

by John Novinson

Going Green

When I attended my first International City/County Management Association (ICMA) conference in 1990 in Fort Worth, Texas, I wandered into a large session where speakers railed against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the tsunami of regulations that were threatening the nation's localities with unreasonable and unfunded environmental regulations. One passionate speaker after another related horror stories of expensive and unreasonable policy based on "bad" or incomplete science.

ICMA's response was the Environmental Mandates Task Force. A meeting in Washington attracted an overflow audience of angry and committed managers who wanted to push back the activist tide that had produced a plethora of legislation in the 1970s that was now beginning to have an actual impact . . . an impact that cost significant amounts of money!

We were being forced to change our priorities to the environmental priorities of distant "bureaucrats" (or was it our elected federal representatives?). We were being told to limit impacts on wetlands, reduce emissions, and protect water supplies from lead leaching from ancient pipes. We did not like it. Moreover, many of our most vocal citizens and businesses did not like it either.

I eventually became cochair of ICMA's task force (along with Dick Zais, city manager, Yakima, Washington), which became part of the Big Seven's (ICMA, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, National Governors Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, and National Association of Towns and Townships) long fight to limit unfunded federal mandates.

This fight culminated in a statute that might not have achieved all the task force's aims, but it did raise the consciousness of Congress for awhile and slowed the growth of new mandates, especially environmental mandates. In fact, there has been comparatively little new environmental regulation at the federal level since

the 1970s, and many feel the environmental movement has basically been fighting to preserve and enforce what was legislated about 30 years ago.

Yet a curious thing was happening at the same time. Local governments became better informed about the health and other goals associated with these regulations. I went from chairing a group determined to roll back environmental mandates to chairing a regional effort to address the serious air quality concerns that afflict the Chicago metropolitan area in a way that is all too common across the country.

That effort, the Clean Air Counts campaign, resides in the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) of greater Chicago and is one of the growing numbers of public-private initiatives that address environmental challenges from the ground up, with local government leading the way.

Federal agencies became better at working with us to accomplish what were gradually emerging as consensus goals. We were even finding common ground with many in the environmental movement. Aware and committed citizens and respected businesses started to be advocates for more action to protect the environment.

These trends have converged with two other great concerns to create a new paradigm to replace the ideas of command and control or no regulation at all. First, September 11, 2001, focused the nation on, among other things, the need for energy independence. That has created a new dialogue and a willingness to seek new options. Second, there is growing concern that worldwide environmental degradation in the form of global warming is setting the stage for a disastrous legacy to future generations.

DRIVING INITIATIVES

Driving local government initiatives have been the increased awareness of local health effects of traditional environmental concerns like air quality combined with the desire to be energy independent and also head off global warming. These local initiatives have

often led to state, regional, and, perhaps in the not too distant future, federal policy changes.

Today, in a new era of environmental awareness and in contrast with the past, local governments are leading and are pressuring the federal government by their examples. Large cities like Chicago, Salt Lake City, and Seattle are leading with programs that raise awareness. Countless other communities are inventing and applying strategies that are creating new environmental policy, often without mandates.

National organizations such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors are establishing frameworks for local action—one example being the U.S. Confer-

Although more people are rating environmental concerns as important, many elected officials believe they expect action without pain.

ence of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement that has been endorsed by more than 600 communities, including my community, Northbrook, Illinois. These changes reflect a growing consensus that change is needed; change is possible; and change can be a good thing; and we can even take the “pain,” especially if we are involved in defining the course.

Business is increasingly a partner although some say it is out of fear of a multitude of regulations or a desire to transfer responsibility to those less able or willing to participate in the debate. That may be true, but I find many businesspeople seem to be sincerely working for less self-serving reasons to reduce their environmental footprint.

It actually is a lot like the ancient and honorable idea that there should be no taxation without representation. The corollary is that, with participation, there can be taxation,

regulation, and even incentives to get to a better place.

Even while we were actively involved in the anti-mandate effort, my community, Northbrook, was taking voluntary steps to become “green.” They were small steps at first, and we retreated occasionally from ideas that did not pan out, but today, Northbrook can point to a substantial array of accomplishments that have won recognition from the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Northwest Municipal Conference (a regional council of governments), the state of Illinois, and Clean Air Counts. Although village efforts are still a work in progress, we are beginning to see some lessons that are easily transportable to other jurisdictions interested in raising the priority of environmental issues.

