



PM MAGAZINE

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Riding the Tech Wave: Silicon Valley to Main Street

Despite the recent recession and lingering unemployment of nearly 12 percent, Silicon Valley's transformation will continue to fuel the innovation economy as well as communities that are a part of it. **Carl Guardino, San Jose, California, and a planned discussion leader at ICMA's 2010 Annual Conference in San Jose on October 19.**
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Meet a variety of needs by repurposing unused schools. **Richard Griffin and Thomas Scott, Waltham, Massachusetts.**
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2010 ICMA Annual Conference Preliminary Program

In support of ICMA's commitment to environmental sustainability, conference preregistration packets are not being printed and mailed to ICMA members this year. Abridged information is included in this PDF document. More conference information is also available at icma.org/conference.



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When the Scandal Hits the Fan!!

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Did I Hear That One Right?



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Where Bikes Rule: A Cautionary Report

Biking is receiving attention in the United States as a potential means of reducing travels to work by car in urban centers. This article compares the current situation in the U.S. with four recently examined European centers, where bikes have been important resources for commuters. **Lawrence Houstoun, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.**
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Does Your Local Government Use Solar PV Panels on Its Buildings (see Active Living department in the May issue)?

Yes
No
Don't Know

[View Results](#)

Book Bin: *Leading Across Boundaries: Creating Collaborative Agencies in a Networked World*

This review focuses on a book that was found beneficial for both practitioners and scholars who are seeking a readable volume that provides guidance on promoting greater collaboration.

Earl Mathers, Gallatin County, Montana.

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A Manager's Creative Side

This poem on the topic of city management has inspired managers with its content.

Gary Brown, Floydada, Texas.

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COVER STORY



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Riding the Tech Wave: Silicon Valley to Main Street

by **Carl Guardino**

Silicon Valley is often viewed as an economic barometer for what the future holds. And for good reason. While most regions of the country have been able to ride one or two waves of economic innovation over the years, Silicon Valley has been all about “surf’s up!” all the time. In the past 60 years, Silicon Valley has transformed itself many times. Its fertile soil and temperate climate made it an agricultural mecca, with acres and acres of orchards during the mid-1950s. The innovative farm equipment manufacturing that went along with the agriculture led to defense and aerospace equipment contracts, which sprouted semiconductor manufacturing, which led to personal computers, software, the Internet, clean and green tech, and smart phones. Local governments and elected officials, too, were integral to the Silicon Valley transformation as they provided a multitude of government services (including zoning) that the companies needed, along with an environment conducive to attracting and retaining a stable and diverse workforce.

Silicon Valley Optimism

Despite the recent recession and lingering unemployment of nearly 12 percent, Silicon Valley’s transformation will continue to fuel the innovation economy as well as communities that are a part of it. Why am I optimistic? Because the CEOs in Silicon Valley are optimistic, according to the Silicon Valley Leadership Group’s “2010 CEO Business Climate Survey,” which was released in April 2010.

As one executive who participated in the survey said: “Silicon Valley remains the world’s leader in advancing technology innovation.” And more innovation is on the horizon. The Leadership Group has more than 300 member companies and 153 senior executives who responded to the seventh annual CEO survey. That may not seem like a lot, but the companies they represent have \$1.7 trillion of global revenue. New this year is a separate, shorter survey completed by 304 venture capital investment–backed CEOs. These Business entrepreneurs reflect the core of Silicon Valley’s innovation economy. Here are the highlights from the CEOs at established companies:

At the ICMA Annual Conference

On Tuesday, October 19, 2010, Carl Guardino, president and CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, an association representing more than 300 of the valley’s most respected companies, will lead a panel of Silicon Valley CEOs in a discussion of future technology innovations that will have an impact on the management and leadership of local communities in coming years.

- By more than 3 to 1, they see job growth in 2010 in their sectors.
- By more than 8 to 1, they see job growth in 2010 in their companies.

Here are the highlights from the venture capital–backed company CEOs:

- 75 percent of emerging technology and life sciences companies said they are planning to hire new employees in 2010.
- Most responding startups reported their 12-month performance outlook would improve.

Why are they bullish? It's because of Silicon Valley's "special sauce"—a unique blend of immigration by some of the world's brightest people, a culture that rewards risk takers, and universities that provide a steady stream of new thinkers. We're also fortunate to have local governments that provide great places to live and work.

Specifically, CEOs say they are in Silicon Valley for these reasons:

- **Access to skilled labor.** Much of it is foreign born. About 53 percent of all engineers in Silicon Valley are foreign born, and 50 percent of tech company founders or CEOs are foreign born. Think Sergey Brin of Google, Andy Grove of Intel, and Jerry Yang of Yahoo.
- **Entrepreneurial spirit.** The drive for new ideas has led the area from being an agricultural leader to a technology leader.
- **Proximity to competitors and customers.** Competitors are often customers, so new words have developed: "frenemies" and "co-opetition."
- **Access to venture capital.** Roughly 40 percent of all venture capital invested nationwide goes to Silicon Valley.
- **World-class universities.** Three of the top 15 universities in the world are in the Silicon Valley.
- **Great weather.** It's hard to beat 300 days of sunshine.

