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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009 · VOLUME 91 · NUMBER 1

Critical Operations Power Systems: Success of the Imagination

This article provides answers to questions that local government managers and elected officials might ask on the new code requirement—Article 708 of the National Electric Code: Critical Operations Power Systems—strengthening distribution system reliability that provides power to state, county, and city emergency management facilities.

Michael A. Anthony and Richard Aaron, Lansing, Michigan.

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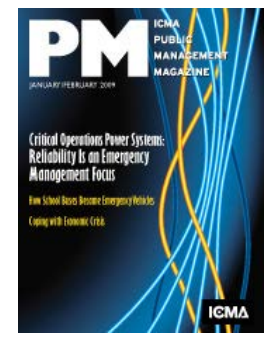
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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009 · VOLUME 91 · NUMBER 1

COVER STORY

Critical Operations Power Systems: Success of the Imagination

by Michael A. Anthony and Richard Aaron

Public servants inherit a long conversation about national security and the "failure of imagination" associated with 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. Much of the conversation about the electric power aspect of national security involves energy supply at the transmission level. The United States has the largest transmission system in the world, extending across almost 200,000 miles. In most countries, transmission ownership is consolidated. In the United States, it is highly disaggregated, with more than 500 owners. There is great variety in the business models of these owners, a fact that greatly complicates grid planning, investment, and operation under normal conditions. During an emergency, disaggregated ownership is both a strength and a weakness.

In the various "lessons learned" white papers submitted to state and federal agencies recounting how emergency management teams responded to 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and the August 14, 2003, electrical blackout in the Northeast and parts of the Midwest, one theme has been repeated: more preparation is needed to assure backup power supplies to emergency management agencies.[1] Regulatory professionals spotted gaps in the national standards that assert leading practices for the design, construction, and maintenance of emergency power facilities.

Leading practices had evolved in the business continuity industry that secures power for data centers for AT&T and Google, for example; but these practices were not conveyed into the public sector where, arguably, the losses are so great as to be incalculable. Complicating the business continuity problem was the sheer size of many city and county critical infrastructures and the regular turnover, according to election cycles, of many key people.

One of the concluding bullet points in the 2003 Federal Emergency Regulatory Commission (FERC) final report on the August 2003 electric outage was a call for "strengthening reliability institutions."[2] The practical implementation of its recommendations would have to include strengthening distribution system reliability that provides power to facilities used by state, county, and city emergency management teams to carry out the rescue and recovery functions of government.

This call for strengthening reliability institutions was heard in the United States by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), which moved quickly to put together a working group of experts to prepare a first draft of what is now known as Article 708 of the National Electric Code: Critical Operations Power Systems (see box on this page). NFPA was the natural place to go for help with a new standard because of its tradition of high-level relationships in the federal government. Its standards are accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and widely adopted as law in thousands of local building safety jurisdictions around the world.

Article 708 presents an opportunity to apply national business continuity practices to the design, construction, and maintenance of needed emergency power facilities at the local level. Local authorities should be mindful in adopting Article 708 as a new standard with the force of law for it will affect planning, construction, maintenance, and budget.

Translating Article 708 into action presents challenges for local authorities. Here are questions (and answers) that local government employees and elected officials might ask about the new code requirement.

Q1. How will this new National Electric Code (NEC) requirement affect my work?

To start, you will have to get people talking who usually

> **National Electric Code Article 708 – Critical Operations Power Systems Definition (excerpt):**
>
> 708.1 Scope. The provisions of this article apply to the installation, operation, monitoring, control, and

do not talk to one another: planners, inspectors, maintenance personnel, and emergency managers. Planning work groups are closely aligned with first-cost allocations or one-time—typically large—capital outlay funding. The electrical inspectors are closely aligned with building safety funding. Maintenance personnel are funded under annual operations and maintenance allocations; emergency management teams under state and federal funding sources.

Given the root-cause evidence about how emergency management teams had failed in disaster mitigation and recovery, the NEC committee took a multidisciplinary approach to writing Article 708. Committee members knew that by asserting requirements for risk assessment (Section 708.4) and emergency operations plans (Section 708.64) they would get the right people talking. Article 708 is remarkable in its procedural requirements. You will need to document practically everything regarding the critical operation power system. Small changes in the critical operation power system become, in effect, a regulatory event.

maintenance of the portions of the premises wiring system intended to supply, distribute, and control electricity to designated critical operations areas (DCOA) in the event of disruption to elements of the normal system.

Critical operations power systems are those systems so classed by municipal, state, federal, or other codes by any governmental agency having jurisdiction or by facility engineering documentation establishing the necessity for such a system. These systems include but are not limited to power systems, HVAC, fire alarm, security, communications, and signaling for designated critical operations areas.

FPN No. 1: Critical operations power systems are generally installed in vital infrastructure facilities that, if destroyed or incapacitated, would disrupt national security, the economy, public health or safety; and where enhanced electrical infrastructure for continuity of operation has been deemed necessary by governmental authority.

Q2. What are the technical issues with which managers should be familiar?

Emergency fuel supply and communications security was mentioned in many public service commission white papers on disaster response. The 72-hour power-supply requirement in Article 708 implies that fuel-supply chains—already highly optimized because of the expanding definition of "critical power"—may need to be revised. City and county emergency management agencies, for example, might find themselves competing for emergency fuel with hospitals.

Article 708 contains a new term—designated critical operations area (DCOA)—that defines the area within an emergency management facility that requires critical power systems. Specifying DCOAs is only a first step. In most cases, local governments already have the rudiments of a DCOA because they already have some form of an emergency management facility. It is how that facility gets upgraded in the next renovation cycle that will be an issue.

For example, strategic planning issues will arise about whether it is more economical to site police and fire departments to share the same DCOA or whether (for security reasons) DCOAs should be spread around. Centralized systems are more economical, but in emergency configuration they are riskier because they make it necessary to focus all resources on one hope, possibility, or avenue of success. In the parlance of risk analytics: a combined police-fire department may be a single point of failure.[3]

Q3. There seem to be so many organizations preparing codes, standards, recommended practices, and guidelines on emergency management. How do we know whose rules are those to which we are legally bound?

To find the binding rules, start at the local level. Article 708, part of the NEC, becomes part of the standards landscape when adopted by the appropriate government action. After reviewing local laws and codes, DCOA managers should next consider state and federal standards that might be implicated. This next level of inquiry should take into account the specific function of the DCOA and non-local sources of funds. Often, funding sources will establish standards that must be met as a condition of providing the funds.

Q4. Which agency determines whether our emergency management facilities must be built to this new electrical code requirement?

Your inquiry can start at the local level. Determine whether Article 708 has been adopted and whether the adoption allows for grandfathering of existing facilities. Next, consider what state or federal authorities may say with regard to your facilities. Again, consider the function of the facility—whether it is serving a purely local, state, or federal purpose as well as the sources of funds.

