



PM

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

ICMA Local Government EXCELLENCE AWARDS

2022

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Service Awards 46

SEPTEMBER 2022
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Err on the Side of *Caution*

The best approach to achieving an **ethical outcome** | BY MARTHA PEREGO, ICMA-CM

Media stories about the unethical conduct of local government professionals are so dismaying. They cast a truly noble profession in a negative light and feed very false stereotypes about what motivates decent, smart, and dedicated people to devote their career to serving communities.

A city manager caught “cheating at the margins” on compensation or another who outright “cooks the books” on travel expenses nurtures the false narrative that the motivating factor to work in government is self-dealing, not service to others.

Unethical conduct erodes the public’s confidence in every facet of local government. The county engineer who devised a plan to solicit and take bribes from contractors undermines public trust and credibility in the procurement process. Taken at face value it is also not unreasonable for the public to question the soundness of any infrastructure built by these contractors. Would the engineer really hold them accountable at the risk of personal profit?

These scenarios, all ripped from the headlines, describe premediated, calculated conduct designed to deceive. It is unethical and illegal.

Can we take some solace that most of the unethical conduct reported to ICMA rarely involves illegal and outrageous conduct? Not really! It doesn’t take a \$10 million embezzlement case to harm staff, send

an organization into a tailspin, undermine public trust, or damage the reputation of the profession.

Cases adjudicated by the ICMA Committee on Professional Conduct this past year, where they concluded that a member violated the ICMA Code of Ethics, highlight the impact of unethical actions.

Conflicts of Interest

A manager and assistant manager fell in love and embarked upon a romantic relationship. Falling in love with a colleague you work for or with on its own is not an ethics violation. It crosses the ethical line when the conflict of interest that the relationship creates is not cured immediately, (i.e., the relationship ends or one of the parties leaves the organization). Failing to disclose the relationship quadruples the ethics issue. Now have you not only entered a problematic relationship, but your honesty is suspect since you didn’t report it. In this case, neither party informed the city council about the relationship. An anonymous letter sent to city council brought it all out in the open. Obviously, any efforts by the manager and assistant to be discreet or to outright conceal the relationship were not successful. An ongoing relationship and lack of transparency exposed the organization to significant legal and financial risks.

Conflicts of interest are not always so intentional or extraordinary as this one. They can appear or be created in the most mundane circumstances. One manager crossed



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Creating and Supporting Thriving Communities

ICMA's vision is to be the leading association of local government professionals dedicated to creating and supporting thriving communities throughout the world. It does this by working with its more than 12,000 members to identify and speed the adoption of leading local government practices and improve the lives of residents. ICMA offers membership, professional development programs, research, publications, data and information, technical assistance, and training to thousands of city, town, and county chief administrative officers, their staffs, and other organizations throughout the world.

Public Management (PM) aims to inspire innovation, inform decision making, connect leading-edge thinking to everyday challenges, and serve ICMA members and local governments in creating and sustaining thriving communities throughout the world.

the ethical line when she sought city staff assistance to resolve a minor traffic accident she had while driving her personal vehicle.

Unprofessional Conduct On and Off Duty

After the town manager was arrested for assaulting an employee at work by throwing an object at her, it was also disclosed that he sent numerous inappropriate text messages to a town intern. The legal issue was resolved on a deferred prosecution agreement and the town entered into a separation agreement with the manager. The town also spent over \$300,000 in financial settlements with the two employees. As the leader of the organization, the manager is required to model appropriate conduct that sets the correct ethical tone for the entire organization. Equally important is to ensure that it is a safe and respectful environment in which to work.

On that note, imagine going to work in an organization where the manager makes derogatory and sometimes race-based comments about employees, governing body members, and members of the community? Or where his approach to managing creates a culture where employees did not feel comfortable disagreeing with him due to a fear of retaliation?

Your ethical obligations don't end when the workday does. Tenet 3 of the ICMA Code of Ethics requires members to demonstrate by word and action the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in all public, professional, and personal relationships. A member failed to meet that standard when he made unwanted and repeated advances toward a colleague while intoxicated

Unethical conduct erodes the public's confidence in every facet of local government.

at a professional conference. In another case, the local government settled a lawsuit after a colleague accused the manager of sexually assaulting her at a conference. Another member was charged after work hours with public intoxication, disorderly conduct, and assault and battery. While he accepted legal responsibility for his conduct, the media coverage reflected poorly on the organization and the profession.

Disrespectful Conduct

After a manager left the organization for a position in another local government, he emailed his former governing body disclosing over three years of text messages between him and the mayor. The tone and language in his transmittal email was highly unprofessional. Beyond that, it was troubling that he only shared the messages he had with one elected official. His explanation that he was legally obligated to turn over all public records upon his departure didn't square with the fact that he did not preserve or share his texts with the other elected officials.

Treating others with respect applies to colleagues as well. A recently retired manager expressed his concerns about his former organization in a letter to the editor. That created the opportunity to undermine public confidence in his successor and her ability to manage the organization without his unsolicited advice. A member has the right to voice their opinion, but that right must always be balanced by the ethical obligation to ensure any commentary does not undermine trust and confidence in a colleague or reflect poorly on the profession. In another case, a manager used a state association listserv to make unprofessional and inappropriate comments about a colleague.

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Political neutrality is a hallmark of the profession.

Another manager's disrespectful comments were aimed at both an elected official and a peer. This manager posted a comment on his personal social media

post following the resolution of an issue between the city and state. The comment referenced the governor in a manner that did not reflect the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity. He also sent an email to city employees containing a preemptive declaration that he would never implement a specific law or policy. Lastly, his comments to a colleague on the state association listserv failed to adhere to his ethical obligation to treat his colleagues respectfully.

Maintaining Political Neutrality

Political neutrality is a hallmark of the profession. The requirement to refrain from any political activity which undermines public administrators applies to all ICMA members who work for a local government, despite their role. One county manager violated the standard by attending state and national political party conventions as a delegate. The manager also sought appointment to the state commission responsible for mapping out the congressional and state legislative districts. Using a commission to do this critical work may appear to be a nonpartisan. But in this case, the path to the commission was entirely through the state legislature. Appointees were either caucus members or selected from a pool vetted by the state legislators. Beyond the partisan nature of the appointment process lies the potential conflict of interest for a sitting county manager to play a role in drawing a legislative district for their county.

Another manager endorsed two candidates for local elected office on her personal social media account, canvassed for these candidates, and made small financial contributions to their campaigns.

Would simply linking from your social media page to an elected official's page cross the line of political neutrality? If the elected official's page is purely personal or a mix of personal and government business, that would not be a problem. In this case, the county administrator linked to the county commission chair's page, which included a link to his re-election campaign site. That created the appearance that the county administrator was engaged in campaign activity even as passive an act as this seems. Context and seasons matter.

Final Thoughts

These members were censured publicly or privately for conduct that violated ICMA's Code of Ethics. Unlike bribery schemes, most of this conduct was not premediated. These individuals landed in a situation, perhaps of their own doing, that presented them with the time and opportunity to choose an ethical path. From the first step to the last, the best ethical outcomes result from awareness that the situation is an ethics issue, seeking advice, vetting options, and erring on the side of caution. **PM**



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LAST CHANCE TO JOIN, GO, AND SAVE!

Looking to connect with colleagues who speak your language? For professional growth opportunities? For tools and resources to benefit your community? Then look no further! Meet with local government professionals from across the globe at ICMA's Annual Conference in Columbus/Franklin County, Ohio, **September 17-21**, and join 5,000+ of your colleagues as an ICMA member. Now is the time to join ICMA to save 50% on your first year's membership dues AND get a deep discount on conference registration. By joining ICMA, you can register for our Annual Conference at the member rate—a savings of \$750. Offer only valid until **September 21!** Visit icma.org/join-go-and-save for details on this limited time opportunity.



September 1: Webinar: Competitive Pay for the Public Sector

September 8: Webinar: Organizational Culture: Use the Return to Work to Attract and Retain Talent

September 17-21: Conference: 2022 ICMA Annual Conference

September 21: Join, Go, and Save Deadline

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COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

Real talks providing insight about the experiences of marginalized and underrepresented persons in local government leadership.

