirement benefits.

5. For those managers who were required to use a local government vehicle rather than receive a mileage allowance, you lose the use of a usually well-maintained vehicle and the fuel needed to operate it. Then you have to use an older personal vehicle full time. In many cases, that older personal vehicle was a step away from donation to a charity. Buying and financing a replacement vehicle is a challenge. After all, you are unemployed. 6. Most separation agreements

**don't include health insurance**, and maintaining coverage under COBRA is expensive. Private policies are also expensive and often offer less coverage than we are accustomed to.

**7. If you obtain another job**, the logistics of an unplanned move are daunting. Depending on the real estate market, you may lose a substantial amount of money selling a home where values have depreciated significantly. Many families have two persons working, and the move requires the employed spouse to leave a secure job and

enter an unknown job market. Although managers can move and establish residency without their families, the new manager's status in the new community is more uncertain the longer it takes to complete the move.

8. Decision making takes on a new urgency. For example, should I get dental work done now while I have insurance or risk delaying the work until a time of higher deductibles if I still have insurance?

# Professional Connections and Assistance

1. Many of the e-mail sites you've logged on to as a manager may deny you service when you have a private e-mail address.

2. E-mail, cellphones, and smartphones are a way of life. To avoid confusion, many of us use city e-mail and cellphones as our primary points of contact. When the use of these devices ends, the reconstruction of that base of information and contacts is slow and frustrating.

#### 3. With the packet of transition

**materials** from ICMA came the awareness that I could anticipate a bimonthly call with displaced managers.

4. ICMA maintains your membership for up to three years while in transition and allows you to attend the annual conference without paying the conference fee. But you still have to travel there and get a room for four or five days.
5. State associations can be a great source of support for the manager in transition, but not all state associations are high-functioning organizations, and newer managers to the state may not yet have established a strong relationship with their state association.

Job loss is painful, and in many ways recovering from that loss is like going through the various stages of grief. The description that follows is based on my interpretation of those stages. **1. Shock and denial.** Of course this couldn't (shouldn't) happen to you.

#### **STATS**

Since 2007, ICMA has been tracking the number of managers in transition as of June 30 each year. Here are how the numbers look for the past five years:

2007	>	106
2008	>	115
2009		138
2010	>	161
2011	>	177

You're a professional; you dedicated yourself to your profession and the community you serve. Termination is something that happens to others.

**2. Pain and guilt.** The shock wears off and, although you know you did nothing wrong, you feel at some level that it must be your fault. After all, we tell our staffs and employees that we work in a system that grants final authority (and a sense of righteousness) to the elected officials we serve. We know less-talented and less-effective people who remain employed and are not in danger of losing their jobs. What did I do wrong or what could I have done differently?

**3. Anger and bargaining.** This reaction isn't the same as the traditional grief response, but how many of us in transition have entertained a scenario in which we would be called (and welcomed) back, and we could then lay out the terms of that "bargain."

#### 4. Depression, rejection, loneliness.

The lives of your friends, coworkers, and peers have continued. You've received some severance pay. Everyone thinks you should have adjusted and moved on. Until they've experienced it, your friends, family, and peers do not understand the full extent of your loss and its impact on areas other than your work life.

The next phases speak to the recovery process.

#### 5. The upward turn.

6. Reconstruction and working through.

7. Acceptance and hope.

We all see these at different times and in different ways. Some managers may bounce back to a better position and community. Without the loss they wouldn't have had the opportunity. Transitioned managers, however, spend a great amount of time looking for work, applying for jobs, and hoping for interviews. The speed and success of that process directly influences recovery.

Certainly getting a better job, higher pay, and a "better" community speaks to a successful recovery. When you fail to get interviews or finish the process without an offer of employment, the grief process in some manner begins anew. I'd imagine at some level that even getting a new position at a substantially lower rate of pay prolongs the recovery process and may never allow it to be completely resolved.

As a typical manager, I can do a good job of identifying the problem. Establishing a workable solution is more difficult, but I have few ideas. In most cases, I'm most concerned about the manager who is truly terminated without cause. Resigning or being terminated because of criminal acts or gross performance issues does not, I believe, warrant the same level of attention.

1. At a minimum, ICMA regional

**vice presidents** should reach out to managers in transition to ensure that they have the support that they need. This should be institutionalized and not depend solely on personal relationships.

#### 2. If possible, a permanent ICMA

address should be established for all members (colleges do it) so that members in transition can maintain relationships that require a dot-org e-mail address.

**3. ICMA and ICMA-RC should lobby** states to allow deferred compensation as an alternative when all employees are required to participate in a state or municipal pension system.