Next, consider that Article 708 envisions a DCOA determination by a governmental authority having jurisdiction. At this point, consider whether the authority has the actual jurisdiction—that is, the actual right and power to make the determination. The import of Article 708 is such that formal and specific designations are highly advisable.

Q5. Are there any legal precedents or is there case history on this issue?

No. Although there are a good number of standards cases throughout the United States, there are no clear precedents in this context.

Q6. If the critical operations power system is an integral part of a building that is used for general business purposes, would the inspection, testing, and maintenance be considered a general operating expense or a homeland security expense?

The answer to any funding or expense question will turn on many factors, funding sources, and accounting requirements. Consider the source of the funds and whether restrictions on funding use exist. A cursory review of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Web site shows that one can expect specific accounting and spending restrictions attached to homeland security grants. More often than not, the operating expenses will not be part of a funding grant for construction.

Next, consider the local sources of funds and any restrictions that may arise. This issue illustrates the fact that adoption of Article 708 as a binding standard and a DCOA determination may give rise to new funding challenges locally, and it stresses the importance of communication among the local decision makers and managers.

Q7. Conversely, can a homeland security grant help pay for an infrastructure upgrade where DCOA is an embedded system in a multifunction building?

The answer will depend on the specific terms of each grant. Care should be given in each step of the grant process to determine the legal restrictions on the funds. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Grant Operations, has developed a financial management guide to provide step-by-step guidance in fulfilling a locality's fiduciary responsibility as a recipient of federal grant funds and in ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used for the purposes for which they are awarded. The guide should serve as the primary reference and day-to-day management tool for grants and training award recipients and subrecipients in all financial management and grant administration matters.[5]

Q8. Our jurisdiction has adopted NEC 2008 without exceptions, but no one looked closely at the practical effect of NEC Article 708. Now our electrical inspectors want to "red tag" our new fire station until we increase the size of the fuel tanks to our central dispatch transmitter. What would you recommend we do?

Much of the recent discussion in the electrical safety community has been about hot-button issues far from the subject of power system reliability. New code articles that govern truck-stop electrification, fuel cells, and critical operations power are still on the fringe of technical discussions at building commission meetings. As the other controversies resolve, fringe code issues like Article 708 will become the core.

Definition of AHJ
The phrase "authority having jurisdiction," or its acronym AHJ, is used in NFPA documents in a broad manner because jurisdictions and approval agencies vary, as do their responsibilities. Where public safety is primary, the authority having jurisdiction may be a federal, state, local, or other regional department or individual such as a fire chief; fire marshal; chief of a fire prevention bureau, labor department, or health department; building official; electrical inspector; or others having statutory authority.
In many cases, the practical reality is that the insurance company may be the authority having jurisdiction. In many circumstances, the property owner or the property owner's designated agent assumes the role of the authority having jurisdiction. At government installations, the commanding officer or departmental official may be the authority having jurisdiction.

Now all NFPA standards contain general purpose language that actually encourages the use of systems, methods, or devices of equivalent or superior quality or performance provided that technical documentation submitted to the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) demonstrates equivalency. The city or county itself is authorized to modify any of the provisions of the NEC, provided that normal democratic processes are followed (see sidebar).
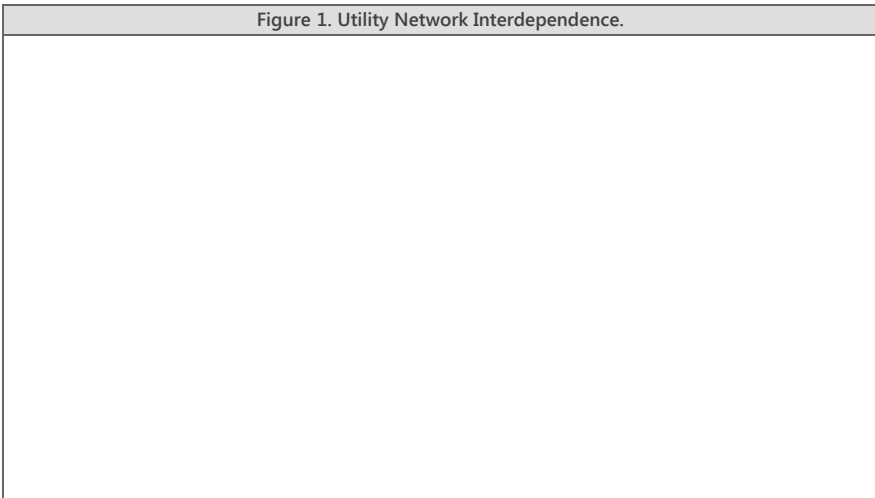
In the case of fuel tanks, the requirement in 708.22(C) for running the DCOA for 72 hours at full load could be accomplished with a UPS or a mobile generator, or both, as long as performance equivalency can be demonstrated.
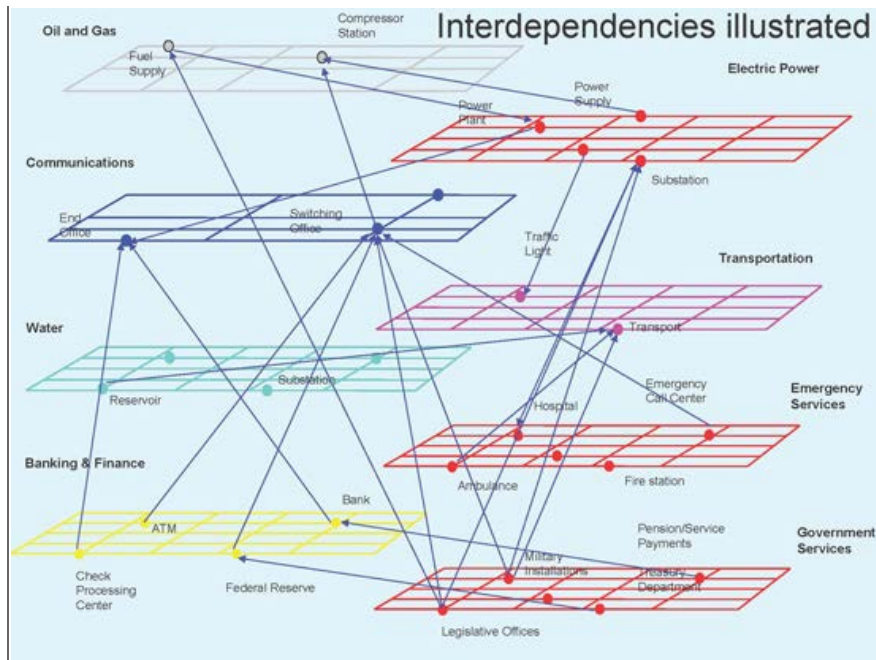
Q9. How much will this cost?

The FERC has a formula for utilities to use to recover reliability investments in a revenue stream, but local governments do not have a comparable mechanism for the cost recovery of their reliability upgrades. Most local governments must apply to the Department of Homeland Security for grants.

Just as having a complex

Figure 1. Utility Network Interdependence.