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VOICES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT PODCAST

ICMA's Voices in Local Government podcast tells stories, inspires ideas, celebrates progress, and acknowledges challenges faced by local government managers and staff in serving the public.

icma.org/podcasts

WANT TO BE SPOTLIGHTED BY ICMA?

If you are an ICMA member, we want to hear what's new in your career or organization. All members are welcome to submit—from CAOs to students. Please complete the form at icma.org/spotlight-members. Check out the September Member Spotlight with Jorge M. Gonzalez, village manager of Bal Harbour, Florida, on the inside back cover of this issue.

The ICMA Local Government Excellence Awards Honor Values-Driven Achievements

BY MARC A. OTT

The 2022 award recipients represent the practices and values that have brought about significant achievements in local government leadership.

It goes without saying that the ICMA Annual Conference is my favorite event of the year. It is a time to reflect, reconnect, and learn from one another. It is also a time to celebrate. I have heard from so many members that being honored by their peers at the conference is one of the highlights of a career that frequently goes unrecognized in their own communities. So often our members quietly go about delivering services, implementing policies sometimes without funding, and mitigating potential crises, never seeking the spotlight, and often deflecting praise to their elected officials and staff members.

I don't envy the task of our Awards Evaluation Committee, chaired by Susan Thorpe, ICMA-CM, and staffed by Joyce Lee and Emily Pohlman from our membership team, as they organize nominations and select the winners. When you read the narratives behind this year's winners, you will see the very essence of the profession itself. There are descriptions of innovations in programs that have longed vexed CAOs—from keeping contaminants out of the recycling stream to finding new ways of engaging underserved populations. There are stories of new programs and processes borne out of these unprecedented times. For example, reaching every senior citizen with the COVID-19 vaccine and organizing the logistics of mass virus testing for local government staff and the community. There are leading practices cited from communities of a few thousand people and others with populations over a million. Every region of the United States is represented, as well as Canada.

You will also see stories of the public service careers our members have built, some spanning several decades, some just starting. The recipient of our Award for Career Excellence in Memory of Mark E. Keane—Vincent Long, ICMA-CM, from Leon County, Florida—is recognized nationally for his creative and courageous leadership over the past 30 years. Justin Casanova-Davis of Norfolk, Massachusetts, who received our Early Career Leadership Award in Memory of William H. Hansell Jr., began his local government career in 2016.

The scaffolding that upholds these many achievements are the values of this profession. Here are a few that were highlighted: “lifelong learning, a win-win perspective, earns the public trust, analytical, great communicator, relationship builder with elected officials and the business community, advocates for all residents, calm in a crisis, gives back to the profession, a sense of humor.” This is what I believe truly differentiates ICMA members. Their careers and indeed their achievements are values-driven. Our core values as leaders and managers carry through to all aspects of our lives. It is one reason why so many of our professional relationships go beyond collegial to deep and lasting friendships.

This year's conference theme is “Achieve.” In spite of the blistering pace of change and adversity that this past year has brought to local governments, you

★
WHEN YOU READ
THE NARRATIVES
BEHIND THIS
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MARC OTT

is CEO/executive director of ICMA, Washington, D.C.



★

**IN SPITE OF THE
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HAVE DEMONSTRATED
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TO ACHIEVE.**

★

have demonstrated your ability to achieve. The 2022 award recipients represent the practices and values that have brought about significant achievements in local government leadership. While we are highlighting the few honorees selected by the Awards Committee, we are extremely proud of what our 12,000 members have been able to accomplish this

past year. I know I speak for the ICMA Executive Board and the ICMA staff when I say that it is an honor and privilege to have worked alongside you this past year.

I would be remiss if I did not urge you to start preparing nominations for the 2023 awards, which will open in January. It's an opportunity for all of us to learn from the best. **PM**



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Learn more at icma.org/coaching

How Government Workers Can Plan for a **Secure Retirement** | BY LYNNE FORD

Public sector employees need more active support to build financial security for retirement. Here are three ways to help them.

Focusing on financial goals and continuing to build an understanding of retirement savings is something that should be an ongoing focus year-round.

Here are the necessary steps public sector employees should consider taking to improve financial wellness to help them achieve life's biggest financial goal: retirement security.

Budgeting and Managing Debt

Amidst ongoing inflation and market volatility, employees' main priorities should be saving, reducing debt, and improving financial health. One way to start

is by looking at your income and what you are spending. It's hard to achieve the most basic tenet of financial wellness—not spending more than you are bringing in—if you don't know what those numbers are. While it sounds simple, you'd be surprised how many people don't know what these figures look like or haven't checked in on them in some time.

In addition, as you think about what money is going out,

it's also important to look at what types of debt you're holding. High-interest credit-card balances lead to high fees and reduce both your spending and savings ability. Making a conscious effort to pay off balances monthly, or paying more than the minimum amount due, can help reduce that debt.

For public service employees who are carrying student loans, there are options to help reduce that debt. The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program forgives the remaining balance on your direct loans after you have made 120 qualifying monthly payments while working full-time for a U.S. federal, state, local or tribal government or not-for-profit organization.

Contributing to Savings and Retirement

Allocating incoming and available cash for monthly expenses, short-term savings, and long-term savings (like retirement) can help balance spending and match your resources to your goals. Most financial planners



suggest having three to six months' worth of expenses in an emergency fund to prevent you from having to borrow against your retirement funds in the event of an emergency.

Regularly checking your retirement savings contributions can also help you stay on track. As many people start their retirement plans with a set dollar amount or a percentage of salary contribution, it's important to adjust those numbers as you grow in your career.

When it comes to retirement planning, many people set it and forget it. There are products like target date funds that enable you to set your retirement year and not worry about it. That said, it's prudent to check each year to see what might have changed as it relates to your retirement. If your retirement horizon or family situation has changed, for example, these factors may prompt a change in your retirement planning.

Taking Time to Reassess

As you age, retirement eventually starts to feel within reach, and you may start to feel a sense that all of your planning is finally going to come to fruition. Usually by this time, you have accumulated more and can benefit from taking a hard look at the financial planning process.

Life's Biggest
Financial Goal:
**RETIREMENT
SECURITY.**



LYNNE FORD

is the CEO and president of MissionSquare Retirement, which has been dedicated to supporting the retirement needs of those in public service for 50 years.



You might decide it's time to reassess your investments and consider moving away from the set-it-and-forget-it model to a more actively managed account. This enables you to look at different types of modeling for your investments beyond just target dates.

Lastly, remember to review your insurance. People always are underinsured. Death is not something people want to think about, but life insurance is a very important way to take care of the unforeseen and provide resources for your family.

The overall notion: Have a plan. It could be sophisticated, or it could be simple. There are a lot of good online digital tools to help.

Learn more about MissionSquare Retirement at www.missionsq.org.

MissionSquare
RETIREMENT

PROFILES OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN ACTION



"The Voluntary Credentialing Program administered through ICMA is an effective tool that helps local government professionals focus on and remain committed to real and relevant professional growth. It is both inspiring and refreshing to participate in a program that recognizes the value of both professional education and experience."

Arlos Crofts
Chief Administrator Officer
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What Does It Mean to Serve on the *ICMA Executive Board*?

Board members reflect on their experience and the **value** of board service

Jeff Towery, ICMA-CM
West Coast Regional Vice President, 2014–2017;
ICMA President-Elect, 2021–2022; ICMA President, 2022–2023



“My interest in ICMA Executive Board service evolved out of encouragement from other members, particularly former vice presidents, and in recognition that I had the opportunity to pay back ICMA for the support and experience I have gained through membership over the course of my career. The benefit of that service, for me, was how much more I learned about our profession and ways to address the challenges we all face. Unexpectedly and most valuable are the close connections that I have made with other board members, some of whom are now dear friends and chosen family. I would encourage all members to consider board service at some point in their career.”

“I would encourage all members to consider board service at some point in your career.”