Of course, there also are serious, and perennial, challenges for businesses and employees. Topping the lists for both groups are high housing costs and taxes. High health care costs are also a Top 5 concern to both companies and their workers. Other key challenges for businesses are recruitment and retention costs and state government issues, particularly with the state's current budget. Rounding out the Top 5 concerns for employees are traffic congestion and K-12 education.

As you can see, there is common ground in the common challenges.

Silicon Valley Leadership Group Action

The Leadership Group, started by David Packard of Hewlett-Packard in 1978, was founded on the principle that business leaders need to be involved in community issues to help solve them. "Our job, as CEOs, is not to sit on the sidelines, to cheer or jeer. Our job is to get into the game and move the ball forward," Packard said.

Today, the Leadership Group works closely with local, state, and national public and private leaders to "move the ball forward" on common areas of concern. The Leadership Group focuses on seven specific, key policy areas that are important to employees and the community: education, environment, energy, transportation, housing, health, and tax policies.

The similarity in the challenges faced by CEOs and employees also is acknowledged by our local government leaders. We are working with them to improve K-12 education, continue the research-and-development tax credit, invest in traffic relief, create affordable housing, and improve higher education. Clearly, quality of life is as important to businesses as it is to residents, and our interests are best served through collaboration.

The Leadership Group has led several successful campaigns in partnership with local community leaders: raise local sales taxes to fund the extension of BART, a regional rail system; establish a housing trust that leverages private and public funds for affordable housing; coordinate math teacher training using local companies; and help coordinate local and regional government regulations to streamline the permitting of energy efficiency measures and alternative energy installations.

The Leadership Group also has been a visible advocate at city council and local planning commission meetings, working in support of numerous land use policies and project-specific decisions to advance affordable housing and transit-oriented development. Plus, the Leadership Group has been a strong supporter of bringing federal, state, and regional funding to Silicon Valley for transportation projects, as well as ensuring that national and state policies help rather than hinder innovation at the local level.

Why is it so important that businesses and local government work together to solve these issues? Data compiled by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LACEDC) show the direct connection between jobs, the local economy, and revenue for government spending.

According to LACEDC, one semiconductor job helps create five more (indirect and induced) jobs. Those six jobs generate \$476,000 in wages and benefits, which leads to \$70,800 in state and local taxes. A pharmaceutical preparation manufacturing job can lead to seven more jobs, \$701,000 in wages and benefits, and \$100,200 in state and local taxes.

Tell Us About It

How have you successfully leveraged private sector leadership in your area to join with local government in creating a stronger community? What advice do you have for your colleagues in making collaboration with business leaders successful for all involved? Send your replies to bpayne@icma.org by July 30, 2010.

Silicon Valley, roughly the nine-county region that makes up the San Francisco Bay Area, is home to 7,000 tech companies and 2,400 bio-tech companies. It has nearly 2.4 million people and 1 million jobs. And, it has a robust entrepreneurial spirit.

The great thing about Silicon Valley is that it never rolls over and gives up. Instead, it rolls up its sleeves. Silicon Valley's best days are not behind it; they are in front of it. And that will mean a brighter tomorrow for all: for those of us who call Silicon Valley home as well as for communities across the United States and around the globe—the managers, the staff members, and all citizens.

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(cguardino@svlg.org).

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Where Bikes Rule: A Cautionary Report

by Lawrence Houstoun

Biking enthusiasts in the United States tend to overlook the costly infrastructure investments that have made bicycle commuting so successful in Europe. In the Netherlands, biking has substantially reduced the number of cars used for the journey to work (only 0.4 percent of commuting trips in the United States are made by bicycle). The Guardian (London) reports that a cyclist's risk of injury in the United States is 30 times higher than in Holland.

Amsterdam's Central Station reveals one of the positive and one of the negative aspects of bicycles as a popular form of urban transportation. Bikes, moving and parked, are everywhere, unbelievably so. At each of several adjacent locations are at least a half acre of parked wheels and seats and handlebars and locks ready to transport their owners departing or arriving by train for work or shopping—a veritable sea of bikes, closely packed. A concrete, four-deck parking structure stuffed with hundreds more bikes is nearby for the exclusive use of commuting cyclists.

Beyond the station, bikes are parked in places small and large, planned and unplanned, legal and illegal. The sheer visibility of the unriden bikes underscores the enormous success of public planning and investment intended to replace private automobiles; it is an utterly successful civic endeavor.

No one knows how many of those bikes occupying so much scarce urban land are actively owned by anyone. On the rare occasion when a block or so needs to be cleared for construction, a substantial share of the bikes remains unclaimed. Orphan bikes clutter the pedestrian domain. The annual report on biking in the Netherlands reveals without comment that there are 1.1 bikes per capita in that nation of 6 million.

Biking is receiving new attention in the United States as a potential means of reducing journeys to work by car in urban centers. This article compares the current situation here with four recently examined European centers where bikes have been made important resources for commuters. It treats bicycles as economic, not recreational, tools. It is intended to sharpen American vision regarding some practical concerns that will need to be faced should a significant effort be made to increase bike use in order to achieve various social goals, including reducing petroleum consumption, air degradation, and global warming while improving individual health and the urban environment. Thirty years of European infrastructure investments and education have produced a successful transition from automobiles to bicycles.