Interdependencies illustrated

Source: Institute of Public Utilities, "Utility and Network Interdependencies: What State Regulators Need to Know" (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, April 2005), www.naruc.org/Publications/CIP_Interdependencies _2.pdf.

backup power system has been the cost of doing business in, say, assuring safe egress from a burning building, so should a robust power system for disaster recovery be integrated into the cost of doing business. Local government managers should consider critical power system investment as important as, say, the ISO rating of the fire department. Such a decision has implications for the types of businesses that can locate and grow with the community.

A recent position paper released by the National Federation of Municipal Analysts detailed why disaster recovery information is vital to bondholders.[4] Investors want to know whether there will be power for traffic control during evacuations and at places of assembly for immunizations as well as communication between dispatch areas and local medical facilities.

As part of a county emergency management program, most counties already have a hazard risk assessment required by FEMA. Managers may able to broaden the FEMA risk assessment to cover the risk to the emergency management facility infrastructure. Be mindful, however, that utility infrastructures are highly interdependent (Figure 1). Trouble in any single infrastructure can spread breakdowns throughout the system.

According to Robert G. Arno of EYP Mission Critical Facilities, the risk assessment required to comply with Section 708.4 of the NEC can range from $50,000 to hundreds of thousands of dollars. The cost depends on the size, configuration, and age of the city or county infrastructure. A small county in a rural area may have only a few locations to consider as part of its DCOA.

A large county incorporating a city or large metropolitan area will have hundreds of locations to consider because of the complex interdependency of the critical infrastructure. The amount of engineering effort to put together a coherent picture of the critical operations power system is expected to vary widely.

Moving Forward

Article 708 was drafted for the purpose of meeting the needs of the public for a reliable emergency response from government institutions. Such standards as those produced by NFPA serve the core building safety and emergency management mission of most U.S. cities and counties, but practical implementation of these standards creates real-life issues for local government. Money, time, and other resources are called upon to meet a diverse set of needs. Because these resources are scarce, planning and risk analysis become vital.

Innovation in many industries depends on releasing products that are not fully developed, a process sometimes called "open innovation." Thus, an imperfect article 708 now is better than a perfect one later. In its crafting of Article 708, NFPA has provided a large-scale platform for collaboration and has identified leading power security practices from which all will benefit.

[1]*Report on August 14th Blackout* (Lansing: Michigan Public Service Commission, November 2003), 65, 78–81, www.michigan.gov/documents/mpsc_black out_77423_7.pdf; *Initial Report by the New York State Department of Public Service on the August 14, 2003, Blackout* (Albany: New York State Department of Public Service, February 2004), www3.dps.state.ny.us/pscweb/WebFileRoom.nsf/Web/5FA2EC9B01FE415885256E69004D4C9E/$File/doc14463.pdf?OpenElement.
[2]*Final Report on the August 14, 2003, Blackout in the United States and Canada: Causes and Recommendations*

(Washington, D.C., and Ottawa: U.S.-Canada Power System Outage Task Force, April 2004), www.ferc.gov/industries/electric/indus-act/blackout.asp.

[3]Michael A. Anthony, Robert Arno, Robert Shuerger, and Evangelos Stoyas, "Risk Assessments for Critical Operations Power Systems," CSE Live, June 1, 2008, www.csemag.com/article/CA6568830.html.

[4]"Position Paper on Recommended Responses by Municipalities to Disasters," National Federation of Municipal Analysts, March 2007, www.nfma.org/documents/disaster_recovery.pdf.

[5]"Financial Management Guide," Department of Homeland Security, January 2006, http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/Grants_FinancialManagementGuide.pdf.

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FEATURE

Coping with Economic Crisis and Some Lessons Learned

by Elizabeth Fretwell

When the wheels blew off the economy in 2008 causing many of the country's large-growth local governments to flounder, the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, was already in "battle stations mode." Its city manager had positioned Las Vegas so it could manage its way through the crisis. A solid foundation of credibility and trusting relationships among city leaders created an environment where the staff members could address this defining moment, head-on.

I was part of the team that helped work on the challenge of eliminating a multimillion-dollar revenue shortfall that was driven by the diving economy. The city council had requested that a fundamental review of all city services and departments be conducted. Alignment with key council priorities was to be the rule.

The staff had six months to pull off this effort. It was the city's biggest such effort in years. Thousands of staff hours were spent as we all ground through what we called a "search for the solution." A massive amount of data was collected, reports written and rewritten, and meetings constantly held. The organization didn't treat this as just a budget-cutting exercise that needed to be done so it could get on to other things.

For the city's staff, it was seen as a time to step up to the plate and solve the problem as a team. We all realized this was not just a passing problem or something that could be weathered by burning through the city's savings account (the ending fund balance).

The city manager's message was crystal clear: the organization was to view the challenge as an opportunity rather than an obstacle. This was the time to consider organizational realignment, staff reassignments, and re-engineering and reaffirming our commitment to quality and cost-effective service delivery.

Staff members were challenged with preserving the most critical of services and identifying the services the city could provide less often or could live without. It was time to change what we were doing and how we were doing it. Truly it was what the name implied—a fundamental review of every service that Las Vegas provided.

The effort wasn't easy, and we made the kind of mistakes an organization that hasn't operated in a cutback mode for decades makes. Some of the lessons we learned as things smoothed out are valuable enough to put into writing. These won't work for every organization, but they are food for thought.

Lesson No. 1. Take the Rearview Mirror Off the Bus

Looking back is fine for explaining or justifying why things happened, but everyone needs to focus forward because the new challenges require new thinking. Recognizing that the situation is going to get harder before it gets easier is a required mind-set because cutting back and changing the way things are done is a formidable task.

It was imperative to quickly get beyond the we-looked-at-this-before statements and haven't-we-plowed-that-ground-already arguments, so one of the first rules was that no program was sacred. This approach also eliminated the blame game so we could get on with solving the situation at hand.

Lesson No. 2. Time and Indecision Are the Enemies

A huge mistake made by many growth communities is waiting too long before grasping the fact that the economy is punching holes in the bottom of the boat. This is especially true where the optimistic mantra of "things will get better" has been deeply etched into the mind-set of the community's business and civic leaders.

The tendency to treat changing economic trends as just glitches, bumps in the road, or a momentary aberration

postpones the hard decisions necessary to operate in a cutback mode. The longer a local government believes "this too shall pass" or denies what is happening, the fewer its workable options.

Lesson No. 3. Bang the Drum Loudly

Changing an organization's mind-set from having enough to go around and more to putting the big brakes on spending is an enormous challenge. Management needs to devote as much time as it takes to convince elected officials, employees, residents, and media that not only does a problem exist but urgent attention is required.

Ongoing briefings, one-on-ones with councilmembers, position papers, discussions with newspaper editors, and meetings with employees are essential. Everybody—elected officials, state legislators, employees, media, and residents—needs to know the facts and what steps are being taken to solve the problem.