THE SKEPTICS

First and foremost are some basic challenges to any of these initiatives: Despite a growing consensus, not everyone shares the same perspective. There will always be skeptics—we were the skeptics in 1990—and the more intense and political the debate, the more likely it is that a manager or mayor will be confronting someone who wants to challenge a decision. This is uncomfortable especially as the subject matter is dense, complex, and evolving.

Environmental concerns are almost always long-term threats that will compete with pressing short-term needs. People may agree that air quality, or mercury, or global warming should be addressed, but we need jobs right now and those threats seem remote by comparison. It is difficult to demonstrate tangible environmental results within the typical term of an elected official. Resources tend to flow toward the here and now.

Although more people are rating environmental concerns as important, many elected officials believe they expect action without pain. Everyone wants a silver bullet to take care of all this, but are voters and taxpayers really ready to pay or change their life styles to get the results they say they want?

On top of all that, you can't believe everything you hear when it comes to environmental policy. These already complex issues are further complicated by different interpretations of the same data and some real misinformation. Michael Crichton, for example, wrote a fictional book on climate change that now, we hear, may have been supported by industries with an interest in frustrating a consensus on climate change, and that became the chief policy reference for a chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. Every day someone is urging someone else to either not overstate or not understate the problem.

It is a challenge to develop policy amid such complexity, misinformation, and competing priorities. So, you are asked to do something. What's the plan? How do you get started?

FIND CHAMPIONS

Look around your organization and you will find people who are interested, want to learn more, and are ready to help. At first, I found a few people in leadership positions, including the public works director, who brought a level of expertise and commitment that has inspired others to look hard at what we are and can do.

The usual suspects are in public works, building, and planning, but do not sell any area of your operation short. When Northbrook's Green Team was put together, no department was without volunteers. And, yes, that included police, fire, and finance.

The talent is not limited to the paid staff. We found a surprising number of talented people—architects, doctors, and people with special business skills—ready to help. They continue to have a real impact on what we do.

BUILD AWARENESS

As complex and controversial as some of this may be, a lot of facts and processes are pretty well settled, and many ready-made articles and programs can be shared to build community awareness and support. Our

champions are helping to keep these issues fresh by feeding us a continuous stream of newsletter articles, Web site content (www.northbrook.il.us/services/Green.php), cable television local access programming, stories for Northbrook's local press, presentations to civic groups, and a series of recognition opportunities for those who are contributing.

Awareness includes inventorying what you have already done. We are still trying to catalog all our accomplishments. Each new discovery is an "aha!" moment that encourages the whole organization, the whole community.

When I first asked the police department to report on its green efforts, my request was met with an

Northbrook is a suburb, and we love our lawns. Quietly and without too much fanfare, though, we have been slipping naturalized landscaping into our oh-so-clipped community.

uncomfortable silence. Yet, given a little time, the police department pointed out its move to lead-free ammunition, the elimination of venting lead fumes from the range, and much more. The fire department actually led the way with indoor air quality improvements but did not recall it in its inventory. It all adds up to a lot that can be shared.

LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Northbrook has observed Earth Day for many years. The staff leveraged the event into an Earth Day festival that includes activities as basic as cleaning parkways; then it moved to a day-long celebration with educa-

tion and environmentally beneficial product displays and a special "electronics recycling" that collects a packed 60-foot trailer of used equipment. Numerous partner programs with state, county, and regional entities have shared and overlapped goals such as gas can exchanges. We work with "sister" units of government to promote no-idling zones and to work on the elimination of pure waste. We partner with citizen groups like Friends of the Chicago River to take advantage of their goals and contacts, and this partnership has led to major clean streams grants.

INVEST IN ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Northbrook for some time has been concerned about energy independence. A 3,000-gallon ethanol fuel tank (E-85) was installed in 1999. It is reputed to be the first local government installation in Illinois. The public works fleet converted 100 percent to bio-diesel fuel before it was mandated. Fire followed that experiment confident that operations would not be adversely affected.

In 2006, we purchased wind energy credits sufficient to operate our entire water utility. That's about half the energy consumed by all our operations. An expansion of each of these investments is being considered. Each time board members and community residents were told that it would be more expensive, and each time we had unanimous support, including our citizens and businesses.

PRESERVE AND EXPAND GREEN ASSETS

Northbrook adopted a tree preservation ordinance in 1999. The no-fee permit process is designed to make sure residents realize the value of trees before they remove them. It also makes it difficult to remove some special "heritage" trees that are recognized as community assets. Removal of trees in some locations requires "inch for inch" replacement.