- Jeff Towery, ICMA-CM

Molly Mehner, ICMA-CM
Midwest Regional Vice President, 2019–2022;
Chair, Committee on Professional Conduct, 2021–2022



“Several aspects of serving on the ICMA Executive Board are incredibly rewarding. But serving as chair of the Committee on Professional Conduct (CPC) has been the most rewarding experience of my ICMA board service. The Code of Ethics is the foundation of professional local government management. By serving on the CPC, my colleagues and I ensure that foundation remains intact, relevant to our profession, and provides our members with a framework to guide their daily decisions. This is an incredible privilege and responsibility. In instances where a member is alleged to violate the code, the CPC thoroughly reviews the case and determines what sanction, if any, is most appropriate. Before you find yourself in an ethical quagmire, remember a significant benefit to members is the ability to seek ethics

advice on any matter large or small. The ICMA ethics staff provides an amazing service to members by providing ethics advice on countless topics. When in doubt, please reach out.

In addition to reviewing several ethics cases each month, the CPC continuously reviews the Code to ensure the tenets and guidelines remain relevant to our members and the profession. Ensuring the language in the Code reflects the values of the profession has been a long-standing priority of ICMA with numerous revision efforts since the Code’s adoption in 1924. The CPC’s most recent charge has been to revisit the Code of Ethics to better integrate our ethical commitment to racial justice and equity into the very fiber of the 12 tenets. It has been a long, complex, and sometimes difficult task considering the numerous viewpoints on the subject. This process will continue beyond my board service, but I have appreciated the opportunity to work on this initiative and talk with so many members over the past year in virtual feedback sessions, at the conference in Portland, and at regional and state meetings. Several members have also engaged via emails and phone calls—all of which are welcomed and appreciated.

ICMA Executive Board service is a remarkable experience, but my time spent on the CPC, and the privilege of serving as chair this last year, will remain the highlight of my service to ICMA and its members. I encourage anyone who is interested in board service to reach out to a current or former vice president to talk with them about what the commitment means.”

“ICMA Executive Board service is a remarkable experience, but my time spent on the CPC, and the privilege of serving as chair this last year, will remain the highlight of my service to ICMA and its members.”

- Molly Mehner, ICMA-CM

Michael Kaigler, ICMA-CM
Southeast Regional Vice President, 2019–2022
Membership and External Outreach Committee



“ICMA has been a valuable asset to me during my career, and serving on the ICMA Executive

Board has been one of the highlights of my career. It has given me the opportunity to support the profession and give back some of what has been provided to me through membership in the organization. ICMA has dedicated and amazing staff members, which made working with them and the executive director very rewarding. Being able to help formulate and develop policies that help meet the needs of our membership in an ever-changing environment, has been an enriching experience.

My work on the Membership and External Outreach Committee has been unique and fulfilling. The most significant accomplishment during my time on the Board was working with the dues subcommittee to address the value of membership. One of the primary goals of the committee was to explore options that would add value to the ICMA membership and attract new members. The subcommittee worked with a consultant and solicited input from the membership, both past and present. As a result, it was determined that one of the primary barriers was the cost associated with membership. This is a bigger issue for individuals from smaller jurisdictions due to the impact on their budget. A key focus of this change was to make membership more affordable for individuals in smaller jurisdictions who may not have access to the resources to deal with today's complicated issues, and need the resources of ICMA the most. This marked the first time in the history of the organization where the cost of membership was lowered. I am most proud of the work we accomplished to address the value of membership through the dues process."

"This marked the first time in the history of the organization where the cost of membership was lowered. I am most proud of the work we accomplished to address the value of membership through the dues process."

- Michael Kaigler, ICMA-CM

Terry Tieman, ICMA-CM
Northeast Regional Vice President, 2019-2022;
Chair, Membership and External Outreach Committee, 2021-2022



"Three years ago, I was elected as Delaware's first ICMA board member. What an honor it has been serving on the board, being a member of the Membership and External Outreach Committee (MEOC) and this year serving as its chair. ICMA exists because of its membership and working on this committee has been an incredible experience.

ICMA provides its members opportunities for personal and professional change. There are a range of leadership programs for career level, and we are working to enhance those programs. Currently we are exploring an expanded credentialing program to include all members of our organization from entry level to CAO. Membership in ICMA provides connectivity to others in our profession through ICMA Connect—a valuable idea exchange for learning how other members are handling projects, challenges, and everyday situations.

There have been many rewarding moments over the last three years, but two of the most meaningful to me this past year as chair were (1) recommending approval of a new member guide, *The Member's Guide to a Career That Has Ups, Downs, and Detours: An ICMA Member In Transition Guide*, and (2) reviewing and nominating members for the ICMA Distinguished Service Award and ICMA Honorary Membership.

"These individuals make me proud to serve in this profession and encourage me to contribute more to the profession. Anyone can serve on the board, and I encourage you all to give back to our profession by doing so."

- Terry Tieman, ICMA-CM

UNDERGROUND
 REFUSE SYSTEMS



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Barcelona

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One of the things members don't often discuss is the fact that managers can face termination at almost any time. It could happen to you, and it did happen to me this past year. ICMA supports members who find themselves without employment or who know that termination may be coming. I am proud to be able to say that the MEOC recently reviewed and forwarded to the ICMA Board a series of recommendations and new publication for members in transition. This guide was prepared by a member task force and offers guidance on how to navigate this transition. I highly recommend it for any member in transition but also for any member who wants to be aware of the warning signs of potential termination, take preventive measures, and become prepared to navigate termination. ICMA also provides personal support, benefits, and resources for our members in transition.

For me, the most rewarding parts of being on the MEOC is annually reviewing nominations and recommending members for the ICMA

Distinguished Service Award and ICMA Honorary Membership. The ICMA Distinguished Service Award recognizes managers whose service to his or her community or communities have been judged by their peers as strong or exceptional, and who has made major contributions beyond direct service to local government. ICMA Honorary Membership is awarded to individuals who made a considerable impact to the improvement of local government and local government management or to the public's understanding and appreciation of responsive and well-managed local government. I was always humbled to be judging the submissions of these great professionals. These individuals make me proud to serve in this profession and encourage me to contribute more to the profession. Anyone can serve on the board, and I encourage you all to give back to our profession by doing so. You will only find it rewarding." **PM**

Step Up to Board Service

ICMA strongly encourages individuals who are interested in pursuing the board service opportunity, now or in the future, to reach out to their state or country association leadership, affiliate organization leadership, current or former ICMA regional vice presidents, ICMA regional directors, or ICMA program staff at icmanominations@icma.org. Learn more at icma.org/boardnominations.

Regional nominations for vice presidents to serve the 2023–2026 term will be accepted October 18, 2022 through January 13, 2023.

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Vincent S. Long, ICMA-CM

County Administrator, Leon County (Tallahassee) Florida

Vincent Long is a highly respected local government CEO known for his fiscal, strategic, and operational expertise and recognized nationally as a transformational leader.

A superior communicator with outstanding interpersonal and analytical skills (and a sense of humor to boot), he has demonstrated an uncommon ability to maintain the highest confidence of elected officials, the commitment of staff, and the trust of residents and community partners while effectively dealing with the complex and competing issues facing local government managers.

Long became county administrator in the darkest days of the Great Recession and used it as an opportunity to make big structural and cultural changes so the county could thrive even in tough times. As a result, Leon County managed to complete generational projects, launch innovative projects, and attract significant private-sector investment during the painfully slow economic recovery.

Long led two successful sales tax referenda, ensuring 35 years of uninterrupted investment in infrastructure and economic development projects. He also received national attention for his management of three successive hurricanes and the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the height of the pandemic, to ensure a ready workforce to address urgent community needs and to protect the public and employees, Long made national news as one of the first employers, public or private, to require employee vaccinations as a condition of employment. This move was politically controversial, but in the end, he was lauded for the county's response in setting up testing sites, providing emergency transport, and conducting hospital surge planning. The U.S. Department of the Treasury recognized Leon County as the top provider of coronavirus relief funds in Florida and one of the leading distributors of emergency rental assistance funds in the nation.