Who Bikes to Work?

Some generalizations will help illustrate the current U.S. experience. Why do people use bikes for commuting? Users see this mode as one that saves time and money—thousands of dollars a year in fuel, insurance, depreciation, and storage if it replaces a car. Many count the associated physical exercise as a motivating factor. Commuters may use bikes for the entire trip to work or school or for the trip to transit or from transit (or both).

Typical American workday users of bikes are under 25 years of age and male, and they use equipment more expensive than the common one-speed European urban bikes. Commuting cyclists are often traveling to and from educational institutions and sometimes job sites; some are messengers. Speed is important; bikers often proceed the wrong way on one-way streets, ignore stop signs and traffic lights, and weave among pedestrians on sidewalks. Enforcement of rules is infrequent. Bike lanes painted on pavements seem irrelevant and sometimes dangerous; few bikers (or drivers) pay them any attention. Cyclists appear to be moving at three times the speed of pedestrians.

Portland, Oregon, is probably Bike City USA, as it claims. Decades of traffic improvements in downtown Portland substantially improved biking conditions, contributing to the relatively high proportion of commuters who regularly bike to work. Advocates say, "It's part of the culture, it's what people do here." But biking in Portland is not without its

costs. Portland reported six biker deaths in 2007. One blogger wrote, "It's scary." A Portland attorney advertises his success representing injured bikers and will not charge "if there is no monetary recovery."

The Philadelphia Biking Coalition notes that 3.2 percent of downtown workers commute by bike at least once weekly, more than the 1.2 percent of all Philadelphia commuters and substantially higher than the 0.4 percent of commuting cyclists in the multicounty metro region where origins and destinations are scattered. Center City is fairly flat, favoring bikers, but most of those who live and work in downtown walk or use transit. A high share of regular bikers appears to be students. A third of surveyed cyclists report they wear protective helmets (required by law in nearby New Jersey), and users complain of the lack of bike lanes, unsafe road conditions, and the speed and volume of auto traffic. In surveys, the growing downtown residential population complains of the city's failure to enforce bike and auto rules. In response to a January 22, 2009, *Miami Herald* article on government plans to improve biking conditions, bicyclists enthused while others, who don't ride bikes, complained about public funds devoted to this small population group. One noncyclist said, "I'd like to see just once a cyclist stop for a STOP sign."

In contrast, European urban bikers in rush hours evidence a balance of male and female users and a substantial share of middle-aged riders and retirees. They proceed at about 10 miles an hour, comparable with auto speeds and perhaps two or three times the speed of pedestrians. They appear more inclined to obey traffic controls than their American counterparts. As evidence of the extent to which city biking is considered safe, many parents transport their offspring to day care using various carrying devices. Some bikes are fitted with ample capacity for shopping. Some stores make deliveries by bike. The sampled cities all have somewhat more precipitation than is common in the United States, but appropriate clothing appears to overcome most adverse weather concerns.

What appears to limit U.S. urban biking to work? For those older than 25, fear of losing in a potential bike-auto conflict is probably the most important reason; adverse weather is another. Few who bike to work do so every day. Bad weather requires a backup plan for getting to work. Convenient storage facilities are rare in city apartments, and there is a justifiable fear of theft. The American commuting pattern has for so long meant single-occupancy cars that the mind-set is doubtless hard to break. Americans have grown accustomed to the \$8,000 annual cost of auto ownership (which includes depreciation), so saving money is a less pressing concern. American streets are designed and refined to facilitate automobile traffic at speeds of 30 miles per hour or more; they are not designed for safe bike traffic.

Copenhagen

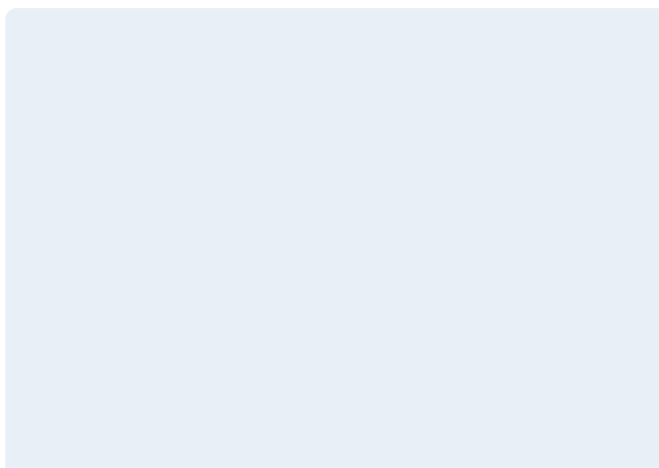
Decades of investment in bike infrastructure have produced an impressive record in modal shift from cars to bikes in the Danish capital; 36 percent of travel in Copenhagen is already by bike, and added investments in parking, green biking routes, more bike lanes, and increased safety are designed to improve that record further. Recent city statistics record an 18 to 20 percent increase in bike use and a 9 to 10 percent decline in car traffic. Most of these gains are the result of the "bicycle tracks" that are separated from other traffic by their own curbs, as distinguished from the less expensive "bicycle lanes" that are only marked with white stripes.