4. The requirements for maintaining credentialed manager status should be held in abeyance and suitable catch-up time allowed when reemployed. When terminated, for example, you have been required to participate in a 360 evaluation. That really wouldn't be feasible in the first few years in a new community. (Note: The credentialing advisory board waives the 360 requirement for MITs until they have been reemployed for two years.)

#### 5. Use the Knowledge Network

to develop a more robust skills and knowledge inventory for ICMA members. Managers in transition can do short-term consulting engagements at a fraction of the cost of for-profit firms.

#### 6. Expand the concept of Range Riders

to include managers in transition. Some older managers may not be as interested in a new community as they are in shortterm work assignments that could take them to their actual retirements.

**Engage in critical conversations about leadership and what it means to be a manager in the 21st century.** Register for the 2nd Annual ICMA Leadership Institute at ICMA's 98th Annual Conference in Phoenix/Maricopa County, Arizona, October 7-10, 2012.



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The ICMA Annual Leadership Institute provides an opportunity to connect with members across generations and experience levels who share a commitment to leadership development.

Preference will be given to local government managers who have participated in one or more ICMA University leadership development programs, including senior credentialed managers and first-time administrators. Space is limited to the first 100 registrants.

For full details, see the 2012 conference preliminary program in the July issue of PM magazine.

**CMA** Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

12-184

7 Investigate lower-cost health care insurance options for ICMA members.
8. Use Public Management magazine and the Knowledge Network to profile managers in transition. It could help in the employment search, especially at the assistant or department head level.
9. Use the experience of terminated managers to help redefine the model employment agreement.

**10. ICMA needs to move from** being an organization that supports the profession to one that supports the professional as well.

**11. If you're on LinkedIn or other social media**, list yourself as "creative local government leader" (your description) rather than "manager in transition." I believe that the expression "manager in transition" makes individuals seem passive and continuing victims of circumstances.

I don't mean to suggest that the power to successfully weather transition lies completely within ICMA. We all know about the need to keep fit, maintain relationships, and develop hobbies. And we have to do this within the constraints of an all-knowing public and a demanding council. Our ability to be truly away from the office is lessened with e-mail, municipal social media websites, and BlackBerrys.

The idea of having quiet time or being with your family matters little to an elected official who feels the community is confronting the most important problems in the universe. And smaller downsized organizations don't allow a staff buffer to exist between the manager and the constant demands of the profession.

Perhaps we should be more attuned to the signs of trouble in a community and make earlier and more graceful exits, although looking for work and interviewing in other communities inevitably impacts current relationships. Even search processes that are more controlled often end up having the names of applicants disclosed. This information finds its way to the local media and the community.

This type of disclosure may cause your current community members to question your commitment to them, even as they might be working to end your employment there. I agree that we should try to take the initiative and look for another job, but we're problem solvers and are loath to admit that the issues that led to our terminations can't be managed. In any case, family needs, working spouses who may in fact earn more than the manager, and a declining real estate market all cause us to delay these decisions as long as possible and often too late to matter.

As managers we are required to move into the communities that we manage and make our largest single financial investment, only to be told in four years (in my case) that the underlying financial reason for that move is gone. I think that ICMA, as an organization, needs to have a discussion on this issue and perhaps advance a solution to the state associations. Increased economic interactions with nearby communities coupled with advances in communication capabilities make the requirement of local residence an anachronism.

The fact is that local government employees who reside within the locality can often organize and act politically to affect their elected leadership and thus the terms of their managers' employments. The ICMA Code of Ethics proscribes (and rightly so) such behavior for members of ICMA.

Local government management is truly a noble profession, and most of us who have worked in local government do so because we want to make a difference. Being removed for even a short period often serves to refocus that commitment and dedication as we pursue our alternatives.



RICHARD BROWN, ICMA-CM Town Administrator Freetown, Massachusetts rbrown@freetownma.gov

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#### **Calendar of Events**

For information about ICMA events Visit icma.org/calendar

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

ICMA UNIVERSITY WORKSHOP Asking Your Police and Fire Chiefs the Right Questions to Get the Right Answers

- May 14 Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- **June 11** Washington, DC

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Young Professionals Leadership Institute precedes each regional summit. icma.org/YPLI = Tweet: #YPLI-ICMA

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- June 18 Registration and Housing Opens
- July 27 First Registration Deadline
- September 7 Second Registration Deadline

For more information, visit icma.org/coference2012 Twitter: ICMAConference Tweet: #ICMA12

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#### BY EVELINA MOULDER

# LECTRONIC GOVERNMENT 2011

CMA's Electronic Government 2011 survey was mailed to all city-type governments with a population of under 10,000 and to all county governments that have either elected executives or appointed managers. An online option was also provided. The survey response was 30 percent. The survey was a collaboration among Dr. Donald Norris, professor and chair of the Department of Public Policy, and director of the Maryland Institute for Policy Analysis and Research, University of Maryland, Baltimore; Dr. Christopher Reddick, chair, department of public administration, University of Texas at San Antonio; and ICMA. The data are proprietary.