Prior to COVID-19, during hurricanes Hermine (2016), Irma (2017), and Michael (2018), Leon County was recognized by FEMA as the nation's first #HurricaneStrong community.

Under Long's leadership, the county has excelled in job creation, most recently securing an Amazon fulfillment center that will make a \$200 million capital investment, create approximately 3,600 jobs, and have a \$100 million recurring annual economic impact. In Leon County, water quality is a perennial priority, for which Long forged a first-of-its-kind partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to leverage county and state dollars and invest tens of millions over the next decade in springs protection. Long also oversaw the unique transformation of a former landfill site into a world-class cross-country course that attracted the 2021 NCAA Cross Country Championships for the first time in Florida.

Since becoming administrator, Long has led Leon County to 95 awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for best practices from conceiving innovative programs to providing fundamental services.

He has made outstanding contributions to his county government and his community.

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Long is a leader in many community and professional organizations, including the Florida Association of County Managers, the Florida Association of Counties Institute for County Government, the Florida Local Government Investment Trust (overseeing an investment portfolio of more than \$1 billion), and the Alumni Advisory Board for the Askew School at Florida State University, where he also served on the adjunct faculty teaching graduate courses in local government for more than ten years.

Long has authored numerous articles published by ICMA and other national professional organizations and is highly sought after to share best practices and help colleagues navigate difficult issues as a speaker, trainer, and coach.

Over his nearly three-decade career, Long has been recognized in local, state, and national news outlets and publications for his leadership. He has made outstanding contributions to his county government and his community. Guided by his strong emphasis on strategic planning and organizational culture, he has successfully led an organization that delivers transformational projects, solves problems, manages crises, and stands as a model for effectiveness in public service year after year. **PM**

This award was established in memory of former ICMA Executive Director Mark E. Keane.

With funding support from MissionSquare, this award recognizes an outstanding local government administrator who has enhanced the effectiveness of government officials and consistently initiated creative and successful programs.



Dr. Mark S. *Watson*

City Manager, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Dr. Mark S. Watson, city manager in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, has positively influenced the career paths of many young professionals since beginning his career in local government in 1981. A second-generation city manager, he has served in Yuma, Arizona; Billings, Montana; and Grapevine, Mission, Temple, and Stamford, Texas.

Watson is a frequent guest lecturer at universities nationwide and has been recognized for his contributions to the education and professional development of University of Tennessee master of public policy and administration students. On the job, Watson's hands-off management style allows for staff to be innovative. Often, he will provide an end goal and guidance on where to start and allow the employee to put his or her skills to use to reach that goal. He makes himself available for feedback and checks in to make sure the task is moving forward.

Watson's contributions to career development are best described by these lightly edited quotes from people he has recently mentored:

Bruce Applegate, assistant city manager, Alcoa, Tennessee: "My job as an assistant to the city manager in Oak Ridge was to take struggling programs and help them get to an effective level. Dr. Watson challenged me to learn everything about local government perspectives. If he hadn't pushed me to try new positions, including

He has been recognized for his contributions to the education and professional development of University of Tennessee master of public policy and administration students.

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personnel director, I wouldn't have gotten the professional certifications I now hold."

Lily Seabolt, development services coordinator, Knoxville, Tennessee: "During my time serving in Oak Ridge, Dr. Watson allowed me to grow professionally by participating in Leadership Oak Ridge and taking on special projects. I was given the opportunity to research and present an ordinance regulating 5G telecommunications to city council, which was both exciting and nerve-racking. Dr. Watson took a chance on me, and my experiences in Oak Ridge helped me land my current role. I plan on using the skills I gained under his mentorship to grow even further professionally."

Matt Wojnowski, assistant city manager, Hutto, Texas: "Mark instantly instilled

his trust and confidence in Temple, Texas, by encouraging me to work on several capital projects." Wojnowski says Watson also taught him a lot about leadership. He added that Watson also cared about him as a person and not just an employee, noting that Watson stopped by to visit after Wojnowski and his wife had their first child.

Lauren Gray, senior communications specialist, Oak Ridge: "Dr. Watson's continued support and guidance have set me up for success in my new public information career in local government. I've really appreciated learning the backstory on some of the ongoing projects and the steps that need to be taken to move forward with a project. I've also had opportunities for further education at virtual conferences."

Eric Ault, assistant to the city manager, Oak Ridge: "Dr. Mark Watson has been a great mentor to me. He takes the time to sit down and provide advice on how to lead a workforce and how to manage the projects and challenges of city management. In addition to mentoring and teaching, Dr. Watson gives me assignments that allow me to use his advice and develop the management style that suits me the best."

Mike Webb, city manager, Edwardsville, Kansas: "When Mark and I worked in Grapevine, Texas, the city was going through growing pains, both internal and external. Unfortunately, Mark was a victim of 'political winds' and left the organization while being a consummate professional in Grapevine's transition. It was a bit unnerving, but Mark gave me some great advice: 'Just sit back and watch.' In summary, Mark has helped me understand organizational dynamics early in my career, and it has served me well."

Testimonials like these support Watson's selection for the Career Development Award. **PM**

This award goes to an outstanding local government administrator who has made a significant contribution to the career development of new talent in professional local government management, in honor of former ICMA President L. P. (Perry) Cookingham, who is credited with creating the local government internship.

ASSISTANT EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD
IN MEMORY OF BUFORD M. WATSON JR.



Lauren G.
Vasquez

Assistant City Manager, Monrovia, California

Monrovia, California, has a simple mission: “We exist to serve the people of Monrovia to create a community that offers a premier quality of life.” No one embodies this mission better than Assistant City Manager Lauren Vasquez. She has served Monrovia for more than 16 years and regularly demonstrates selfless public service.

In September 2019, Vasquez was appointed assistant city manager with responsibility for multiple divisions—city clerk, human resources, public information, information technology, and administration. She seamlessly transitioned to this greater leadership role and stepped up to meet unexpected challenges with grace, humility, and admirable servant leadership.

The first unexpected challenge was COVID-19, and when it emerged in 2020, Monrovia was among the first cities to initiate response operations. Starting with a local emergency proclamation on March 13, Vasquez organized the city’s first remote public meeting. Then, as many city services shifted to virtual delivery, Vasquez’s shared vision of leadership was clear: Monrovia will protect the safety of the public and staff, and Monrovia will set an example for others to follow.

Under her careful management and planning, the city set up infrastructure to enable staff to work remotely; created communication channels to share information quickly and regularly with residents, employees, and retirees; and halted bill collection, parking enforcement, evictions, and other processes that can create financial hardship for vulnerable residents.

This award, commemorating former ICMA President Buford M. Watson Jr., honors a local government management professional who has made significant contributions toward excellence in leadership as an assistant (regardless of title) to a chief local government administrator or department head.

Whether she is coordinating the state of the city address, responding to “bears and bobcats” calls for service, or simply lending an ear to a city employee who is having personal difficulties, Vasquez sets an example.

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Within a month of the emergency proclamation, Vasquez coordinated the mass rollout of COVID testing for employees, starting with public safety staff. She and the rest of the city’s leadership team supported a voluntary pay and benefit reduction and maintained positive relationships with the city’s labor organizations, all of which voluntarily postponed scheduled salary adjustments of their own. She created workplace safety protocols and procedures for employees who tested positive and/or had potential COVID exposure in a way that protected and respected the safety of those affected and provided a virtual health fair and a socially distant flu vaccination day for staff and their families.