Lesson No. 4. It's All About Job Security

While programs, clients, and services are important to employees, the overriding concern of every member of the local government staff is job security. "Will I lose my job?" is a question that creeps into every worker's thoughts, and worries about family concerns and life style closely follow. The faster a city moves to the point it can specifically identify what positions (if any) are going to be eliminated and what other compensation impacts are going to take place, the better off its ability to settle down the organization. Until this threshold is reached, employees will focus on whether they will remain employed rather than on the new challenge of operating in a cutback environment. So long as there is job uncertainty, rumors will continue to vibrate through the workforce like a wheel on an 18-wheeler that is out of alignment.

Lesson No. 5. Heavy Lifting Needs to Be Done by Department Directors

In the end, it is the department directors on whom the management staff depend for making most of the retrenchment decisions. They operate at the direct service delivery level and have the best knowledge of what will really happen if a change is made.

The absolute success of a radical retrenchment program is tied directly to how well the department directors perform. And the importance of keeping the management team intact and not pitting one department against another cannot be overstated.

A local government manager needs a cohesive team of department directors to work through an expense reduction program successfully. These courageous directors also need regular support by the executive team for putting the really meaningful ideas out there for consideration.

Lesson No. 6. Financial Condition Is the Stabilizer

Common sense and the city's creditworthiness (ability to issue bonds) require strict adherence to the principles of sound financial condition. Measuring every retrenchment decision against the benchmarks of financial condition (the industry standards set by the rating institutions) is a way to avoid bad decision making that is often based on constituency demands, departmental turf battles, or political expediency.

A solid financial model developed by the Las Vegas finance director and tested by outside financial experts was a critical decision-making tool. A city like ours couldn't ignore the financial condition standards and be able to work its way out of a period of declining revenues. Failure to recognize these realities would result simply in an academic exercise and not truly solve the city's financial issues.

Lesson No. 7. Every Budget Line Item Has a Constituency

Understanding this fundamental law is why all items on the block, no matter how inconsequential they may seem in the big picture, must be thoroughly analyzed from not only a cost-benefit perspective but also in terms of the social and political values attached to them.

What might seem to be a minor issue to one person might be a very big deal to a special interest group or a politically powerful person. Knowing the impact of the cuts, how many service beneficiaries are affected, and the true savings is a key part of the discussion. Having a strong performance management system is important for mining these data.

Lesson No. 8. Cast the Study Net as Wide as Possible

Retrenchment work is a team effort that involves many interrelated and often fast-moving parts. It's a mistake to focus the retrenchment effort on just making budget cuts. Las Vegas put into place 10 other information-gathering initiatives to collect data, ideas, opinions, and judgments with respect to ways to rebalance the organization.

Collectively, these studies focused on human services, operational services, fee adjustments, organizational structure, consolidations with other entities, and alternative work schedules and were used in the decision making surrounding the retrenchment and service-rebalancing effort.

Lesson No. 9. Someone Needs to Be the Referee

No matter how accommodating or collegial all the players are, in a large city or county government someone has to break the ties, override objections, and sort out differences. This way, the manager can concentrate on the complex variables and unknowns that rise up with increasing frequency as the rebalancing effort moves toward a conclusion.

This was the task assigned to me, and it was a real learning experience. For a rebalancing effort to be effective, someone has to make a lot of unpopular choices so the manager has the time to work on the bigger (and often more political) issues. This is not a job for someone who has a need to be liked, and the task needs to be accomplished by someone who not only knows what the organization does at the operational level but also has a firm grounding in finance and budgeting.

Without someone acting as referee, the city or county manager will be buried in endless arguments pertaining to such matters as the consolidation of inspections, use of energy-efficient vehicles, position reclassifications, and so forth. The manager's time needs to be spent with the bigger-picture issues and preparing to make the final decisions regarding recommendations to be made to elected officials.

Lesson No. 10. Politics and Practicality

The buck stops with the elected officials, and they need as much information as the staff can develop. Because they have to make the final calls after receiving the city manager's recommendations, they need to be aware of as many options as possible in order to sort out and oversee the changes.

When staff are able to clearly identify all the budget-cutting options and present them in a nondefensive way so that the elected officials have a reasonable time in which to consider all the implications, the elected officials can focus on what the city really has to do. Keeping the council fully advised is as important as anything else that is done in a retrenchment program.

Lesson No. 11. Mobilize the Media

When retrenchment work gets serious, rumors start to fly around city hall—the kind of rumors that get picked up by the media. To avoid misinformation from being reported, direct communications need to be established with the media. Reporters need to know who has the facts, and editors should receive updates as often as possible.

The goal is to use the media as a distributor of factual information about what actions management is taking and why. The single most important criterion when dealing with the media is to provide them in a timely manner with factually correct numbers that are understandable to the layperson.

Lesson No. 12. Shepherding the Process

Someone has to be designated as the project manager because of the complex shepherding that this process takes. This person has to have the authority to speak on behalf of the manager with respect to the assignment of tasks, meeting schedules, staff participation, communications, and deadlines.

The project manager needs to have the trust of the organization and the skills necessary for keeping everything and everybody on track. Until the project is completed, it is a full-time task that needs to be handled by one of the organization's best managers. Most important, this person needs to have direct access to the city manager and the full confidence of the manager.

Lesson No. 13. Listen to the Heartbeat of the Employees

Create as many opportunities as possible for employees to share their ideas—preferably outside of traditional meeting settings but not exclusive of them. Idea competitions and focus groups are critical steps for keeping everyone in the loop. You are not likely to solve the problem through that one revolutionary idea, but you will find some low-hanging fruit that you might not have known was hidden behind the leaves. At the end of the day, you will be able to feel confident that everyone had a chance to share ideas for improvement and cost savings.

Lesson No. 14. Communicate Endlessly

Use every opportunity to share the data, process, and latest reports. Dedicated Web sites, memos, and regular newsletters are good tools that most employees can access. Don't exclude your union officials as the process unfolds. They can be important for success when it is time to implement the plan that council approves.

No city or county is totally immune to the economic consequences driven by unexpected events in our global society. In the past, local government managers focused on such local and regional economic indicators as building permits and local employment patterns. Now communities must constantly look beyond the horizon, often to the other side of the globe, where once seemingly other-world events now affect them—for example, the price of oil, industrialization of China, trade relations, global warming, and wars.

Communities must expect to be financially impacted at some point in the future because the new world order is such that an individual community has much less control over its economic housekeeping than in years past. Remember,

whether it's the S&L crisis of the '80s, the dot-com burst of the '90s, or the housing and liquidity crisis of today, there will always be bad times as well as good.

To be successful, managers, present and future, will have to develop the skill set necessary to cope with the always looming possibility of revenue upheaval that is now part of the world's economic condition.

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009 · VOLUME 91 · NUMBER 1

PM*PLUS*

Leading Change Isn't a Spectator Sport!

by Patrick Ibarra

> "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."
>
> —Albert Einstein

In today's ever-changing, unfolding world, the forces for change are rooted in the continuation of past issues gathering momentum—declining revenues, contentious political pressures, and increasing demands for service as well as other issues arriving on the scene that include shifting workforce demographics and expanding technologies.