#### **HOW LOCAL** GOVERNMENTS **UNDER 10,000** POPUL ATION **DFVFI NP E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES N**% 8% 50% **8**% 17% 17% Developed through a publicprivate partnership Developed by a local government association Consultants and local government staff Purchased programs from vendors Outsourced to application service provider (ASP) In-house by local

WHY LOCAL **GOVERNMENTS UNDER 10,000** POPULATION E-GOVERNMENT **APPI ICATIONS** AND SERVICES

<b>6</b> %	Produce revenue
33%	Save money
33%	Citizen participation in government
<b>39</b> %	Citizen access to appointed officials
44%	Citizen access to elected officials
<b>72</b> %	Citizen access to the local government
<b>94</b> %	Citizen access to local government information

# NLINE SERVICES IFNTS **NDER 10.000** POPULATION

5%	Online registration for recreation facilities/ activities	
5%	Online requests for services, such as pothole repair	
<b>9</b> %	Online payment of fines/fees	
<b>9</b> %	Online voter registration	
9%	Online completion and submission of business license applications/ renewals	
23%	Online delivery of records to the requestor	
<b>27</b> %	Online requests for local government records	
<b>27</b> %	Online completion and submission of permit applications	
<b>36</b> %	Online payment of taxes	
EVELINA MOULDER		



EVELINA MOULDER Director of Survey Research Washington, D.C. emoulder@icma.org

government staff

# BY ERIC SMITH EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECKS, EDUCATION FRAUD, AND DIPLOMA MILLS

mome bad decisions are easy to correct. Many are not. Hiring the wrong person can be an expensive ordeal and may be extremely disruptive to your organization, coworkers, and, perhaps worse, your customers. According to the Department of Labor, the cost of turnover is approximately one-third of an employee's annual salary.

There is also the impact on the organization's reputation if an employee is not properly vetted and causes harm, especially in an event that attracts a lot of media attention. Just look at the impact a handful of employees had on the entire organization of Penn State in last year's news.

#### **False Information**

According to one study, as many as 61 percent of résumés contain false information. The three most common areas falsified are education, job titles, and dates of employment. In general, a call to past employers will help validate past job titles and dates of employment. Human resources departments are often allowed by policy to provide that much information, and your organization should have in place a background screening that includes making those calls.

That leaves education as a high-risk area that is often falsified. And that leads to the question: How risky is it to hire someone with exaggerated or falsified education? That depends on the position, how critical the education requirements are for success, and what is needed to help an organization succeed.

In my opinion, the most important aspect is that the candidate is truthful about the information on the résumé or application. If the candidate is deceitful

at this stage, how could you ever really establish trust later?

First, you must clearly identify what level of education is needed for each job description. That base requirement helps to determine what kind of educational background you need to verify and helps guide the screening process.

Second, confirm that a potential candidate meets the necessary requirements. Sounds obvious, but dig a little deeper. This means that you need to verify that the education meets your requirements. Did the classes teach the basic skills or knowledge necessary? Did your potential new employee pass the curriculum?

Third, the college or university needs to be researched. The education provided must be accepted or, at the least, the school must teach to a level that matches the industry. In short, is the degree in question issued by a recognized or accredited college or university? If not, the degree could be from a diploma mill-an institution that sells degrees without any education or curriculum supporting it.

#### Verification

This all leads to the verification process.

Start with the college or university. Is it accredited? If not, that does not mean that it does not provide a valid education. Some schools choose not to be accredited as they feel it might conflict with their goals-religious schools are one possible example. For colleges and universities in the United States, accreditation can be confirmed online through a Department of Education database at http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/.

Also search the Internet for information on the school. If the university does not have information about the curriculum or education process, beware. Some

diploma mills go so far as to offer education credits for work experience and do not require a student to attend any classes, either online or in person. There have also been programs set up that appear to be affiliated with legitimate universities but have no connection.

Next, verify that the candidate attended and graduated from the program. Many universities will send an official or unofficial copy of the transcript directly to an employer. This is even done for many professional certifications in order to confirm that minimum standards are met.

Within the European Union, the comparable transcript of record is used to verify class work and grades. A copy of a degree provided by an applicant could easily be forged on a computer, so rely on verification provided directly by the school.

Education tends to be more of a dominant focus for entry-level positions where there is not a lot of work history to review. Many industries, however, deal with compliance issues, and some require verification of education for many positions.