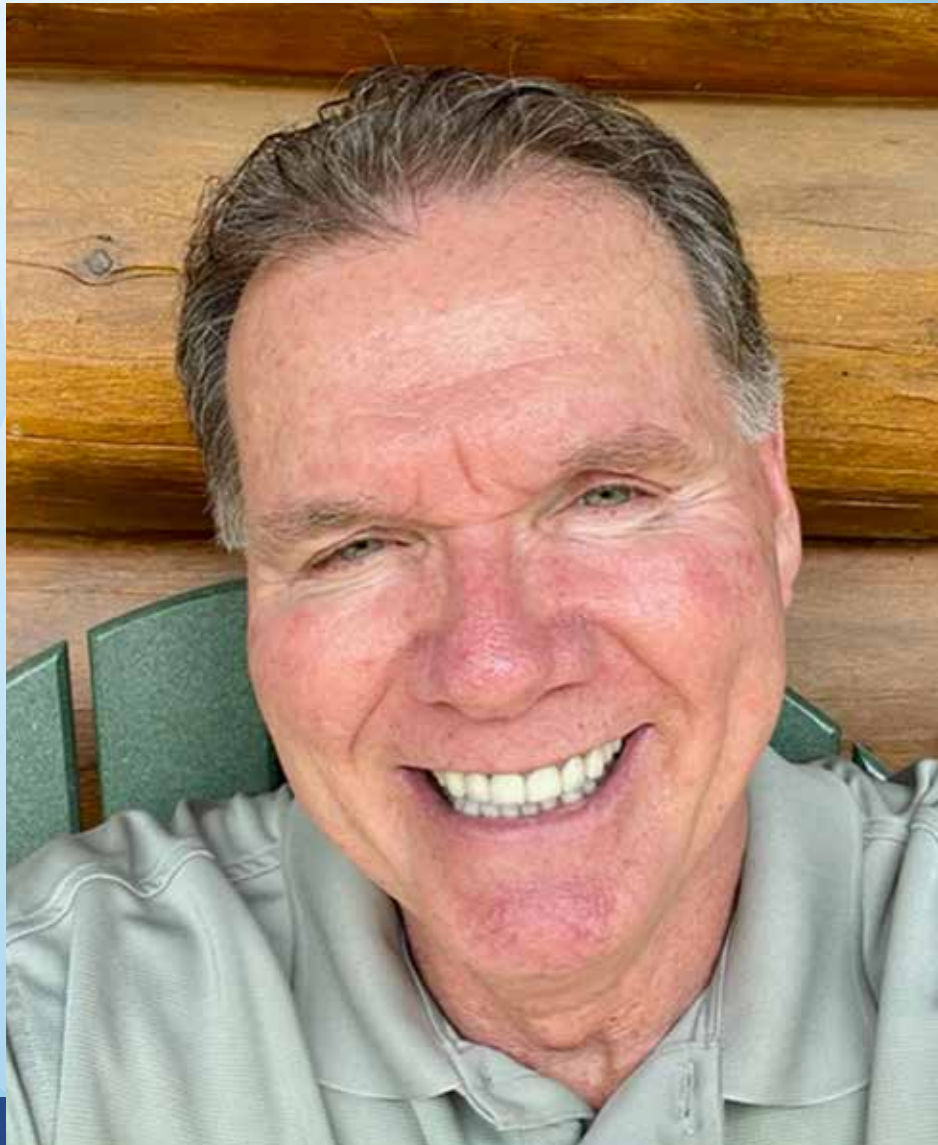
A second unanticipated challenge was local civil unrest following the death of George Floyd. Peaceful protesters called for change, recognition of past wrongs, and action. As a member of Monrovia’s leadership team, Vasquez helped coordinate public messages of encouragement to “embrace” the community and, with the direction of the city council, to create an ad hoc committee on equity and inclusion to “open the curtain” on city policies, procedures, and practices. Vasquez helped develop recommendations to ensure that those serving Monrovia also reflect the diversity of the people who live there.

Another challenge, in the thick of the pandemic, was the Bobcat Fire, which grew

to become the largest fire in Los Angeles County history, burning a total of 115,000 acres. In the first 48 hours, the fire burned more than 8,000 acres and was moving toward Monrovia. In addition to stepping up to take charge of general city operations while the city manager served as incident commander, Vasquez also served as the deputy incident commander, providing backup and support to the manager, offering advice and counsel, and helping the public information officer create resources to keep the community informed.

Following the Bobcat Fire, significant rainfall triggered mudslides and debris that almost completely destroyed Monrovia Canyon Park. While the park remains closed to the public, Vasquez is creating new ways to “take the park to the community” by developing public outreach communication tools, sharing aerial photos of the park taken by drones, and reporting on the rebuilding efforts.

Whether she is coordinating the state of the city address, responding to “bears and bobcats” calls for service, or simply lending an ear to a city employee who is having personal difficulties, Vasquez sets an example. Humility is valued in Monrovia, and Vasquez is among the humblest of servants, thinking less of herself and more of others. In this time of unprecedented local government challenges, she clearly demonstrates excellence in leadership. **PM**



Dr. Robert E. *Lee*, ICMA-CM (Retired)

Associate Professor, Florida Gulf Coast University

Throughout his career, Dr. Robert E. Lee has demonstrated a passion for public service and for educating the next generation of local government leaders. As an associate professor at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), he has earned the respect and appreciation of his past and current students and recognition from his professional colleagues and peers.

Before joining FGCU in 2007, Dr. Lee held local government management positions, including city manager, in Pennsylvania and Florida—experience he draws on in designing his courses. His contributions are described here in terms of teaching, scholarship, and service.

Teaching. Dr. Lee's colleagues and students describe him as exceptionally thoughtful, insightful, and student-centered in his teaching. He has taught core and specialized elective courses in FGCU's master of public administration graduate program, covering introductory and advanced topics and incorporating both scholarly and applied professional content. He has overseen and advised students throughout their academic careers and internships and well beyond their time in the classroom. Former students say he has had a transformative impact on their lives and subsequent careers, as he remains an active resource and advocate for them. The Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) recognized him with the Michael J. Roberto Award for Career Development in 2015. Further evidence of his success as a teacher is the

number of highly competitive state-level scholarships that FCCMA has awarded to Lee's former graduate students.

Scholarship. Dr. Lee has co-authored scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed journals, as well as practitioner-oriented articles and book chapters for the Florida Association of Counties (FAC), the Florida League of Cities (FLC), and ICMA. For ICMA, he has published in *PM* magazine and co-edited a revised edition of *The Effective Local Government Manager*. The National Council on Public History awarded him the 2017 Michael C. Robinson Prize for outstanding historical analysis that contributes directly to the formation of public policy. He also has an ongoing appointment as a research partner with the FLC Center for Municipal Research.

Service. At FGCU, Dr. Lee has served capably as the MPA program's graduate coordinator—a job that involves crucial recruitment, admissions, advising, and internship supervision, as well as extensive and time-consuming outreach work with the local government and nonprofit administrators serving on the program's External Relations Council. He has served as the department's point person for FGCU's post-baccalaureate local government management certificate program since its inception, and he has served for years as a member of the College of Arts and Science Student Affairs Team. He has also been the faculty advisor for the ICMA Student Chapter at FGCU. In addition to providing the chapter's members with networking and professional development opportunities, he has assisted them in designing and administering professional workshops on such topics as government ethics, water quality, hurricane preparedness and disaster response, and collaboration between local governments and nonprofit organizations.

*Dr. Robert Lee
has been highly
successful in
teaching, scholarship,
and service.*

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These workshops are well attended by graduate students and local government and nonprofit administrators.

However, where Dr. Lee's service commitments and achievements have been most impressive is in the realm of professional service. He has served for years as a member of ICMA's Graduate Education Committee; and regularly teaches short courses on "Building Your City Team" at the FLC Institute for Elected Municipal Officials, delivers "Cities 101" training at the FLC's annual conference, presents a program on budget training at the Florida Association of City Clerks Academy, provides state-mandated ethics training to city and county officials in several Florida locations, and administers the week-long Florida Association of Special Districts annual certification program. He also serves as an instructor for the FLC "boot camp" for new city managers and as a presenter on "Florida Local Government 101" at programs organized by organizations such as the Bonita Springs Alliance for Constructive Dialogue and Action.

In summary, Dr. Robert Lee has been highly successful in teaching, scholarship, and service. He combines professional experience in local government management, scholarly acumen, and unflagging commitment to the education of students pursuing careers in local government. **PM**

Established in the name of Stephen B. Sweeney, the longtime director of the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government, this award is presented to an academic leader or academic institution that has made a significant contribution to the formal education of students pursuing careers in local government.