In public sector organizations large and small, change is ubiquitous and often overwhelming, especially to those who perceive themselves as being on the receiving end. For leaders, the struggles reside in both corralling the forces for change and shepherding their organizations and members of those groups though a successful change process.

Government organizations are encouraged to institutionalize best practices, freeze them into place, concentrate on execution, increase predictability, and get processes under control. These ideas establish stability as the key to performance.

Consequently, public sector organizations are built to support enduring values, stable strategies, and bureaucratic structures—not to change. In today's chaotic unpredictable world, however, organizations should be built around practices that encourage change, not hinder it. Playing it safe is no longer playing it smart.

It has been said that not everyone is for progress. Many leaders are under the assumption that change can be accomplished with a mandate. Actually, the merit of an idea or change initiative has little to do with its successful implementation. Every organization has its own unique "cemetery," and that's often where good ideas go.

Why? Because leaders either try to strong-arm people into compliance or believe that, over time, employees will simply accept the change. Rarely does either of these occur. Instead, people often wait out the change with a this-too-shall-pass mind-set or act as though they support it long enough to impress decision makers and until attention is diverted to something else and they can return to work as normal.

The best example I have found to demonstrate the struggles people and organizations encounter with change, especially with regard to implementation, is one many of us can relate to: getting in better physical shape. We are extraordinarily gifted at talking about getting in shape (the chatter about change), and even go so far as to join a local health club (we buy the solution).

The problem surfaces when it comes down to actually visiting the health club and, while there, participating in some type of workout that will generate our desired outcome. Sound familiar? Organizations and their members duplicate this same practice: employees and leaders chat about change and buy solutions, but when it comes to actual implementation it seems something always comes up and derails good intentions.

Organizational development is the practice of managing change through design and application. Its approach is to manage change through a series of planned events. For too long, however, change has been managed as a process as though people function in lockstep, waiting for the next pronouncement from on high before they move on with their beliefs and thoughts.

Quite the contrary, according to some from the organizational development field who recognize the people side of the change equation and realize that people are complicated, ambivalent, and downright messy. They also believe that employees, heavily influenced by their work environment, routinely zigzag in their expectation about the results

from a change initiative.

The balance of this article will (1) Describe the most common change scenarios organizational leaders find themselves in so as to raise awareness and lessen the likelihood the situations will be replicated and (2) outline an effective approach for designing and implementing meaningful and sustainable change initiatives.

Typical Change Scenarios

The barriers that hinder, derail, and often prevent well-intentioned change initiatives from accomplishing the desired outcome are numerous and often fairly predictable. Crucial to implementing a successful change initiative is to be fully aware of the common mistakes even seasoned professionals can sometimes make. As you read these scenarios, identify those that you have experienced:

"Change is a solution looking for a problem." An executive or manager returns from a conference all fired up, wanting staff members to read about the latest management fad that will, like taking a pill, solve their problems. The solution is a series of simple, easy-to-use steps that, upon implementation and often in isolation, will cure the current ills.

Unfortunately, this practice does not account for the organization's own history, unique culture, and current state of affairs that together often work to resist change. It is the equivalent of a person's initial consultation with a personal trainer—a session that can lead some to expect to become an Olympic-caliber athlete when, in fact, the original goal was to merely get in shape for an upcoming high school reunion.

"More communication is all we need to make this change successful." The notion here is that a bigger dose of communication will persuade all involved that the change under consideration is worth their extended effort. I strongly encourage leaders who reduce everything to a communication gap and who often "fall on their swords" to prove their point to strongly reconsider their approach.

Why? Because leaders often approach communication as a one-way street and focus more on telling instead of listening. In reality, leaders and managers mistakenly believe they are the intended audience for their own message. As a result, they begin with their point of view about the change and assume that everyone will get on board and see the situation as they do.

In reality, however, most employees are not at the same level of understanding about the situation and need more opportunity to examine all the factors. Leaders often become frustrated and wonder what's wrong with all those folks who don't "get it," forgetting that employees have not been engaged in all the discussions that have brought leaders to their conclusions.

"We need to brainstorm our way out of this situation." This activity often reflects the quotation from Albert Einstein shown at the beginning of this article. Thought processes are sometimes flawed, and doing more of a flawed process only gets you more flawed, or worse faster. Moreover, managers who do little to cultivate the imagination of employees every day are mistaken when they expect that convening those same employees in a stale room with day-old doughnuts and bad coffee will result in leading-edge ideas that simply appear.

Most employees are pretty savvy when they are invited to participate. They realize early on that there will be lots of talk—even earnest efforts afterward about instituting something generated at the brainstorm session—but little to no significant improvements made. Consequently, their participation wanes, and there is a direct correlation between this energy drain and any change initiative actually succeeding.

For too long, members in organizations have heard too much of the same thing and seen too much of the same thing, and now feel totally comfortable being spectators to the events unfolding in their own organization. Leaders become frustrated with this type of employee mind-set, but it is often the result of the organization's collective history as it relates to change initiatives. Employees have very long memories, and they often have seen change initiatives simply repackaged. Ultimately they become disillusioned. Quite frankly, there's nothing worse than a dispirited employee.

"Let's reorganize." Change is often designed to ease some level of pain, and reorganizations tend be the most popular technique to remedy that pain. If organizational members are not aware of what's supposed to happen once the situation has been remedied and the pain is gone, then that uncertainty plays a significant role in their inability to transition to the new way of doing business.

Many agencies undertake a reorganization that is intended to deliver different and better outcomes but often generate few, if any, positive dividends. The changes expected were not those delivered. Leaders often pull the "let's reorganize" lever, which is perceived by many employees as another in a series of misguided attempts at resolving often an isolated but troubling issue.

There also is a tendency to believe that simply reorganizing a function and moving boxes around on an organization chart translates to substantive differences in how work is executed.

In summary, every organization is perfectly designed to achieve the results it gets. In other words, designing a reorganization when insufficient attention was devoted to identifying significant changes in outcomes will amount to practically no positive results and may unexpectedly exacerbate other pressing issues.

The point here is that organizational change is much more than just a change in a process, procedure, or program.

Organizational change is any type of transition that requires a change in human performance. The problem with ignoring the human aspect of organizational change is that you could be leaving out a whole range of initiatives that require a change management focus in order to be successful.

Change must focus on content, people, and process. Content refers to what about the organization needs to be changed: strategy, structure, systems, processes, technology, or work practices. People refer to the behaviors, emotions, minds, and spirits of the people who are being impacted by the change.

Process refers to how the content and people changes will be planned, designed, and implemented. All three aspects must be woven together into one unified change effort. Often, there is an overreliance on the content aspect of the equation and much less attention paid to the people side, with the assumption that people know intuitively what to do once the change has been announced.