This requirement sits on top of a long-standing cost-sharing planting

Leon County “Drives” Students Green

program that has yielded 5,800 parkway trees since it was first adopted in 1976. As staff face a series of threats from exotic pests—gypsy moth, Asian longhorn beetle, emerald ash borer—maintaining the urban forest will be a more difficult challenge. We are blessed with a lot of open space that, in the tradition of the region, is protected and enlarged principally by the Northbrook Park District and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

ADAPT NEW TECHNOLOGY

We have embraced opportunities to find better, healthier ways to accomplish Northbrook’s mission. We retrofitted diesel trucks, adopted Energy Star standards for all appliance purchases, retrofitted all traffic signals to energy efficient light-emitting diodes (LEDs), and we are in the process of converting the administrative fleet to 100 percent hybrid “or better” fuel efficient vehicles. We use new, low-, and no-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints and similar products.

These practices not only reduce the village’s contribution to the region’s ozone problem but they have a beneficial impact on the workplace. Employee absenteeism and breathing problems related to such products are reduced or eliminated. Local hospitals report they can paint rooms with low/no VOC products without affecting patients in adjacent space. Our traffic signal heads have all been switched over to more efficient and less frequently changed LEDs.

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

Northbrook has built formal partnerships with schools, park districts, and neighboring towns. They have adopted many of our initiatives whole like creating no-idling zones adjacent to schools. Staff members also work with regulators on collaborative initiatives. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), for example, was looking for a location in which to house a cutting-edge regional air quality monitoring laboratory. Space was located for IEPA in Northbrook’s water plant, and that cooperation has spilled over into other areas.

For the first time this past fall, high school students in Leon County, Florida, began to learn to drive from behind the wheel of a hybrid vehicle. The Leon County Board of Commissioners approved funding so the county’s school board could purchase six hybrid vehicles for driver education programs. Now students at each of Leon County’s five high schools will learn to drive using a Toyota Prius, which has an Environmental Protection Agency-estimated city/highway gas mileage of 55 miles per gallon.

“Purchasing hybrid vehicles for youth education programs is not only sound fiscal policy,” said Cliff Thaell, Leon County commissioner and environmental advocate. “It’s also where the rubber meets the road in promoting the values of conservation to the next generation.”

The program is funded by the very drivers who speed on streets or roll through stop signs in Leon County. Through an ordinance passed by county commissioners in 2002, \$3.00 per civil traffic penalty are to be used for this expanded driver education program in public and nonpublic schools, which is in accordance with the Dori Slosberg Driver Education Safety Act. This year’s funding is \$230,000 and includes the salary needs of a driver education instructor, as well as the hybrid vehicles.

The use of these vehicles in Leon County high schools is part of a larger countywide effort made by the commissioners to encourage and implement greener living in the community. In 2005, the board established a comprehensive energy policy as a top priority and approved 15 strategies to increase energy conservation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For more information on Leon County, visit www.leoncountyfl.gov.

—Jennifer Meale
Public Information Officer
Leon County, Florida
mealej@leoncountyfl.gov

Northbrook is an active player in the regional effort to improve air quality. The village’s main missions are health, safety, and welfare. We are confident in the accuracy of the data. Clean Air Counts is the voluntary campaign organized by the Metropolitan Mayors’ Caucus that is working to make the region and Northbrook compliant with the Clean Air Act but also, more simply, to get healthy air to our community.

We also work with an IEPA companion initiative, Partners for Clean Air. Also, a partnership with Friends of the River produced a \$2 million-plus (grant funded) cleanup of our eponymous “brook,” the West Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River. Native plantings are now recommended for all new large surface retention basins.

REVIEW POLICIES

In our purchasing policies, green contractors—those with formal policies that address clean air and fuel efficiency concerns—are likely to be given an edge in construction contracts. Northbrook staff don’t simply choose to buy Energy Star products; village rules require it.

Purchasing green products includes paper products with a high recycled content as well as benign cleaning supplies, solvents, and paints. We are in the recycling business, so we try to buy products that can be processed by our scavenger’s programs. That means staff will be purging those omnipresent Styrofoam cups that back up the mugs we actually wash and reuse.