Justin *Casanova-Davis*

Town Administrator, Norfolk, Massachusetts

Ever since he began his first local government position in 2016, Justin Casanova-Davis has demonstrated his passion for municipal government and public service. He began as an intern on a participatory budgeting initiative in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which encouraged residents to submit ideas for capital projects and ultimately vote to spend taxpayer dollars on the proposals they felt would provide the greatest benefits to the community. When that project ended, he left to become a budget analyst for the Massachusetts House Ways and Means Committee, and then returned to Cambridge before assuming his position in Brookline in 2018.

Along the way he completed a graduate certificate in local government leadership and management at Suffolk University, received designation as a Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official, and, while working full time, completed an MPA degree.

On the job, Casanova-Davis can point to many accomplishments. When working for the Ways and Means Committee, he proposed an initiative that was incorporated and passed in the state budget to combat criminal recidivism. In Cambridge, his work helped earn the city special recognition from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for performance measures, the only municipality in Massachusetts to earn that distinction. When the city launched a “minibond” initiative to sell municipal bonds directly to Cambridge residents, he learned as much as he could about bonds and investing and quickly became the face of the initiative. The project ultimately earned the 2017

He has been cited for his incredible work ethic, diligence, and hunger to learn and manage new systems and concepts.

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“Deal of the Year” Award from The Bond Buyer in the nontraditional financing category. During his time in Brookline, GFOA recognized him with the Goldberg-Miller Public Finance Award for outstanding performance. He began serving as acting finance director in addition to his assistant town administrator duties in August 2021.

His passion and leadership have been demonstrated not only by his work but also by his commitment to recruiting the next generation of leaders. He has participated in many initiatives, speaking on panels and serving as a mentor to encourage and promote careers in public service. Professional development is extremely important to Casanova-Davis, as he believes you need to invest in the growth and development of your staff. As a supervisor in the Brookline organization, he has supported multiple employees with the opportunity to attend robust municipal finance training and supported an employee’s participation in the MMA-Suffolk certificate in local government leadership and management, which provides graduate-level education in public management.

Considered a rising star in Massachusetts municipal government, Casanova-Davis has been a role model for

others. When the Massachusetts Municipal Association created its MassTown Careers advertising campaign, he was one of 12 individuals featured in ads encouraging people to pursue careers in local government. The campaign was developed after the lieutenant governor’s task force identified a skills gap and lack of people prepared to take on municipal jobs in the state.

In July 2022, Casanova-Davis accomplished a professional goal when he was hired as town administrator in Norfolk, Massachusetts. He says his goal is to ensure that municipal government is representationally diverse, inclusive, and as productive as possible. His passion and calling are to create effective change at the local level. To that end, he is working toward becoming an ICMA-CM and seeks to receive a public leadership credential from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Casanova-Davis has been cited for his incredible work ethic, diligence, and hunger to learn and manage new systems and concepts; his dedication to helping people; and his skill at building relationships with residents, supervisors, and staff at all levels of the organization. These demonstrated strengths have earned him the Early Career Leadership Award. **PM**

Established in memory of former ICMA Executive Director William H. Hansell Jr., this award recognizes an outstanding early career local government professional who has demonstrated leadership, competency, and commitment to local government as a profession.

COMMUNITY Equity & Inclusion

10,000-49,999 Population

STORM LAKE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Storm Lake, Iowa

Keri Navratil, City Manager



Situated in rural northwest Iowa, the city of Storm Lake (population 11,269) has embraced community equity and inclusion with a positive, proactive approach for more than three decades, becoming one of the most diverse cities in Iowa and the Midwest.

Shifting demographics and an increase in diversity have contributed to the community's growth and a 50-percent expansion of the local workforce. Within the community, approximately 30 languages are spoken. The community school district enrollment is 87 percent non-Caucasian, and the local parochial school system is 54 percent non-Caucasian.

While the population in some areas has declined, immigrant growth makes Storm Lake an anomaly, with a vibrant economy and visible cultural diversity. The community recognized equity

and inclusiveness as a key to its future and seized its opportunity to excel. When asked what we love and are proud of about the community, we are quick to respond that it's the diverse culture.

Despite the city's track record, the COVID-19 pandemic hampered its inclusiveness initiatives because of the number of languages spoken and the fact that many residents had arrived from countries where they feared interactions with the government and people in authority, or where the vaccine was mistrusted.





As the COVID pandemic evolved, the city's approach to inclusiveness had to change as well. Community service officers (CSOs) served a vital role as liaisons between the police department, the general city government, and the ethnic community. With a grant from the local Tyson Fresh Meats, the city converted a military surplus vehicle to the YumVee Ice Cream Truck. A grant, along with private donations, funded Operation Hoop Dreams and PopUp BBQ events at a local park. The Bridge, a nonprofit organization for Storm Lake youth that grinds its own coffee bean blends, partnered with the police department for two special blends, Donut Dunker Blend and Be a Better Human Blend. A percentage of the sales proceeds goes toward police community outreach programs.

Immigrants new to the community and long-time community residents all benefit from these efforts. New immigrants are assisted in their transition to a new home that is often vastly different from their previous country. Interactions become comfortable for residents as they come to value the inclusiveness that makes Storm Lake home for everyone.

The effectiveness of the city's efforts is evident in the proliferation of multicultural immigrant-owned retail businesses and restaurants. The growing workforce drives increases in local manufacturing. Concurrent with a vibrant economy fueled by diversity is stability and growth in local government revenues. Stable revenues not only support delivery of key public services, but also make possible community programs that offer leadership opportunities and information sharing in multilingual settings on such topics as leadership, government operations, public safety, rental housing rules, education, and access to health care.

Community engagement through outreach is a key to the success and transformation of Storm Lake. The city celebrates diversity through many events, including the July 4th Parade of Nations, Fiesta Latina, Asian New Year, and the Feast of Our

Lady of Guadalupe. Participation of all residents at community events is an indicator that barriers have been overcome.

Local government leadership and commitment by City Manager Keri Navratil and Police Chief Chris Cole ensure that Storm Lake will continue to be an inviting home for people from around the world. The thoughtful approach and vision of local government officials have produced a transformation leading to continued growth and vibrancy in this rural Iowa community. Equity and inclusion enhance life for everyone in Storm Lake, and the future promises to be bright. **PM**

50,000 and Greater Population

THRIVE LIVINGSTON: LIVINGSTON COUNTY'S RURAL ANTI-POVERTY PLAN

Livingston County, New York

Ian Coyle, ICMA-CM, County Administrator



Ian Coyle,
ICMA-CM

In 2017, Livingston County, New York, created Thrive Livingston, a plan to develop an anti-poverty strategy focused on combatting social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges facing residents of this rural community. The plan is built on six pillars: (1) benchmarking to establish a foundation for future phases of the plan; (2) addressing the need for affordable housing; (3) building a solid employment base through job creation and training; (4) reducing transportation barriers; (5) creating long-term, sustainable economic development; and (6) considering the impact of poverty on quality of life.

The county has implemented the plan in phases, and these are the Phase I initiatives that have been complete for more than 13 months:



Benchmarking: A poverty profile and gap analysis was created in 2016, and updated in 2020, to reflect the impact of COVID-19. The analysis considers the dynamics of poverty and identifies community needs.

Housing: The Livingston County Land Bank Corporation was founded in 2017 to support community development by facilitating the return of vacant, abandoned, underutilized, and tax-delinquent properties to productive use. A countywide housing needs assessment in 2019 identified key priorities, including increasing the number of affordable single-family homes and rental housing. An early project win was the opening of a housing development for special needs populations.

Jobs and Job Training: The Livingston County PIT (Pathway Into Trades) Crew is an interdepartmental collaboration that provides public assistance recipients with the opportunity to learn construction-related job skills by working on public works projects. The PIT Crew was critical in the redevelopment of the county's Al Lorenz Park by developing a new trail system along with the accompanying park benches, trail head kiosks, and new bridges, as well as installing playground equipment. Crew members were able to learn general carpentry skills along with the operation of heavy equipment.