Simply put, content is the what; people, the who; and process, the how. All three must be synchronized for the change initiative to succeed.

How to Implement Change Initiatives Successfully

Traditional organizations like those in the public sector are built to resist change. Their numerous rules, regulations, and policies limit experimentation, program in traditional behaviors, and reward consistent performance. They have many checks and balances in place to ensure that the organization operates in the prescribed manner.

> Essential to successful change initiatives is the designation of the type of change being undertaken. In other words, not all change is created equal.

This approach is consistent with the objective of achieving success under current business conditions, but it is entirely inconsistent with achieving continuing success when change is needed. Change must become the new norm; it should be contagious among members of the organization. Organizations should always be changing, both adapting to new circumstances as well as driving strategic change in anticipation of what's on the horizon.

Essential to successful change initiatives is the designation of the type of change being undertaken. In other words, not all change is created equal. Planned change efforts can be characterized as falling along a continuum ranging from incremental changes that involve fine-tuning the organization (referred to as change with a lower case c) to quantum changes that entail fundamentally altering how the organization operates (referred to as Change with a capital *C*).

Vehicle maintenance is an apt metaphor. It's crucial to distinguish the type of change in an organization. Is it the equivalent of a routine oil change or a major engine overhaul? Too often, executives overdramatize the change even for slight modifications, so employees may view change with a healthy dose of skepticism. Therefore, distinguishing where on the continuum the change initiative is that you are driving should be one of the first steps you take.

Fundamental to motivating change in an organization is having some dissatisfaction with how things are. In that pursuit, leaders and managers need to foster a work environment that enlists the involvement of employees in the performance and future of the organization; creating and sustaining a learning-oriented, feedback-seeking climate is strongly encouraged. By doing so, leaders develop their organization's capability by building up their people.

Their focus should be on creating a high-commitment culture on the part of employees as the main lever to institute change. This can happen through a variety of means, providing feedback organizationwide about the agency's performance and engaging employees in random discussions about the impact of trends on the agency, to name just two. In the spirit of the idea that "what gets talked about gets done," substantive discussions should be regularly held at all levels about the forces for change and how respective organizations intend to respond.

Penetrating the cocoon that can insulate public sector agencies should not be left to the annual budgeting process or the occasional staff meeting but, instead, needs to be part of the fabric that comprises the organization's collective mind-set. If we want employees at all levels to exercise initiative and act as leaders, then it is imperative that they are not only advocates of change but also active participants in its development and implementation.

Organizational change can be viewed as two distinct phases: determining the change needed and implementing the change.

Phase 1: Determining the Change Needed

As was described earlier under the topic of typical change scenarios, many change initiatives are misguided from the beginning. The common theme shared by those scenarios can be attributed to the desire for immediate improvement, with leaders and managers doing the proverbial "gut check" to know what needs fixing.

There is sometimes a tendency to accelerate through the assessment phase so one can arrive at the more provocative segment of the equation—the actual solution. At its core, though, change management is a problem-solving process, so if insufficient time and effort are applied to actually determining current conditions, the likelihood that a change initiative will succeed is marginal.

An alternative to the gut check is an analytical process that focuses on evaluating current practices and conditions as well as anticipating potentially impacting trends. A process that can be held up to scrutiny and is consistent with the due-diligence expression so common in organizations today is precisely what is needed. More than simply a popular notion, due diligence is designed to evaluate all the factors that are prompting the current situation.

Unfortunately, during this phase inexperience and a "we've always done it that way" approach can strangle the process. The challenge in this phase is to remove the psychic prisons that prevent people from seeing old problems in a new light. Analysis suffers and effectiveness deteriorates when managers and leaders cannot reframe the issue. When they don't know what to do, they do more of what they know.

Unfortunately, rarely is government described as being proactive. Instead it is accused of the opposite: being too reactive. Reactive measures tend to create crises and changes that can occur and may be viewed as punitive.

Although most public sector agencies do not have the equivalent of a research and development (R&D) department, that should not preclude them from using an R&D process. The R&D process is well-suited for this phase of the change process.

Essentially, R&D is focused on evaluating current and future conditions, assessing their impacts on organizational performance, and developing alternatives to address those impacts. To simplify, R&D is akin to engaging in a continuous SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) process so the organization is constantly feeling the necessity for change.

An effective R&D process will be able to distinguish the magnitude of the changes needed, the incremental from the quantum, their level of interdependence, and, most important, what the change needed actually is. This is consistent with the maxim that "problems drive solutions," not the other way around.

Important during the analysis are two aspects often overlooked:

1. Occasionally the change solution should focus on what the organizations should stop doing. Yes, that's right, stop doing. Public sector organizations excel at performing more of the same but suffer from a straitjacket approach when deciding what to cease. In many organizations, for example, there are dedicated, earnest, hard-working employees who prepare reports no one reads.

   It's time to evaluate what each and every employee is contributing to support your agency's mission, and those activities that are not valued-added should be stopped. Sometimes the most important thing anyone can do to institute change is to refrain from doing what seems normal (that is, the way we've always done it).
2. Overreliance on best practices and benchmarking. Benchmarks are about input and output measures and can assist with forecasting workload requirements, but often they have little positive correlation with positive outcomes. Government is in the business of creating positive outcomes, not merely producing more outputs.

   Best practices are often self-proclaimed by agencies without any outside review assessing their validity, and they do not take into account the unique culture and circumstances of the organization into which they are transplanted. Furthermore, using best practices for every service and program an agency provides is not only unrealistic, it's unnecessary.

   Once the analysis has been completed, the situation ascertained, and a change solution identified, the second phase is the actual implementation of the change solution.

Phase 2: Implementation

Fundamentally, change is about improving employee performance and organizational effectiveness. Strong, focused, and sustained commitment is required to implement any change initiative successfully. With many change initiatives, there is an inclination to simply do that which is easiest or least controversial. While that may be the most politically expedient course of action, it may prove to have fleeting results.

Executives must be visible advocates of the outcomes being generated by the change initiative. In that respect, employees invariably have expectations about the results of organizational change. These expectations can play an important role in generating motivation for change.

The expectations can serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy, leading members to invest energy in change programs that they expect will succeed. When members expect success, they are likely to develop greater commitment to the change process and direct more energy into the positive behaviors needed to implement it. The key to achieving these positive effects is to visibly communicate realistic, positive expectations about the organizational changes early and often.

A variety of approaches exist to implement change effectively in organizations. The crux of each is that support from top management is necessary from the beginning and throughout the entire change process. Beyond that, the following 10 steps (tactics) are recommended:

1. **Define change as a compelling element of organization strategy.** Unless the proposed change finds its way into a grander set of organizational priorities, it is unlikely that the change will be sustainable over time. The reality in most organizations today is that organizational priorities are driven by the annual budget cycle. It will be difficult to sustain the change effort unless there is a clear and unambiguous reason for it. Linking the change to organizational strategy creates such a purpose.