Although bikes are not allowed on the famous pedestrian linear facility, the Strøget, they are allowed on the adjacent street. Most subway trains and many buses have bike storage capacity. Special traffic lights at most major intersections control and protect bikers. Round signs with a blue background and a white bicycle indicate bike lanes or routes. Bikes are instructed to give way to trams from any direction.

The Danes are enthusiastic about their success in shifting from streets once jammed with cars and the frustration of searching for parking spaces. Copenhagen looks forward to being designated as the world's top bike city based on usage. Cycling is so important in Danish transportation that authorities invest in research into accidents and injuries associated with the street arrangements mentioned above, plus circumstances where bikes and autos are mixed. Sixty-two percent of cyclists reported that they feel secure in Copenhagen's traffic, up from 58 percent in the 2004 survey. The cycle tracks, where bikers feel most comfortable, have produced an 18 percent increase in cyclists and a 9 percent decrease in car traffic, although accidents have increased with the greater volumes.

Netherlands

The Dutch work hard to make biking safe, in part through public education. Amsterdam warns visitors not to imitate abuses by some local bikers. Don't, for example, ignore red lights, carry a passenger, ride on sidewalks, forget to use warning bell when passing, or fail to use lights at night. Don't chat on phones while biking. Bikers are reminded to use hand signals and when in doubt walk bikes through intersections. Users are warned to lock bikes (high incidence of theft in Amsterdam), walk bikes on crowded streets and pedestrian areas, obey traffic signs (police will pull bikers over for





Note the rearranged street in Amsterdam—traffic lane in the center of the street, then parking, then bikes, then pedestrians next to the shops.

running a red light), and beware of tram tracks. Visiting cyclists are warned to watch for pedestrians who don't understand local bike rules—in other words, "drive defensively." Never stop in a bike lane; move to the side of the lane.

Despite this campaign, common errors observed in Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Utrecht include infrequent use of hand signals and chatting on mobile phones, sometimes while transporting a child. Bikes are generally equipped with lights for after-dark travel, and bikers tend to comply with special traffic lights for bikers. No one wearing a bike safety helmet was observed. Few seem to obey the signs intended to bar bike parking; they lock their bikes anywhere it seems convenient.

Saturday shopping via bicycles is popular in Utrecht. While Dutch cyclists proceed at a moderate pace, the protected lanes and controls mean that bikers and drivers complete their journeys at about the same time. Bikers probably have an edge; bikes are usually stored closer to the intended origins and destinations than cars.

The Dutch are biking more, owning more and more elaborate bikes, and using their bikes for commuting (46 percent), recreation (40 percent), and other purposes such as shopping. There has been a recent increase in sales of bikes with small motors.

Amsterdam tried bike sharing—pick it up and drop it off without a charge—but discontinued the program when an unacceptable number were stolen. Washington, D.C., has started a sharing program with support from its department of transportation. Some costs will be met by advertising on bus shelters.

Freedom from Fear

Writing of "The Problem of Biking in America" in the *Bygone Bureau* journal, biking advocate Nick Martens says, "Of the many complaints an American cyclist can make, a concern over his or her safety is the most serious. It is also the best reason to stick with a car." Martens describes the common and disastrous consequences of the unexpected opening of a car door in the face of a biker properly staying in the designated bike lane on the right side of the street. Without question, fear of bike-auto conflict is the most pervasive factor limiting bike use for commuting in the United States. In the United States, the driver-side door opens into the bike lane; in European streets designed for bikes it does not.

In cities, the Dutch have invested heavily in dedicated bike lanes with special safety controls, essentially a separate set of red, yellow, and green lights for cyclists. The most elaborate arrangement of segregated lanes includes the following features that facilitate four different modes. Sideways from the center of a city street:

1. The first lane (in the center) is for cars, trucks, trams, and buses.
2. The next lane is devoted to auto parking; the driver's door does not open toward bikers.
3. The next lane—at the curb—is the bike lane.
4. Next to the buildings is the pedestrian lane, the sidewalk.



Bikes are a prominent feature on the streets of Amsterdam.

Making streets multimodal and widely used by bike commuters depends on the degree to which the guideways are reassuring. To produce comfortable conditions for bikers requires clarity: What are the rules, how must bikers and drivers behave, what is our turf and what is theirs? Ambiguity breeds uncertainty, which in turn contributes to accidents and discourages potential cyclists. Reassurance about clarity includes separate traffic signals for cyclists and obvious signs signaling where bikes may go and where they should not.

The broad popularity of biking in Continental cities at peak user periods has resulted from the infrastructure investments that have produced a comfort level almost unimaginable in the United States. If there were a comfort scale reflecting concerns regarding possible injuries, high scores would go to cities where both sexes, all age groups, commuters, and shoppers bike regularly; where use of child carriers is common, few wear helmets, and use of mobile phones in traffic are indicators of biker comfort. Biking conditions in northern Europe would generally rate an eight or nine out of a possible 10. Typical U.S. conditions would rate a two, evidenced by how few wear helmets and how many ride on pavements. Cyclists in the United States feel most comfortable when breaking the rules.

Prospects for American Conversion

Martens notes the political impasse associated with encouraging public investment to produce bike-friendly cities when so little daily biking is actually occurring; there are so few commuting bikers that they do not represent a sufficient pressure group to influence capital improvement, a situation resulting from not having bike-friendly conditions. American bikers are predominantly young, male, and urban—not a powerful constituency. Most Americans are car owning, happy with that condition, and sometimes antagonistic to bikers.