No-idling policies are being stressed, and they are actually being embraced by police officers and fire-

Look to ICMA

ICMA's Sustainable Communities leadership initiative is a comprehensive series of programs and resources designed to help city and county managers chart an environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable course for their communities. For more information, contact ICMA at 202/289-ICMA, or visit ICMA online at www.icma.org.

fighters. Public works vehicles shut off automatically after five minutes. We are wasting a whole lot less while making the air cleaner.

CHANGE THE RULES

Northbrook is a suburb, and we love our lawns. Quietly and without too much fanfare, though, we have been slipping naturalized landscaping into our oh-so-clipped community. The larger corporate campuses led the way, followed by the park district and now some schools. Each acre that is done right adds to the community and silences lawn mowers. Native plantings are now recommended for all new large surface retention basins.

The weed ordinance has been modified to allow this to occur. We are still fine tuning as we open the door to more residential properties. Growing annoyance with polluting and noisy landscaping equipment encourages the trend. Yet there is also great resistance to "untidy" results.

Like many communities, we enjoy energy credits from our electric utility, Commonwealth Edison, in lieu of fees for its use of our right of way. As a result, the village has no financial incentive to undertake energy efficiency measures in buildings. This has the unintended consequence of making energy efficiency a financial loser in most of government buildings. We have retained a consultant to help convert the ComEd franchise credits to cash to make lighting investments and other electrical efficiencies economically viable.

Other areas need review. Building

codes, ordinances about planting and protecting trees, and business licensing are some of the areas we have been or will be investigating. There are many more.

CREATE INCENTIVES

We are looking at ways to provide incentives to encourage green buildings. That usually means LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified structures. The U.S. Green Building Council estimates that buildings in the United States account for 36 percent of total energy use, 65 percent of electricity consumption, 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, 30 percent of raw materials use, 30 percent of waste output, and 12 percent of potable water consumption.

To address the environmental impact of buildings, numerous communities are seeking to encourage green building and development techniques usually based on the LEED certification process. Many developers need government prompting to seek LEED certification if they plan to build and sell a property. The so-called green premium added to design and construction costs may be recouped through operating efficiencies, but those benefit the owner-operator, not the builder.

A handful of communities have mandated LEED-based requirements for certain building types, but most have chosen an incentive approach. Some communities (like Arlington County, Virginia) are awarding density bonuses to encourage such buildings, others (Chicago is one example) are fast-tracking green building permit applications, and still others (San Antonio, for example) waive impact fees, permit fees, or both. We are considering permit fee rebates for those projects that actually attain certification.

Some communities are providing vehicle licensing and parking incentives to private purchases of efficient vehicles with low or no emissions. This can range from a reduction on vehicle stickers to on-street and commuter parking preferences.

Recognition is essential. We are working with our Environmental Quality Commission to develop a lo-

cal award program that can be assimilated into our existing celebrations of volunteer service. We have some outstanding corporate citizens that have done great things that may have been taken for granted in the past. Underwriters Laboratories, as one example, has been a leader in manufacturing ice during the late-night (low-rate) hours to then be used to cool its campus when electric demand and rates are peaking. All this happened without much community awareness of the green benefits or recognition.

BE AN EXAMPLE

Northbrook is committed to its own green building and retrofit program for future projects. The Web site at www.architecture2030.org/home.html gives an idea of how much buildings contribute to the challenges and opportunities of the environment. We plan to be around for a while. Each building investment needs to be made on a life-cycle basis with reasonable projections of the future cost of energy.

Northbrook has received an enormous amount of positive feedback for its first major investment in green energy. The village plans to expand its commitment to alternative energy, including the possibility of investing in a turbine at a wind farm in western Illinois. A number of other jurisdictions are interested in the same initiative.

Northbrook also plans to continue its investment in high mileage and low- or no-emission vehicles. Staff are also looking at the way the village does business to see what is possible and practical in changing policies and methods to simply reduce the amount of time one person is in one vehicle on the road. Should we be using bicycles more? England's postal service does, and postal workers there may be extracting health benefits as a by-product.

Perhaps the most important way to be an example is to take a chance and share the results with the community. Because we do not always succeed, it is just as important to share the mistakes as the successes. Sometimes a mistake

(continued on page 15)

Clayton Believes in Being Green

When Clayton, Missouri's Mayor Ben Uchitelle signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in February 2006 and then again in 2007, Clayton became one of the Sierra Club's Cool Cities and one of nine in the state of Missouri. Mayors from around the world who sign the agreement pledge to meet or exceed 12 Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing global warming pollution. Clayton has implemented 11 so far.