   Often change is designed as though once in place it is permanent. On the contrary, many changes should be temporary—but temporary may be several years. The notion that anything put in place is permanent and needs no

attention is incorrect.

2. **Put an infrastructure in place, a change management coalition.** Get the right people involved in the change effort and define the roles and responsibilities for these people. The coalition, to be effective, must include people in the organization who are influential and can affect employee opinion; they must be people of high integrity and credibility.

   Nothing dooms a change initiative faster than for those people overseeing it to have tarnished reputations. As has been stated, the merit of the change has little to do with its success, especially when it's compromised at the start by people whose credibility is questionable.

   Depending on the scope of the change initiative, the coalition should pursue bold actions that are highly visible moves and demonstrate that things are now "very different around here." These moves are to be understood as emphatic signals that send unequivocal messages about the new direction. Bold actions should not indict the past, but rather honor it without prolonging it. They must attend to both content and people changes.

   As an organizational effectiveness practitioner, my role is to serve as a change adviser, and within this arrangement there are definite limits on my ability to influence change. Consultants can play a pivotal role but cannot be seen as the face of change. Instead, a strong partnership must be established between the consultant and those overseeing the change initiative.

3. **Work from an implementation plan.** Implement the recommendations resulting from Phase 1 and be sure they are rigorously managed.

4. **Recognize the investment and commit to the long haul.** Ensure that the change project doesn't become some flavor-of-the-day effort. Help people understand that change takes time to implement if it is to be successful.

5. **Think small.** Break the change effort into elements that are small enough to ensure quick wins and build momentum. The coalition should divide the change initiative into several phases, each phase with its own dividends.

6. **Build alliances in support of the change.** Learn to play the politics of change. Find champions for the change effort. Successful implementation will be decided by customers, both internal and external, who are affected directly or indirectly by the change.

7. **Align recognition to support implementation.** Employees will generally achieve what they are rewarded for or measured against, not just what they are expected to do. Provide positive recognition when expectations are met and negative consequences when expectations are not met.

8. **Translate the change into job-level details.** In the end, the people whose jobs are affected by the change will be the determining factor in whether the change effort proves successful. Unless the change can be translated into specific actions or activities for these individuals, there will be too many opportunities for misunderstanding, and unnecessary time will be spent tracking down glitches in the implemented solution. Make the change meaningful to the people who will be responsible for implementing the change.

9. **Integrate the change into management systems.** Incorporate the change into such systems as the agency's strategic plan, budget, performance measurements, structure, compensation, succession planning, and employee orientation and training. Integrating the change into these systems will help prevent the change from dissipating over time and can serve as an early warning system if the change effort jumps off track.

10. **Follow up relentlessly.** The need for short-term results drives most organizations, and change requires time to become sustainable. People must be held accountable for their commitments. Establish regular opportunities to review progress through status reports, project review meetings, and meetings with key stakeholders.

The idea behind the 10-step approach is that executing a change initiative cannot be left to chance and must be done according to a coherent plan of steps, at least the technical aspects of the change. It is crucial to recognize that employees may not transition smoothly through the steps. This will serve as a reminder that when an organization does not actively engage its employees in the change debate, it lessens the likelihood of continued success.

Sustaining Change

The initial excitement and activity of changing often dissipate in the face of the practical problems of trying to learn new ways of doing business. A strong tendency exists among many members in organizations to return to what they already know. Just as diets should lead to changed eating habits and working out must become part of one's lifestyle for both activities to generate the desired results, change must take hold and become part of the fabric of how an organization conducts its business.

Two maxims about change management essential to remember throughout the change journey are:

- "Changing is what organizations do, not what you do to them."
- "Organizations don't change people, people change organizations."

And, finally, remember that conversations are the oxygen of priorities. So begin the dialogue about change and enjoy the ride!

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DEPARTMENTS

Ethics

Focus on the Fundamentals

At the beginning of this new year, local government leaders may well face significant challenges in delivering ethical, transparent democracy. Limited financial resources at every level of government are likely to force difficult choices about services, commitments, and investments in the future.

Although opportunities and innovation may result as well, it will no doubt be a tough period. Successfully navigating staff, organizations, and communities through challenging times requires leaders to focus on the fundamentals, that is, on ethics. Building a strong ethical foundation is the key to success. During periods of uncertainty, it's prudent for managers to take steps to ensure that the foundation is rock solid.

Is there agreement about the core values that will drive decision making and policies? Do we demonstrate respect for the unique roles and responsibilities of elected officials, staff, and residents? In the push for results and accountability, is it clear to all that how we achieve our goals is as critical as getting there?

Consider these steps to promote an ethical culture:

- **Renew your commitment to the profession's values.** Commitment is more than hanging the ICMA Code of Ethics on the wall (although that isn't a bad idea). It is a dedication to the highest standards of honor and integrity in all public and personal matters in order to merit the respect and confidence of those we serve. It is unwavering integrity.
- **Engage elected officials.** Use council orientations and goal-setting sessions to encourage elected officials to understand how their conduct and commitment to public service values contribute to ethical government. Take the time to enlighten them about the ICMA Code of Ethics and the values that guide professional local government managers.
- **Set organizational values.** If the organization lacks a code of ethics or statement of values, implement a process that engages elected officials, staff, and residents in the definition of core values and acceptable conduct. If you have a code of ethics, is there clarity and agreement on the core values that drive critical decisions? Organizations or teams with shared values produce the best results.
- **Ethics training.** It's a myth that good people always make wise choices. Regular training builds awareness of common ethical issues, provides tools and strategies for effective problem solving, and, yes, can even inspire someone to do the right thing when faced with a difficult ethical dilemma.
- **Welcome the dialogue and the dissenter.** Make sure that individuals have formal and informal opportunities to raise any ethical concerns they may have about conduct or decisions in the organization. Create a safe environment for those seeking advice or raising a warning.
- **Transparency, transparency, transparency.** Clear and regular communication, complete and accurate disclosure of the facts, taking responsibility for decisions and outcomes, and a focus on transparent processes all work to build trust with those we serve.

As Dave Childs, ICMA senior adviser and assistant county manager, Washoe County, Nevada, notes, "We are all experiencing a time of extreme stress in our organizations. A key result is that our employees are justifiably worried about the stability of their jobs, about their personal finances, and ultimately about their own future. In uncertain times, it is imperative that we provide our employees something solid to hold on to.

"And, to that end, what could be more important than having every employee be totally sure of the values and ethics of their workplace and their organization? As the leaders of our organizations, we need to redouble our efforts to bring that sense of stability and grounding to all of the dedicated employees who serve the public each and every day.

Building a solid ethical foundation is one of the keys to providing that stability and restoring confidence. And now is the time to begin."

—**Martha Perego**
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DEPARTMENTS

On Retirement

Scholarship Fund Helps Surviving Family Members Pay for Education

In the United States, we are fortunate to have public employees who are dedicated to making our communities enjoyable and safe. In the course of performing their duties, however, many firefighters, police officers, and other public employees face great risks to their safety. Too often, their work can lead to fatal outcomes.