Any jurisdiction contemplating a serious modification of streets to reduce fear of injury and to expand the use of bikes for commuting and shopping should study the research from Copenhagen. Important options have already been tested. Starting with specified goals would avoid some expensive missteps in the United States. Copenhagen, for example, seeks to increase to 80 percent the share of bikers who feel comfortable or “secure” when biking, and the city is well along toward that goal.

The successful shift from cars to bikes in Europe can be traced to the steady, persistent, decades-long pace followed by governments there in adapting streets to produce bike-friendly transportation routes. Cheap won't do it. An inexpensive stripe next to the parking lane does not produce comfortable biking conditions; in many cases it is a recipe for collisions with car doors. It is hard to imagine U.S. local governments following a commitment to two or three decades of block-by-block reconstruction and continued bike-oriented education and enforcement of rules. How often would one hear the threat of litigation raised at hearings when officials propose to move car parking toward the center of the street and to install special traffic controls and curbs designed to protect bicyclists?

And, of course, other competitors for America's infrastructure funding are stronger and more influential. The highway lobby has a notorious 50-year lock on gasoline tax revenues. Other claimants—subways, buses, and commuter rail—may receive a larger share of these funds as the United States for the first time gets serious about reducing its petroleum dependency. Then there is the newly recognized need to repair and upgrade thousands of bridges and tunnels that elected officials pray will not collapse on their watch.

Probably the best prospects for financing conversions would imitate the system used for appropriating monies for a larger public cause, such as reducing global warming or employing jobless workers. Two or three good examples in American cities might influence others. New York City is modifying a few streets to favor biking. Philadelphia and other local governments might start in such limited areas as university neighborhoods where substantial use can be expected. Requiring bike storage facilities and fewer car parking spaces in residential projects would help. Five-dollar-a-gallon gasoline would boost bike usage but do little for cyclists' comfort level in peak hour traffic.

In a nation attuned to quick solutions, the widespread replacement of cars by bikes as in European cities must be seen as a long-range and expensive objective.



Many European cities have separate traffic controls for bikes, another safety feature.

Lawrence Houstoun is a redevelopment, public spaces, and improvement district consultant, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (lhoustounjr@verizon.net). He prepped for this article by biking in European cities.

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Ethics Matter!

What to Consider When an Ethics Crisis Threatens to Derail the Organization

It's such a common scenario and yet so painful to watch unfold. It starts with the initial inquiry, rumor, or report of questionable conduct by a public official or agency. Next the response, almost always issued by a spokesperson, offering a denial, counter explanation, or vague statement of concern.

The second shoe drops when diligent reporters or sources disclose more damaging facts that elevate the seriousness of the allegations or call into question the veracity of those initial responses. With the heat up, the official or agency leader responds *in person* with a pledge for an investigation in order to "get to the bottom of it" and a commitment to do whatever is necessary to ensure that this never happens again.

Then . . . silence. The lack of action inspires prodding from the editorial page for leadership to do something! Long after the issue has faded from the front page, a final report is issued. It may include reference to new procedures, discipline or removal of the guilty parties, and perhaps a leadership change as the agency "seeks to move in a new direction."

What's missing? No mention of decisive and timely action that would reassure everyone that the agency leadership was committed to rooting out unethical or corrupt conduct, understood the systemic weakness that allowed it to happen in the first place, and took concrete steps to a prevent recurrence.

There isn't a standard playbook for handling a scandal or ethics crisis because unique circumstances will dictate the approach. That said, here are some basic steps to take to get on the path to successful recovery and reduce the likelihood that the organization leaders will stumble in their response.

Don't ignore concerns that are voiced or reports of misconduct regardless of the source. One agency uncovered fraud by very senior-level department staff after a new employee joined the team, observed improper conduct, and reported her concerns directly to the city manager.

Drop the defenses. When you have confidence in your staff and operations, it's easy to get defensive. It's better to be as open as possible and publicly acknowledge that the issue is really worthy of concern and then outline the process you will employ.

Conduct a thorough, expeditious investigation before taking action. It's hard to be fast and fair, but it's important to balance both. Critical time is often lost at the dawn of the crisis as leaders ponder the public relations fallout, whether the issue is even worthy of review, and what to do next.

On the other side of the equation are decisions made (and later reversed) based on an initial but incomplete set of facts. Critical to the validity of the investigation is the "who." Refer matters outside the agency or use a third-party investigator for allegations of misconduct by senior leadership or when the independence of the investigator could be called into question—police investigating misconduct within their own agency, for example.

Be relentless in the investigation. An audit may initially reveal information related to the original allegation, but if it doesn't all make sense or add up, keep going. As one colleague with direct experience put it: "If what you find defies logic, you don't have all the relevant information."

Trust but verify. Source aside, this advice works for organizations. We place great trust in our employees, and that

trust is reinforced when no evidence of misconduct has ever been presented. But the onus is on leadership to have proper internal controls and conduct appropriate reviews. Compliance and audit standards exist because they work.