Transportation: Ride Livingston, an online clearinghouse of public transportation options, has a specific emphasis on transportation services for special needs individuals and



underrepresented populations. The county also operates a driver's license support program that helps low-income residents obtain a valid driver's license.

Youth and Education: Ten microgrants have been awarded to student-led groups for the purpose of stimulating community service projects in the county, including collecting and donating supplies to needy families and forming an Earth Day Club at a local high school.

Quality of Life: Services include a senior nutrition program that reduces food insecurity by providing cost-free meals (41,781 meals in 2020); an expanded in-home services program that provides personal care to seniors (6,091 hours in 2020); a water supply study listing actions to ensure appropriate public water drinking supply; a county jail inmate re-entry program; and improvements that increased the visitation and use of the county park.

The county learned many lessons throughout the implementation of Thrive Livingston:

- **Revisit and Reflect:** The county uses insights to recalibrate the living document and better align future decisions about strategic investment in programs and projects that reduce poverty.
- **Measure Performance:** The county is developing performance measures that will allow for continuous monitoring and reporting, increased efficiencies, and sustainability.
- **Collaborate:** Implementation has been possible because of the relationships cultivated among government leaders and community partners.
- **Lead by Example:** Just as the county has learned from the accomplishments of other anti-poverty initiatives, Thrive Livingston can serve as a model for other counties.

Thrive Livingston has been successful because of dedicated county leaders who have responded to community needs, developed creative solutions to the challenges posed by poverty, and promoted social cohesion and better integration of disadvantaged and underrepresented populations for the benefit of the entire community. **PM**



COMMUNITY Health & Safety

Under 10,000 Population

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL 911 DISTRICT

Foxborough, Massachusetts

Robert Verdone, Executive Director



Robert Verdone

Few people can remember the days before 911 became the national emergency phone number. Local jurisdictions relied on conventional phone numbers to hail emergency services, and emergency calls were not always answered safely or effectively. Massachusetts passed

legislation in 1990 that established a statewide 911 system and required that 911 centers be established across the commonwealth.

This role was largely absorbed by local police departments, and implementation was reasonably straightforward. Cell phone technology was still in its infancy, and GPS technology was not yet widely available to the public. Even in 2000, the pace of society was arguably much slower than it is today. During the next 20 years, however, public safety and society saw an explosion of technology and an unprecedented shift in the way people interact and communicate.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, highlighted the urgent need for updates to emergency operations. The Massachusetts 911 center model had become woefully outdated, and the pace of technological change left dispatchers under-trained and ill-prepared to face public safety challenges. Further, local 911 centers could not even accept wireless (cell) calls directly. Those calls went to state wireless centers and were then redeployed to local emergency teams, adding precious minutes to each 911 response.

In 2015, the contiguous Southeastern Massachusetts towns of Foxborough, Mansfield, Easton, and Norton recognized the need to modernize their 911 and dispatch operations. They shared similar public safety operational models and similar challenges. After commissioning a series of feasibility studies and working group meetings, the communities collectively agreed that it was both critical and mutually beneficial to utilize recently enacted state legislation that authorized the creation of special districts for regionalizing 911 dispatch and public safety operations.

By a unanimous vote of their select boards, the four towns formed the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional 911

District—now more commonly referred to as SEMRECC—in 2017. Under the governing agreement, a board of directors consisting of the chief administrative officers of the four member towns would set policy and direction and an executive director would manage day-to-day operations.

As a district, it could apply for and receive grants from the state's 911 Grants Program to help construct, equip, and operate a new regional emergency communications center (RECC). The district applied for its first grant in 2017, and hired Robert Verdone as executive director.

The district had hoped to fund the RECC project completely through the state 911 grants program, but the RECC was larger and on a faster track than most other grant-funded projects, having recently purchased a retired Cold-War era former AT&T bunker. Recognizing that it needed a new financing approach, the district approached the commonwealth with an idea that ultimately changed the financing method for all new facilities in Massachusetts. It gained approval to use general obligation bonds to fund construction. These bonds were backed by the district's full faith and credit, and the funding was available immediately, supplied by a newly dedicated funding stream, enabling construction to begin.

To provide an interim operational solution, a temporary RECC was opened in Foxborough's former police communications center, and the new SEMRECC 911 Center came to life. Remarkably, despite the disruptions of COVID-19, the construction project was completed on time and within budget.

SEMRECC became fully operational on December 15, 2020, when the four communities transitioned all their public safety operations to the new facility. The center immediately implemented a 911 wireless-direct program, which allowed 911 calls from cell phones to be routed directly to SEMRECC. Another significant benefit to each member town was the ability to provide a higher, more sophisticated level of service while realizing *annual* savings of \$500,000 to \$700,000.

Considering the full array of benefits from this venture, one would be hard-pressed to find a more successful and cost-effective example of regional cooperation anywhere in the country. **PM**

10,000-49,999 Population

COVID-19 VACCINATION SITE FOR VULNERABLE SENIORS

Oakland Park, Florida

David Hebert, ICMA-CM, City Manager

Jennifer Frastai, Assistant City Manager

Andrew Thompson, Chief Financial Officer



David Hebert,
ICMA-CM



Jennifer
Frastai



Andrew
Thompson

After nine months of tragedy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the approval of a vaccine offered a glimmer of hope to thousands of Floridians. Websites were launched

to schedule vaccine appointments, and Florida began to administer doses in December 2020.

Unfortunately, many vulnerable seniors living in Broward County had no hope of getting an appointment. They did not have a computer or internet access or lacked the skills to navigate an online registration system. Some did not speak English; many did not own a car; and some had physical constraints that limited their mobility.

Reports mounted of crashing websites and vaccine sites running out of vaccine. Residents started to lose hope, and Oakland Park feared for its seniors. The city commission and city manager were determined to find a solution, and their determination led to the opening of a point of distribution (POD) vaccination site to remove the barriers that prevented vulnerable seniors from getting vaccinated.

A critical objective was to acquire access to vaccines. With the support of the city commission, the city manager accomplished this through an arrangement with the Florida Department of Health (DOH): Oakland Park would operate a site for vulnerable seniors if the DOH would supply vaccines.

The Oakland Park site opened on January 9, 2021. To identify and contact the target audience, staff and volunteers made calls from existing vulnerable registry lists, contacted nonprofit organizations, mailed letters to seniors who received exemptions from the county



property appraiser, and distributed bilingual flyers at churches and community centers.

As volunteers and staff contacted seniors, they scheduled appointments two to four days in advance or placed them on a waitlist. The DOH vaccine supply was never guaranteed, so appointments were scheduled within a small window to avoid the risk of cancellations. People on the waitlist were called to fill vacancies from same-day cancellations, ensuring that every dose was used. At the peak, 3,000 people were waiting for appointments. The city also arranged transportation if needed.

Staff identified a city-owned community center that was large enough to accommodate CDC social distancing guidelines and that had ample parking and restrooms. City employees and volunteers staffed the site. Paramedics prepared and administered the vaccines and returned vials and paperwork to the DOH. Contract nurses were hired periodically to fill staffing shortages.

The city continuously refined logistics, improving operations and increasing the number of daily doses from 54 to 144. Once the POD was operating smoothly, Oakland Park offered 20 appointments each day to other Broward County cities. When the waitlist was exhausted and vaccines became widely available, the city closed the site and then reopened for booster shots. The collective community effort achieved measurable results:

- Vaccines administered: 9,570.
- Waitlisted people served: All 3,000+.
- Volunteers: More than 14.
- Broward cities whose residents served at the POD: 10.