While we cannot ease the pain felt by their families, we can help them move forward with their lives.

In 2001, ICMA-RC established the Vantagepoint Public Employee Memorial Scholarship Fund. The fund provides post–secondary education scholarships to the surviving children and spouses of firefighters, police officers, and all non-uniformed local and state government employees who have died in service to their communities. These scholarships help survivors pursue college and vocational-school opportunities. Since its inception, the fund has provided over 200 scholarships worth more than $600,000.

This year, the scholarship fund awarded 40 students from across the country $90,000 in scholarships. These students are attending such schools as Stanford University, Parsons The New School for Design, Pennsylvania State University, and Knox College.

One of this year's recipients, Lillian Cherry, of Clinton, Maryland, is pursuing an associate's degree in culinary arts from the Art Institute of Washington. She hopes to start her own catering business after she graduates.

Another recipient, Kimberly Dillard, of Leonard, Texas, plans to use the scholarship to attend graduate school at Texas A&M University. She has dreams of completing her degree and teaching college-level law enforcement courses.

Kimberly, an officer with the Leonard Police Department, decided to follow in her father's footsteps and became a police officer early in her career. She has served on the force for more than 19 years and recently earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Her son, Joseph, is following his family's legacy by also becoming a police officer.

Survivors of all public sector employees, both emergency and nonemergency personnel, who have died in the line of duty are eligible to apply for the scholarship.

If you or someone you know has lost a loved one and has family members who could benefit from this program, let them know that applications are being accepted from December 15, 2008, through March 15, 2009.

Copies of the application and more information about the program can be obtained by visiting www.vantagescholar.org.

—**Joan McCallen**
President, Vantagepoint Memorial Scholarship Fund and
CEO and President, ICMA Retirement Corporation
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DEPARTMENTS

Profile

City Leaders Respect, Though at Times Disagree With, Joyce Wilson

Joyce Wilson is city manager, El Paso, Texas.

A city manager form of government has taken politics out of the administration of the city, and it has given the mayor and city council more time to focus on the legislative policies they would like to see addressed, El Paso, Texas, City Manager Joyce Wilson says.

West-Central city Representative Susie Byrd has been a vocal supporter of Wilson, but recently she revealed she was apprehensive about the need to hire a city manager.

"I worked under the strong mayor form of government when Ray Caballero was here, and I even voted against changing the system to a city manager system," Byrd says. "But Joyce has completely changed my mind about this. She is a great asset to the city."

Wilson, who has been city manager since 2004, says she likes to take a back seat when it comes to public appearances and lets Mayor John Cook and the rest of council be the "face of the city."

Still, she is active in the community and often attends neighborhood gatherings, and she often meets with civic and business leaders from throughout the region. She also schedules monthly meetings with each city representative, although she admits to meeting more frequently than that with most of them.

"This is a shared-power environment we have here. No one has absolute power," Wilson says. "I have made great progress in developing a good working relationship with every city representative."

Wilson pointed to Northeast city Rep. Melina Castro, with whom she had very little contact four years ago. "Everything was very formal with her. It was through e-mails and letters," Wilson says. "Since then, we have worked together and

have developed a relationship based on trust."

East-Valley city Representative Eddie Holguin, who often finds himself on the losing side of the votes in council, says he, too, has come to admire Wilson for her work.

"Joyce and I don't see eye-to-eye, but she has done a good job carrying out the policies set by council," Holguin says. "I meet with her often and she has always been very responsive to the District 6 office and the needs of the people in my district."

Wilson has faced strong criticism this year, though, especially from home and business owners upset over the creation of the stormwater fee to help address drainage deficiencies throughout the city. Critics have says the fee, which is charged to all water users and managed by the Public Service Board (PSB), is a form of taxation.

"I don't think the city handled the stormwater thing very well, and I guess since she's the city manager she could be to blame," Eastsider Gloria Carrasco says.

Wilson defends the creation of the stormwater district but acknowledges that some tactical mistakes were made in the early stages of establishing the fee. "Could things have been handled differently? Yes. We kind of just walked away from this one," she says. "There could have probably been better communication between the PSB and the public before the rollout of the fee."

She also says she would now have insisted on better communication between the council and the PSB in order to avoid the conflict that exists between some of the members of council and the water district.

"Still, looking back on it, a dedicated fee (for stormwater) was the right thing to do," Wilson says.

Wilson's contract with the city runs through 2011, and she says she has plans for each one of those years. She wants to see the city's mass transit plans realized and hopes to get started on plans for another quality-of-life bond program next year.

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> February 7, 2009, marks five years that El Paso, Texas (population 624,365), has operated with the council-manager form of government.

Also on her agenda are the improvement of streets throughout El Paso and the implementation of more environment-friendly policies and the development of both the Medical Center of the Americas and the downtown.

"In three years, I would like to see the plans in place for a better El Paso," Wilson says. "I hope that by 2011, I will be able to say that I had a role in helping these things happen."

—Gustavo Reveles Acosta
Staff Writer
El Paso Times
El Paso, Texas

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DEPARTMENTS

Intern Profile

Intern Profile: Robyn Keyes

Robyn Keyes began her work at Livingston, Montana, as an intern.

In May 2007, Robyn Keyes began her internship with the city manager's office in Livingston, Montana. Robyn was the first to serve the city in this capacity, and she set the bar extremely high!

Getting acclimated to local government, Robyn spent her first month working in each city department, acquiring hands-on experience with the staff members and the daily operations. This was an important piece of on-the-job training as it gave her personal exposure to the challenges of meeting the service demands of a growing community.

Keyes's primary focus was to assist the city manager with such human resource responsibilities as updating job descriptions, enhancing recruitment efforts, and developing a local wellness initiative. Keyes also participated as part of the selection team charged with hiring a new fire chief for the community.

A native of Livingston who graduated from both Park High and Montana State University with honors, Keyes brought an important perspective to the leadership team. For her, the opportunity to improve the quality of life for longtime friends and neighbors made the whole experience even more rewarding. She had a built-in network to rely on when she undertook such community projects as developing a standard bike rack design (and vendor) for the downtown, which also included formal approval from the historic preservation commission.

A popular setting for Hollywood movies (*A River Runs Through It*, *Horse Whisperer*, *Rancho Deluxe*), Livingston has maintained business relationships with numerous directors looking to produce films. Making sure that the expectations of all parties involved are well understood and met during filming is critical to local success. During her internship,

Keyes revised the city's film policy and served as lead staff person for the permit application process.

After completing her internship in May 2008, Keyes remained part of the leadership team as a management assistant to the city manager. In October 2008, she was promoted to the position of human resource associate—the first full-time staff position devoted to human resources.

For Livingston, this internship program was a new experience, and Keyes's performance exceeded all expectations. Her eventual promotion to HR associate demonstrates the value she has brought to our leadership team. Now we look forward to contributions that future interns will make to our organization. This has been a win-win situation for Livingston.

—**Ed Meece**
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