The long-tenured employee who is so dedicated that he never takes leave, the workhorse who rejects all offers of assistance or backup, the nice but seemingly disorganized staff member who never has the required support documentation, and the supervisor who deflects questions about the details of her operations are warning signs of a problem that should be heeded.

Pay attention to the wounded afterward. That may be practically everyone in the organization. Staff outside the area where the bad conduct occurred may be really angry about the damage done to their reputations. Those closer to the situation may be anxious about their employment status. And senior leadership may be left wondering how this could have happened on their watch.

In order of priority, communication should go to the governing body first, staff second, and then to the public. That way, those closest to the situation are not surprised by any disclosures of wrongdoing and understand what the organization will do to recover.

The need to respect privacy with regard to personnel actions should not keep leadership silent about the matter. Use the crisis as an opportunity to reaffirm the values that should drive everyone's conduct.

Last, get out in front of the issue and be proactive. As Teddy Roosevelt said, "In any moment of decision the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing."

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Balancing Act

Self: The Fulcrom of Balance Part 2 of 3

In the [June 2010 PM](#) column (Part 1 of 3 about the self),¹ I reviewed the importance of reflection and introspection as they relate to who you are as a public manager and the power you wield. Now summer is in full swing. As you plan or start out on your summer vacation, you have a natural opportunity to learn about yourself. A step to take is to get curious about your “stuff” to understand yourself. How might you do this?

First, I'd like to refer back to the [October 2009 PM](#)² column where I wrote about the time period that is the daily commute to work—a time that falls between two of your worlds: work and family. I recommended it as a quiet time to plan for what you want.

It is useful to you because the time is relatively free of work and family demands; you have a moment to clear your mind. Experts define this as a “liminal period,”³ or a period of time in which an individual is transitioning between two identities. There are other, longer liminal periods in our life where we are neither the person we just were nor the person we are becoming.

Examples familiar to the readers of *PM* could be the time between school and work, or single and married. On the horizon, there is time between work and retirement. At those times, emotions are strongly related to the optimism for what comes next, yet also unease as the new life is not yet clear.

As you commute, things travel with you: your *stuff*. What is your stuff that stays with you between home and work? Have you ever wondered about it? How is the stuff similar to when you were in school, and what is different?

I imagine some standard things are similar. You are driving in your car, along a familiar route, likely with music playing. You have caffeine in the morning and possibly also at the end of the day. You're carrying your cell phone, your keys, and your purse or wallet. You might not have thought about them, but these small items are interesting. They provide tokens of who you are and what's important to you. A story from my life as a counselor is intended to show you how and why these little things matter to you.

While in training to be a psychiatrist, a young man I worked with had noticed something about himself he wanted to share. When he got a new wallet, he was surprised to find photos of his two grandmothers inside his old wallet. He showed them to me. Beneath plastic covers, the two women were bright eyed and happy. He wanted to talk about them. His grandfathers had died when he was young, and throughout his life his grandmothers had been reliable touchstones to remind him he was smart, handsome, a good person—in a word, lovable.

We explored this feeling. He was surprised to recognize how they stayed there in his wallet with other valuable things like his money and his driver's license. This young man entered adolescence full of confidence, yet as he grew older, life had sent him lessons that he wasn't so great. There were times he wanted to quit, to give up on dreams. Yet, in his grandmothers' eyes he always was great. By being there in his wallet, he had in a private way kept this positive feeling about himself in the form of his grandmothers with him. Close by.

What are the things you carry? What is on your key chain, in your wallet or your purse, on your cell phone, or in your car's glove compartment? As you head for summer vacation, take time and protect it. Plan for it. Then when you are at the cabin, at the beach, or at the airport, write about what your stuff means to you. How are you keeping positive and important feelings about yourself close by?

SOURCES

¹ See the Balancing Act column at icma.org/pm/9205.

²

See the Balancing Act column at icma.org/pm/9109.

³ Christena E. Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries through Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

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Retirement Strategies

Saving in Today's Economy

Even during normal economic times it can be difficult to save for retirement, and as we all begin to emerge from the deepest and longest financial downturn in decades it is even more challenging. Although it is still too early to say that our economic difficulties are behind us, especially for those who work in local and state governments, we have seen encouraging signs of improvement in local and national economies.

During times of economic uncertainty, it may be tempting to stop or reduce the amount you are saving for retirement. But doing so can make achieving your retirement goals much harder in the long run. There are some things we can all do personally that may help us reach retirement security.

Most retirees need more money than they will receive from a pension, from Social Security, or even both together.

For example, most retirees need more money than they will receive from a pension, from Social Security, or even both together. The money you save through your employer's retirement savings plan and an IRA can help make up the difference.

Also, tax-deferred compensation plan contributions can mean an up-front tax break. Your contributions to your employer's 457 deferred compensation plan are made pre-tax, and the amount you save can affect your federal income tax bracket. I encourage you to visit the PLANSmart section of our site at www.icmarc.org/plansmart for more details and to see how tax-deferred saving could benefit you.

Remember, your retirement savings account earnings are not taxed as long as the money stays in the account, where it can grow until you begin to take withdrawals in retirement when you could be in a lower tax bracket. Fewer dollars to pay in taxes now can equal more available cash for you to save.

