



Minnesota
City/County
Management
Association

President's corner

Jamie Verbrugge, City Administrator, Rosemount

In a couple of weeks, MCMA members will make our annual pilgrimage to Cragun's to refresh, network and learn. The conference committee has done great work once again to develop a program that is stimulating, thought provoking, and meets the development needs of our members as individuals, as professionals, and as community leaders.

I'm in a reflective mood as I wrap up my term serving this organization as president. Last year a challenge was issued to our members to approach our commitment to local government on three fronts – at the individual level, at the community level, and at a national level.

On the individual level, members were encouraged to demonstrate their commitment to self-improvement and continuous learning by pursuing the ICMA credentialed manager designation. I recently reviewed the list of credentialed managers in Minnesota on the ICMA website and was pleased to see about 10 more names than last year at this time. But the total number represents only about 15% of our members. The MCMA Board threw its support behind credentialing by including it as a point of emphasis in the recently adopted strategic plan under professional development.

At the community level, members were encouraged to take the positive message about the importance of professional local government management to our schools, our civic clubs and community organizations. It is important to be a voice in our communities to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering local government services, to educate about the functions and roles of elected and appointed officials, and to encourage participation in the civic process. Civic engagement also found a place among the strategic goals for the association. Part and parcel of that outreach is continuing the tremendous strides taken by the committee

on educational initiatives to develop the K-12 curriculum.

All of this outreach fits nicely into the final category – challenging members at a national level – to demonstrate your commitment to professional local government by monetarily supporting the ICMA Fund for Professional Management. The MCMA Board will consider a proposed budget at its meeting in May that allocates \$5,000 to the Fund, directing a portion of funds left over from hosting the ICMA Minneapolis conference back to ICMA and the profession. The Fund has done great work in communities advocating for the council-manager form of government and professional local government management. The ICMA Strategic Planning Committee has also discussed the role of the Fund and I expect there will be more thought given to how it can be even more effectively leveraged in the future.

I encourage you to visit the MCMA website at www.mnmca.org to review the Strategic Plan before going to Cragun's. The Thursday morning session will feature our members talking about the work plans and initiatives of the committees tasked with implementing the plan. Please consider how you can be a positive force in moving these important initiatives forward.

Finally, I want to thank my fellow Board members. This past year serving with my colleagues has been a richly rewarding experience. I am grateful to all the members of MCMA who have provided suggestions and support.

In the same manner that I think we all approach our jobs, our communities and our own lives; I hope that my contributions to the association have helped to place it in a better and stronger position to continue serving the needs of its members and the communities you serve. ◻

*The Professional
Association
of Appointed
Administrators
Serving Local
Governments
in Minnesota*

Range Riders are here to help:

Bill Bassett
(507) 243-4346

Learning About Intercultural Conflict in Duluth

*Kris Busse, Waseca City Manager
MCMA 2nd Vice President*

If you were not among the lucky 45 individuals who participated in the annual Mid-Winter professional development seminar, February 23 and 24 in Duluth, you missed a great opportunity to learn about your conflict resolution style. Robin Silverman, who did such a great job last year, was invited back to present her workshop on "Intercultural Insights". Participants completed an ICS-IP (Intercultural conflict style inventory) This instrument identifies your preferred method of resolving conflict. This exercise allowed us to gain insight into not only our personal conflict approach but how others from different cultures approach conflict. The differences in each conflict style are significant and if you were unaware of another's

conflict style, you will likely misread a situation. The knowledge gained about conflict styles gave participants the tools to resolve disagreements more effectively, manage the stress and anxiety present in conflict situations and more effectively communicate goals and interest to others. All important skills for city managers!

The Edgewater Resort and Water Park provided a new venue for the seminar this year. The feedback we received from previous seminars had indicated a need for more family friendly activities. Everyone enjoyed the waterslides, lazy river and hot tubs. The complimentary cocktail reception including a musical trio and complimentary breakfast on morning was a big hit too. ☺

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Revamping Our Member Support

David Unmacht, 1st Vice President

Our esteemed President Jamie Verbrugge has led the MCMA Board through a series of strategic planning discussions over the course of the past six months. Members have been introduced to the results through email communications and the Association Newsletter. In addition, time has been set aside on our agenda at Cragun's to further review the strategic direction of the Association.

As First Vice-President my role is to chair the Membership and Recognition Committee. The Committee has been diligently working on the assessing the level of and current practices in place for how we as members support each other. Diane Krogh who was serving as MCMA contact person for members in transition has recently retired and thus it is an opportune time to review our past and chart a new course for the future.