Development Standards

Clayton uses such Kyoto Protocol targets as "practice and promote sustainable building practices using the U.S. Green Building Council's (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) LEED program or a similar system." The city has implemented the LEED certification program, created by the U.S. Green Building Council, which requires buildings to have environmentally friendly features.

Clayton and Kansas City are the first communities in Missouri to adopt an ordinance calling for LEED certification. The ordinance requires all new construction and major renovation projects owned, occupied, or funded by the city that are 5,000 square feet of floor area or greater be certified to the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver level.

In September 2006, the Board of Aldermen added LEED certification to the public benefits criteria section in the planned unit development (PUD) project guidelines. A PUD is a distinct zoning classification established to provide flexibility for unified developments by waiving certain zoning requirements in exchange for public benefit. PUD guidelines reward developers for environmentally responsible developments.

Here are more details on Clayton's energy-saving activities.

Trees

Clayton has been named a Tree City USA each year since 1992. Trees produce life-giving oxygen, remove air pollution, and lower air temperature. Clayton's public works staff understands the benefits and importance of maintaining Clayton's public right-of-way tree population, which totals 7,921 trees worth approximately \$17,015,928. To protect this valuable community asset, staff has established guidelines for maintaining the urban forest.



Clayton's right-of-way urban forestry management tree policy and procedures outline a long-term commitment to the preservation process. The tree population is inspected and maintained according to a one-, three-, and five-year tree trimming and removal program. To view the policy, click Forestry Policy on the home page of Clayton's Web site at www.ci.clayton.mo.us.

Bioswales

To prevent rainfall runoff and soil erosion, the public works department created bioswales, or rain gardens, which are structural stormwater strategies that promote natural infiltration of stormwater. They increase runoff duration rather than pipe water directly into the stormwater infrastructure. The bioswale and rain garden plantings also filter and clean the water.

Recycling

Residential. In collaboration with citizens serving on the Ecology and Environmental Awareness Committee, Allied Waste and St. Louis-Jefferson Solid Waste District applied for a grant to obtain new recycling containers. The containers help reduce the amount of waste and increase the amount of material converted into recycled products. This reduces the need for new landfills, decreases costs for the waste hauler by offsetting rising fuel costs to run the waste trucks, and ultimately allows the waste hauler to pass along savings to the city.

Electronics. Besides its own internal recycling program, Clayton partners with Web Innovations and Technology Services (WITS) to hold an annual electronics recycling event. During March this year, residents and businesses were invited to discard used electronic equipment at a park site; WITS would then dispose of it properly. Nine box trucks of equipment were collected.

Alternative Modes of Travel

Light rail. In August 2006, Clayton celebrated the opening of a cross-county extension of MetroLink, the region's light-rail system. As part of the city's aggressive campaign to promote light-rail use to reduce pollution, businesses were

(continued on page 14)

Clayton Believes in Being Green

encouraged to participate in the Partial Expense Reduction for Commuters (PERC) program, which promotes the use of mass transit.

Clayton subsidizes passes to encourage its employees to ride MetroLink. Since the program operates on a pre-tax basis, it reduces employees' taxable income and out-of-pocket costs for transit. It saves employers money by reducing not only payroll taxes and payroll tax liability but also employers' costs for parking as well as employees' absenteeism and tardiness.

Cycling. Recently the city completed a bicycle "Share the Road" sign project. Bike St. Louis provides signs marking a bike route from St. Louis through Clayton to MetroLink passenger stations and Clayton's Shaw Park. To emphasize the route, Clayton partnered with the Great Rivers Greenway on a banner program that promotes the benefits of cycling. The city plans to install bike racks throughout the community.

City Operations

New, textured crosswalks were installed to promote walking as an alternative to cars, and they enhance access to MetroLink stations.

To reduce pollution, a portion of Clayton's fleet is being replaced with hybrid vehicles, and bio-diesel fuel has been used in fleet vehicles for several years.

In city-owned buildings, an energy-efficient, pulse-type heating system and environmentally safe light bulbs are used to reduce energy waste.

To reduce paper use and waste and to increase efficiency, a Web-based portal has been implemented that houses all key Board of Aldermen documents, including meeting agendas, minutes, ordinances, and supporting documents. Using the portal, board members and city staff have access to these documents from any personal computer, at home or office.