Investing regularly in volatile markets may have a silver lining. When you contribute to your 457 plan through payroll deductions, your systematic ongoing contributions mean you are automatically dollar-cost averaging. Dollar-cost averaging can lower both your average cost per share and the risks involved in investing large sums at market highs or making investment decisions based on emotion. Keep in mind that dollar-cost averaging does not assure profit or protect against loss in any market.

As I visit with clients I see firsthand that using various tools and strategies can help public sector employees work toward building retirement security. Diversification is important, and a good awareness of your personal circumstances and your tolerance for risk is just as essential. Investing and saving for your retirement can help you be prepared as you work toward achieving your retirement goals.

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Book Bin: *Leading Across Boundaries: Creating Collaborative Agencies in a Networked World*

by Earl Mathers

(SAN FRANCISCO: JOSSEY-BASS, 2010) 299 PP. ISBN: 978-0-470-39677-3.

Today's public management environment often requires collaborative action because of the compound problem of meeting ever-increasing service delivery needs with fewer and fewer resources. It is likely that this conundrum will be with us for an extended period of time as governments at all levels adapt to massive fiscal challenges.

Russ Linden's important new work translates theory and research into practical guidance for applying collaborative approaches to organizational challenges. Working effectively across organizational boundaries doesn't just happen. It requires well-conceived strategies that are teachable. Providing practical guidance is precisely what Linden does in his latest book.

With rare exceptions, the authoritarian model of public management and leadership is defunct. We have evolved from a Theory X mentality, through various iterations of applied management theory, to our contemporary era in which Generation Xers and Millennials, as Linden points out, expect to be informed of and engaged in meaningful organizational activities.

Despite this new reality of public organizational life, systemic resistance to collaboration is often present for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is turf protection coupled with a voracious appetite for power that is still all too common.

In American society, with its deeply ingrained tendencies toward individualism, collaboration may not come as naturally as to those in other societies that emphasize group action. Americans, however, can also rally strongly around a common cause or, as Linden puts it, "individualism and collectivism or autonomy and connection aren't necessarily contradictory."

This dichotomy provides some reason for optimism inasmuch as even the most obdurate individualists may be encouraged to modify their personal control-freak tendencies if it is clear that it is in their self-interest to do so. It would be unrealistic to suggest, though, that the transformative process will be easy. For those starting on the road to transformation, Linden discusses the foundations of collaboration and even provides a self-assessment tool that will be enlightening for both practicing and emerging leaders.

For many readers, case studies, best practices, and other real-world examples are instructive. Linden's book features a number of fascinating stories that drive home the importance of collaboration in achieving results. Comparisons are used to illuminate elements of the process of collaboration for both context and sequence.

These illustrative examples are helpful for analyzing situations that are problematic and for determining potential remedies. Linden's contrast of the approaches used by Michael Allen and Thad Allen in dealing with Hurricane Katrina resonates extremely well with those who have observed the problems that arise when leaders rely exclusively on formal authority, by-the-book procedures, restrictions on access to information, and an overemphasis on solidifying one's own power base.

If the circumstances require contributions from a number of individuals or agencies, attempts to overcontrol are almost always met with resistance leading to suboptimal results, as Linden describes.

Trust is the lubricant of efficient organizations. Chapter 4 is entitled "The Power of Relationships Built on Trust." There we find a detailed analysis of the challenges associated with arriving at trust among collaborative partners. Linden then compiles many pieces of sage advice on building and strengthening collaborative relationships that are, by definition, grounded in trust.

These approaches work. Prospective partners respond well when they are offered a genuine opportunity to collaborate in a mutually beneficial way. Using self-disclosure, helping when help is needed without the expectation of reward, and simply being trustworthy are just a few of the elements of trust building Linden describes with compelling anecdotes.

Practical guidance for the development of collaborative leaders is found in Chapter 5. Leadership characteristics—which include an unwavering goal orientation, listening for the true meaning, looking for win-win solutions, using more pull than push, and strategic thinking—are presented with insights that go beyond standard management advice.

While charismatic, take-charge leaders often capture our attention, leaders who operate below the radar have the potential to make the kinds of meaningful changes to organizational culture that will endure beyond their own tenure. Moreover, the characteristics Linden discusses can be learned, and they can be coached.

In addition to ensuring that tangible benefits accrue to all the organizations involved, building collaborative relationships is an art that demands careful attention to the professional and political aspirations of key stakeholders. Seasoned public managers understand very well that negotiating political minefields requires a nimble step and the right pace.

Linden reveals knowledge of the pitfalls that can cripple the unwary. His list on page 105, “Political Rules of the Road for Collaborative Leaders,” which includes suggestions such as informing the gatekeepers, recognizing the importance of timing, and never surprising key stakeholders, can work toward building trust and confidence.

Collaboration between jurisdictions based on Linden’s ideas also holds the promise of improved intergovernmental relations as well as a smoother path for subsequent collaborative efforts.

Two and one-half years ago, Gallatin County, Montana, began planning a joint 911 communications center–fire station with Bozeman, Montana. Naysayers disparaged the idea, citing a less than stellar history of cooperation between the jurisdictions and somewhat different governance philosophies.