In summary the Committee has come to the following conclusions about our current results in supporting members in transition:

- Members do provide support when needed yet this is done on an individual basis
- There is no structured or organized communications plan for member support
- Member contact falls off as time moves on and members begin to feel isolated
- Transitioned members believe the Association can improve our contacts

The Committee has brainstormed on various ideas and recommendations for the future and we are currently working on several themes. More details on these will be presented at Cragun's; to date our work has resulted in the following thoughts:

- Consider a more formal role for the Range Riders in member support
- Divide the state into regions and organize a formal communications plan
- Recognize the generational differences in implementing a member support plan
- Develop a member "news and notes" email or webpage
- Utilize MCMA Board members in contacting and calling members

There is no question that the strategic direction of our Association must include a component that puts member support (whether in transition or not) as a high priority. Contacting members "on the brink" or in need is just as important as reaching out to our members in transition. This is a fundamental value within our Association and we have concluded that our past practices have been good in this area, yet we can and must do better.

We are also interested in your ideas and suggestions. As we move ahead in our Committee work and begin to formalize our recommendations, please contact me if you have suggestions or ideas. I can be reached at dunmacht@co.scott.mn.us. ☐

ICMA Midwest Regional Summit

Peter Herlofsky

City Administrator, Farmington

ICMA Midwest Vice President

On March 22 and 23, 2007 a Minnesota delegation consisting of the MCMA President, Jamie Verbrugge, Rosemount City Administrator; incoming MCMA President David Unmacht, Scott County Administrator; Kevin Frazell, MCMA Secretariat Officer; and I attended the ICMA Midwest Regional Summit in Milwaukee. This event featured an ICMA University Workshop titled, Sustainability as a Legacy: Leaving a Legacy of Public Service.

The purpose of event was to provide an opportunity for representatives from the ICMA Midwest region, which includes the states of Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, and Ohio to network. The original purpose of the Midwest meeting was to involve the state officers in ICMA activities and provide them an opportunity to share their concerns. Over the past couple of years the Midwest Regional Summit has changed in emphasis to not just include the state officers, but to include ICMA members throughout the Midwest region. The Regional Summit provides an opportunity for members of ICMA, unable to attend the annual conference, to experience an ICMA event closer to home.

This year's summit included the topic of Sustainability as a Legacy: Leaving a Legacy of Public Service. The program was presented by ICMA Executive Director Bob O'Neill and ICMA Director of Leadership Development, Felicia Logan. The topic was how to sustain each individual's professional energy in their current positions. The discussion between the members was very helpful and the opportunity for a networking event closer to home proved to be a real benefit to all participants.

One of the most important items emphasized at our meeting was the issue of not only the sustainability of our current position, but how we can encourage the next generation of public employees. Managers themselves need to encourage other ICMA memberships within their own organization. The ability to participate in ICMA events

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MCMA Coaching Program – A Chance to Grow and Share

Susan Arntz, City Administrator, Waconia
MCMA Next Generation Committee

One of the Strategic Priorities for the MCMA Board this year was to create a program that would connect emerging leaders and others who might need or want assistance of mentors and provide coaching opportunities for existing managers. To that end, last summer a subcommittee of the Next Generation Committee started work on creating a Coaching Program. The program mirrors much of the great work done in California.

So, How Does the Program Work?

This program connects interested individuals with coaches through a one-on-one training opportunity. As soon as the details of the program are in place, a Coaches Corner will be located on the MCMA website (www.mncma.org). Emerging leaders and others who want the assistance of a coach will learn about who the available coaches are by looking at the Coaches Corner. The Coaches Corner will have contact information and will allow viewers to know whether the coach is available. Once the coach has been selected, each participant will be provided with a Statement of Mutual Understanding that would be signed. This provides a framework for the individuals to structure their coaching relationship. The program is very flexible, individuals and their coaches will be able to determine how often they will connect, meet, talk, etc.

What Can I Do?

To kick off this program we need coaches from across the state that are willing to participate in this program. As a coach, you have the chance to share your local government management knowledge and have some fun getting to know someone else in the profession.

If you are interested in serving as a coach or have questions about the program, please contact one of the committee members:

- **Susan Arntz**, Waconia City Admin, 952-442-3100, sarntz@waconia.org
- **Bart Fischer**, Newport Econ Dev Dir/Asst Admin, (651) 556-4603, bfischer@newportmn.com
- **Scott Somers**, Savage, Asst City Admin, 952-882.2641, ssomers@ci.savage.mn.us
- **Kim Therres**, Crystal Asst City Admin/HR Mgr, (763)531-1132, kim.therres@ci.crystal.mn.us
- **Heather Worthington**, Edina Asst City Mgr, 952-826-0415, hworthington@ci.edina.mn.us

The success of this new program starts with you and your willingness to participate! Sign up soon. ☐