Health care is one example. Hospitals that want to be accredited by the Joint Commission or those that want to be eligible for Medicare and Medicaid funds must meet specific standards surrounding verification of licensing and background screening. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 requires that all officers of publicly traded companies have background screenings done, including verification of education.



ERIC SMITH, CPP, is the security director for the three-hospital system Exempla Healthcare, Denver, Colorado (eric@businesskarate.com). Copy is reprinted with author's permission. Article is adapted from Smith's security blog, Business Karate, at www. businesskarate.com.

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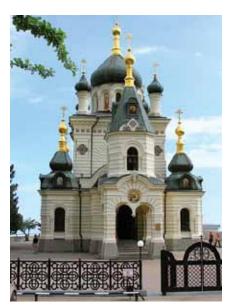
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# REACH YOUR MARKET

# BY LARRY KRUSE, ICMA-CM MY MINNESOTA-BORYSPIL, UKRAINE, EXCHANGE

Contrasts and contradictions were valuable to me



"The Church on the Rock" in Foros, Crimea, Ukraine.

here are times when I am reminded why being a city administrator is as much a calling as a profession. There are real opportunities nearly every day to make a difference for the better in people's lives. I had such a reminder last May when I traveled from Albertville, Minnesota, 5,085 miles to Boryspil, Ukraine, to participate in the development of local government leaders and citizens.

I was invited to participate by the program developers, Irina and Richard Fursman of Brimeyer Fursman, an executive search firm. I accepted not fully understanding what I was going to do for others, or appreciating what was going to happen to me.

Once we arrived in Ukraine, our team of six local government officials spent a week learning about the issues and challenges of Boryspil (population 70,000) while brainstorming solutions and celebrating small victories. It was gratifying to see our Ukrainian counterparts embrace new approaches to problem solving while our team humbly realized we were learning as much or more from them.

Part of the exchange was living with the city officials we were working with to fully experience their daily life. I stayed with a family on the fifth floor of a large, 200-unit concrete multi-family building. These plain looking, multifamily buildings with no elevators were the most dominant feature in and around Boryspil and Kiev. Each building was a drab copy of the next, with a small green space and tot lot for children.

My hosts' apartment was guarded by two solid doors, both fitted with double locks. Inside, the small but warmly decorated space was home to my host Victor, a young lawyer, and his fiancée who lived with his father, a colonel with the fire department, and his mother, a nurse. Each evening they greeted me as an honored member of the family with the finest meal they could put together.

#### **Interesting Government Structure**

Each morning our group reassembled at city hall, where we squeezed through the front door designed to limit rather than invite citizens. Boryspil has 48 councilmembers affiliated with 13 different political parties. At council meetings, the mayor and party majority leader sit up front on stage while the rest of the councilmembers sit facing them.

The parties caucus prior to council meetings to discuss how they will vote, and they negotiate coalitions much like a legislature does. On three memorable occasions during the meeting I attended, a lone Communist Party member gave vociferous short speeches that were met with laughs or groans and then followed by an equally strong rebuttal. The agenda included debates on new taxes, funding for infrastructure, and updates on numerous projects. It was as if the issues were lifted straight from agendas in the United States.

A good portion of our time was spent meeting with elected officials, city staff, and citizens of Boryspil. Large groups of residents were broken up into small subgroups to discuss various topics, exchange ideas, and then report findings back to the larger group for further discussions and consensus building.

The students and community members who took part were delighted and emotionally moved. It was, as I understand it, the first time they were invited to share their thoughts and ideas alongside the mayor and other officials.

#### **Interesting People**

The Ukrainians have been invaded, starved, bombed, enslaved, and exiled, yet embrace real hope in their future. We had the opportunity to live with people walled off during decades of cold war and we became friends.

I rode to daily sessions with a former Russian soldier who was trained not to trust Americans. Initially he displayed that trust and coldness, but by midweek I could feel a change with the two of us.

I arrived home excited to go back to work, and I felt a positive, can-do attitude about the challenges I face as a local government manager. My advice is to seek out a cultural adventure and see if you, too, can make the world a little smaller and a little bit better place to live. **P1** 



LARRY KRUSE, ICMA-CM City Administrator Albertville, Minnesota Ikruse@ci.albertville.mn.us "The fire chief of tomorrow must be equipped to operate in an environment that is more dynamic, more challenging, and more unforgiving than in the past....the opportunity for the fire and emergency services profession to mobilize around meaningful and effective change is also great."

> -Adam K. Thiel, Fire Chief, FACETS Consulting, LLP, and Charles R. Jennings, Associate Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, Editors



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