The city hall council chambers is also wired with Internet access so board members can view all necessary documents online during their meetings; this eliminates the need for printing and copying, and it saves paper.

Using green purchasing and procurement policies is being considered now. The policies make evaluating green criteria a significant factor when making purchasing decisions. Employees will be required to look for products and services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human



health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.

In all bid solicitations, environmental factors or impact will be considered when requirements are defined. Bid solicitations will include instructions asking bidders to identify any environmental benefits over the life cycle of their products and services. In the past, purchasing was based on price and quality of service. The new policy includes green criteria in determining the best value overall.

Environmental Groups

Clayton has two committees working on environmental issues. In 1997, the Ecology and Environmental Awareness Committee was formed, and it is composed of citizens committed to conservation. This group makes recommendations on development and support of ecologically sound programs and practices within Clayton.

This year, a group of city employees is working to promote conservation and preservation. The committee's preliminary efforts include starting a calendar of environmental events for the community; planning programs to facilitate recycling; and adding a new environmental section to the city's Web site, which will contain information on topics like landscaping, recycling, and energy efficiency.

The city believes patterns of consumption will change gradually. Throughout the conservation process, Clayton encourages everyone to do their part to conserve, recycle, and use alternate modes of travel.

Each of us must do what we can to protect the environment and reverse the effects of global warming. **PM**

—Mike Schoedel, ICMA-CM, is city manager, Clayton, Missouri (maschoedel@ci.clayton.mo.us)

can be corrected. Other times we can help someone avoid the same mistake.

DO NOT STRAY TOO FAR FROM ELECTED LEADERSHIP

Green must blend with the objectives of elected policymakers. Northbrook's current board ran largely on a pro-development agenda. Board members came around to the green agenda after many small steps developed their awareness, confidence, and then enthusiasm for these initiatives. In less than two years the village president went from "not too sure about the green agenda" to serving as a member of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Council on Climate Protection. Other elected officials may need more time and information.

Moving toward green works best as a consensus process. We are able to do more because we are now expected to bring these ideas to the table. There is great support for all the strategies we inventory here and openness to the ones we have not seen yet.

TAKE COMFORT AND INSPIRATION FROM ICMA

Sustainability is ICMA's number one priority endorsed by its leader-

Share Online

Discuss this article online or any activities your community is doing to be greener or more sustainable. Visit forums.icma.org, and select the Sustainability forum.

ship embraced by the membership through formal resolution at the 2007 ICMA Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. That strategy and goal includes "green." It is as much a part of our management culture as devotion to fiscal responsibility and ethics.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHALLENGE

Yes, there are some big challenges:

- Not everyone shares the same perspective, but the consensus for action is building.
- You can't believe everything you hear; this stuff is complex and some of it will change; yet we make many decisions with less than perfect certainty and there is a solid case for acting now.
- Long-term threats will compete

with short term needs, but we are in it for the long term.

- We need to help people understand that action will involve pain, but we can manage it to make it a success.

Local government professionals should be exercising leadership in this area. There are lots of opportunities to do so.

Get involved in the policy debate. Managers are in an exceptional position to identify the possible, quantify the results, and help direct the numerous small actions that can lead to real results. You can volunteer for ICMA's Governmental Affairs and Policy Committee; state association initiatives; and numerous regional, state, and federal advisory groups.

Start making the many easy changes that make sense to you and your organization.

Recognize that this is likely to reach your in-basket whether you care about it or not. **PM**

John Novinson, ICMA-CM, is village manager, Northbrook, Illinois (novinson@northbrook.il.us).

PM

The Web site at <http://lgean.org/html/whatsnew.cfm#wn1> provides resources on a variety of environmental challenges that local government administrators face:

Air Quality

Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment

Smart Growth

Solid Waste Management

Wastewater Treatment

PM Web Resource

To find out more about tap water, visit the American Water Works Association Web site, Only Tap Water Delivers, at www.onlytapwaterdelivers.org. Here are some facts:

- Water is the primary ingredient in hundreds of thousands of everyday products, including many foods and beverages, as well as items such as toothpaste and perfume.
- Water is needed in the manufacturing of many products. For example, approximately 300 million gallons of water are needed to produce a single day's supply of U.S. newsprint.
- Total water use (both indoor and outdoor) in a typical single-family home is 101 gallons per capita per day.
- Only 3 percent of the tap water we use on a typical day is used for drinking. The rest goes for outdoor watering, bathroom uses, clothes washing, and so forth.