Position appointments & other personal/ professional news

- **Gary Eitel** is in transition from Rogers
- **Richard Grabow**, City Administrator, Detroit Lakes, will be retiring in September after 23 years
- **Scott Jensen** has been appointed City Administrator, Claremont
- **Ed Larson**, City Manager, Morris will be retiring on June after 26 years
- **Gary Plotz** was recently honored by the City of Hutchinson for 30 years of service as City Administrator!
- **Bill Schimmel** has been appointed City Administrator, Stewartville
- **Lynda Woulfe**, City Administrator, Pine City, has been appointed City Administrator, Cambridge

Reaching the MCMA Secretariat

For MCMA Secretariat services contact:

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You can also contact Rebecca Erickson, Administrative Assistant (rerickso@lmnc.org), or Jim Miller, Executive Director (jmiller@lmnc.org).

All can be reached at (651) 281-1200.

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would be a tremendous asset both to ICMA and the organizations themselves. This is a way that each manager can participate in sustaining their own legacy.

This event is scheduled in the late winter/early spring of each year and ICMA members throughout the Midwest region are encouraged to attend. When a date has been scheduled for next year's event, I will make a point of sharing the meeting notice in this newsletter. ☐

Memorandum from the edge

By Jon Hohenstein

Those of you who paid attention during the first semester of Business Management 101 – before they got around to Theory X and Theory Y and Management by Objectives and so on and so forth – may remember Frederick Taylor's time and motion studies and the Principles of Scientific Management.

For years, as we have applied organizational management principles to local government, the watchword of our profession has been efficiency, essentially we have answered the question, "What Would Frederick Taylor Do?" We have tried to work smarter. Do more with less. Dig deeper. Trim the fat. Tighten our belts. Rightsize. Prioritize. Reorganize. If we could figure out how to do something for nothing, we would have the decision makers beating a path to our door.

Then came 9/11. In a chilling heartbeat, efficiency was coupled with a strange bed-fellow – redundancy. Today we are called upon both to be efficient and to have contingency plans, duplicate systems, secondary power sources, self healing communication loops, back up files, cross-training, three deep succession planning, emergency operations centers and pandemic preparation inventories.

So I have organized myself with primary sources, electronic backups and hard copy backups. That worked pretty well until someone moved up daylight savings time. Despite my careful planning, for three weeks, I had an Outlook calendar that was iffy, a PDA calendar that was wrong and a paper calendar with pages worn so thin from erasures and reentries that you could read both sides of the page at the same time. So much for that system.

I have learned something important from all of this, though. There are occasional benefits to be found in inefficiency. When I was younger, nothing aggravated me more than forgetting something. I was an early adopter of the notion of multitasking. I had read that Napoleon could simultaneously plan a battle, play a game of chess, critique his generals, read a book and order take out. Granted, he was a tyrant and not much to look at, but something about his efficiency fascinated me. If he could keep track of five things, a

reasonably intelligent person ought to be able to remember one.

I was frustrated when I couldn't remember a name, forgot a fact or misplaced something. Most frustrating of all was when I would go from one place to another on an errand of some sort and suddenly realize that I couldn't recall the purpose of the trip. As I have aged and this has become more prevalent, I have arrived at a different way of looking at this experience.

Poor memory is a terrific way to get exercise. I will leave my office, walk purposefully down the hall and stop bewildered in the middle of our department. Rather than getting frustrated, I now take pride in the fact that I have gotten up out of my chair and have taken 100 or so of the 10,000 steps a day you are supposed to take for weight control and cardiovascular health.

It is even better if I make it all the way upstairs, before drawing a blank. People spend hundreds of dollars on health club memberships and drive around forever to get a parking space close to the door just to use a stair climber. Without spending a dime or leaving the building, I get a routine consisting of at least four flights of stairs – up and back once and then up and back again when I remember what it was I went for in the first place. It is a different kind of multitasking that uses energy rather than saving it.

Despite my conclusive, personal evidence, I have begun to see articles that suggest that memory loss is not the inevitable result of aging. Hogwash! I believe this to be bad science perpetrated by people in denial of their eventual diminished capacities. You can read all the books and eat all the fish and work all the crossword puzzles you want. At some point, you are going to climb into the wrong car and wonder why the key doesn't work. You may as well prepare for it. And when it happens, instead of babbling some inane excuse to the horrified person sitting in the passenger seat, just smile, get out and walk across the parking lot to your own car, secure in the knowledge that you are that much closer to 10,000 steps a day and, in doing so, snatch accomplishment from the jaws of embarrassment, yet again. ◻

**Be sure to
check out
MCMA's
web site:
www.mncma.org**