Today that facility is fully functional, and both jurisdictions saved considerable money in the development of a highly functional, aesthetically pleasing, and energy-efficient building. Less tangible but of considerable importance is the improvement in relationships that evolved during the process. Some pushing on the part of the city manager and county administrator was required, but all parties soon recognized the win-win dimensions of the concept and were able to rally around a common purpose similar to what Linden describes. Budget constraints and the importance of the project provided strong incentives to work together.

Austere budgets and demands for accountability exert ever-increasing pressures on all levels of government to do more with less. At the national level, the reality of addressing burgeoning indebtedness and deficits and improving the financial condition of our assistance programs can no longer be denied.

Consequently, the demands for frugality and efficiency will continue as budgetary impacts trickle down to all levels of government. In the context of collaboration, Linden provides several demonstrated techniques that can save jurisdictions and taxpayers money. Co-locating services is one example that has worked well.

Sharing resources, including staff, has great potential and also provides the opportunity to share information that may be of importance to the collaborating partners. In addition to credible examples, Linden offers specific suggestions for assessing the environment and overcoming potential obstacles to implementation.

It is clear that creating a collaborative working environment between agencies or departments is a process. In his book, Linden references public safety agencies as effective examples of collaborative effort. It is interesting that competition and turf battles among such agencies are fairly common except when there is an incident to manage.

When an event demands the resources of several agencies, the level of collaboration is driven by far more than mutual aid agreements. At the individual and agency levels, fire and police personnel are absolutely committed to getting the job done because it must be done. Although attempting to replicate emergency management’s system of values in other agencies should be done cautiously, it is likely that this sense of determination can be nurtured in other settings.

Persuading people to adopt more collaborative approaches, especially when they have succeeded by being highly independent, is no mean feat. In his discussion of generational differences, as well as his insights on dealing with difficult personalities, Linden provides sensible advice. While the challenges are very real, there is reason for optimism.

Younger workers may be more likely to embrace work models that promote interdependence. Linden offers “Strategies for Developing a Collaborative Mindset” within an organization, and his contention that a “collaborative mindset is the leadership characteristic most critical for dealing with the networked world of the twenty-first century” makes sense.

Linden’s book is beneficial for both practitioners and scholars who are seeking a highly readable volume that provides specific guidance on promoting greater collaboration.

Earl Mathers is county administrator, Gallatin County, Montana (earl.mathers@gallatin.mt.gov).

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PMPLUS

A Manager's Creative Side

 by **Gary Brown**

A POEM FOR MANAGERS

This poem was written by Gary Brown, city manager, Floydada, Texas, and published in the March 2010 issue of the *Management Messenger* newsletter, published by the Texas City Management Association. Kevin Carruth, ICMA-CM, city manager, Paris, Texas, was moved by its content and submitted it to *PM* for publication consideration.

City Management/City Manager

"What is city management?" The professor did ask.
 Preparing students for employment, this is his task.
 After much thought the students began to talk,
 Through their ideas about city management they each began to walk.

Many ideas were presented and most were on track,
 The professor was pleased with the students' understanding and tack.
 When thoughts about city management were no longer being spoken,
 The silence, by the professor, was about to be broken.

"Now that your ideas about city management are known,
 I want knowledge about what a city manager is to be sown.
 City management and city manager are not the same,
 I want you to know what is required when you have this name."

The students looked bewildered and then they recognized,
 What the professor had said and then they realized
 That there really is a difference between the two.
 Get the students thinking, "Is this what I really want to do?"

The discussion began and different traits came out,
 Different students seeing differently about this bout.
 None seemed to know what a city manager really was,
 Nor exactly what it is that a city manager does.

One student finally spoke up, speaking very clear,
 You could tell to him the subject was very dear.
 "Your ideas are great, but that is not what a city manager is,
 I know, for all my life, my dad, a city manager's job is his."

The student moved to the front of the room to give his speech,
 This would be an impromptu talk with which he would teach
 The other students about what they should expect
 In this field of hands-on and high tech.

"Passion, desire, and willingness to sacrifice,
 Being able to keep a job is sometimes like rolling dice.
 You will be living in a house that is made of glass,"
 Was the way the student started speaking to the class.

He then went into detail about different parts of the job,

"Are you willing to let the job time from the family rob?"

Aspects about the job that the students did not know,
Were what the speaker was beginning to show.

"You have to be able to lead, follow, and get out of the way,
Speak to the citizens watching what you say.

Please the council and employees, too,
Is just a part of what you will have to do."

At the end of the day, someone, maybe yourself, will ask,
Did you do your best at each and every task?

Were the results, whether completed or yet to be done,
The best for all, each and everyone?

There is only one person who is the hardest to please,
It is the person in the mirror that the manager does see.

"You will not please everyone, no matter had hard you try,
I have seen my dad at day's end just sit down and cry."

Maybe over a job that did not go just exactly right,
Or an employee did or said something that caused him fright.

Could it have been disciplining or even dismissal of a friend
That brought this sadness to his day's end?

You will know within yourself when the day does end,
By the feelings that your pride outward does send.

The job is tough, but for those who dare,
You can show the citizens that you really care.

Now go forth and apply yourself to your best,
Take the challenge, stand up to the test.

Years from now, when your career is winding down,
Know within yourself you have helped improve your town.

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