The Oakland Park POD was the first city-run vaccine site in Broward County, and Oakland Park was the first city in the county to request vaccines from the DOH specifically for vulnerable seniors. The city shared what it learned by conducting onsite tours and creating a PowerPoint and videos to walk other communities through the step-by-step process of operating a vaccine site. Six cities used the model to set up their own POD. The educational resources were shared with local, regional, and statewide contacts, as well as stakeholders at the national level, including ICMA and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The Oakland Park POD would not have opened without a partnership among the city manager and staff, elected officials, the DOH, nonprofits, and volunteers—all of whom came together and literally saved lives. Its success is a shining example of the power of local governments serving their communities in times of emergency. **PM**



50,000 and Greater Population

HOMELESS STRATEGIC PLAN

Vista, California

Patrick Johnson, ICMA-CM, City Manager



Patrick Johnson,
ICMA-CM

Homelessness is one of the most challenging social topics of our time. The city of Vista, California, recognized a need to implement a systematic, long-term proactive response to support the unsheltered community with a strategic plan that balances the needs of the most vulnerable residents with the greater needs of the community.

In 2020, the city council adopted Vista's Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness utilizing evidence-based practices and programs tailored for Vista. The plan blends services, resources, and enforcement to address three primary goals: (1) prevent homelessness, (2) improve quality of life, and (3) reduce homelessness.

Prevent Homelessness. Homelessness prevention focuses on promoting self-sufficiency and stabilizing housing for individuals and families who are at risk of becoming homeless. One strategy is the prevention program, which provides rent and/or deposit assistance, utility assistance, transportation assistance, and case management.

Another strategy is home sharing to assist people looking for low-cost housing. Home share coordinators match home providers with home seekers, conduct outreach in the community, locate housing, assist with agreements, and provide support to home providers and seekers.

Improve Quality of Life. As part of the strategic plan, the city improved coordination of encampment cleanups to

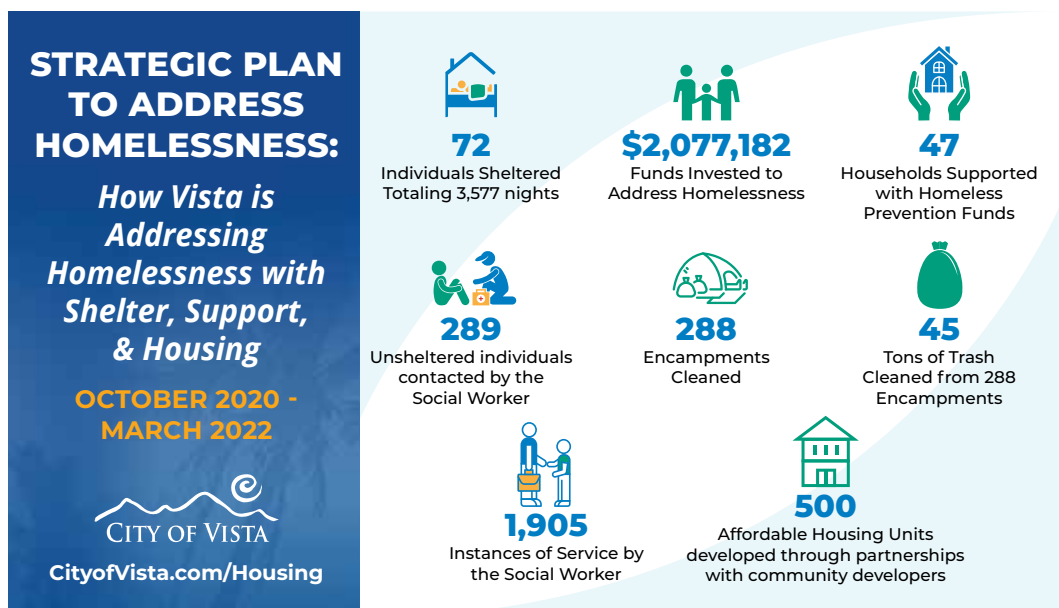
include social service providers and other jurisdictional partners. This strategy focuses on environmental requirements to reduce debris and pollutants that can contaminate creeks and watersheds. Vista continues advocating for legislation, funding, programming, and tools to assist in preventing and reducing homelessness.

Reduce Homelessness. The city began contracting with a local shelter partner to secure up to 10 shelter beds per night in existing low-barrier shelters. Low-barrier facilities have minimal entry requirements and make shelter more accessible to those in need. Individuals can remain for 120 nights—or longer if they are involved in case management. The city is also exploring a safe parking program and permanent supportive housing.

The city contracts with a social worker and housing navigator to assist clients in accessing basic needs and providing case management and assistance to the unsheltered community in collaboration with the sheriff's department, county health services, mental health providers, substance abuse resources, shelters, and other services providers. The social worker conducts outreach to encampment sites and individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the city.

Another element is the Internal Homelessness Working Group. The group includes the city's contracted social worker and housing navigator, members of the Vista Sheriff's Department, and city staff from code enforcement, public works, fire, stormwater, recreation and community services, building and planning, economic development, the city attorney's office, housing, and the city manager's office. The group collectively works to improve internal and external communications about homelessness, including identifying opportunities to collaborate with information, strategize, and initiate cross-department and/or cross-agency deployment of resources.

The success of the strategic plan is evidenced by a recent \$1.8 million demonstration grant administered by the California Interagency Council on Homelessness. Vista was the only city in San Diego County to be awarded a grant, and the program will provide targeted outreach and housing navigation services for 30 to 40 unsheltered individuals. **PM**



COMMUNITY *Partnership*

Under 10,000 Population

LUCAS FARMERS MARKET

Lucas, Texas

Joni Clarke, ICMA-CM, City Manager

Kent Souriyasak, Assistant to the City Manager



Joni Clarke,
ICMA-CM



Kent
Souriyasak

Lucas, Texas, was originally home to several farming communities and has developed into a bedroom community (population 8,631) in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Despite this evolution, Lucas still has agricultural producers who are passionate about local produce and meats.

Discussions about a farmers market began as early as 2005, but limited resources and inactive involvement delayed its creation for 14 years. In 2019, residents made a collective, organized effort to establish the market in partnership with the city to provide the community with local access to agricultural products, value-added products, artisanal products, and ready-to-eat foods. The city

council and the city's Parks and Open Space Board approved the creation of the market, and residents led an initiative to form a committee to establish rules and regulations, recruit vendors, plan operations, prepare marketing, and coordinate volunteers. The city contributed such resources as staffing, supplies, setup, teardown, and traffic safety.

The mission of the market is to create a safe and pleasant social experience for the community and visitors by providing access to local farmers, food producers, and artists. The city held two successful trial markets in 2019 and developed plans for a full season in 2020. Each trial market attracted an average of 39 vendors and more than 1,000 customers, and the city incurred direct costs of \$5,725 and indirect costs of \$3,337 for staffing and supplies. To guide future improvements, the city and the committee gathered and evaluated feedback about logistics, operations, staffing, vendor selection, and marketing.

The most difficult period occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of public health concerns, the city canceled most of the markets scheduled for the spring and summer of 2020



and worked with the market committee to meet changing public health and safety requirements. They outlined five stages to guide operations, starting with normal operations adjusted to provide more spacing (stage 1) and ending with complete closure of the market (stage 5). Stages 2, 3, and 4 imposed increasingly strict restrictions, including masking, parking and crowd limitation, and drive-through purchasing only.

The pandemic spurred a reexamination of needs, resources, and opportunities and set the stage for the 2021 season. The 20-member committee, with active involvement of the Parks and Open Space Board, discussed ways to increase volunteers, streamline tasks, reduce the work burden for city staff, recruit vendors, improve marketing, and adjust rules and regulations as necessary. The city approved \$5,000 to fund market operations and adopted a vendor fee of \$20 per market for nonresidents. The 2021 season offered 12 regular markets and two additional markets in conjunction with the city's special events. It was very successful, with an average of 343 vehicles and 686 visitors per market.

Several new programs and activities support the market's mission. A Market Share program assists underserved communities by partnering with local food pantries and charities, allowing residents to easily donate and share food with those in need. The continuing pandemic, exacerbated by Winter Storm Uri, pushed even more local families to seek assistance. Market Share collected a trailer of food donations and raised more than \$1,000 to benefit the local charities.

Additional market programs have included youth booths, which give young entrepreneurs an opportunity to showcase their goods and gain important business skills; a Lucas historical exhibit; a live chef demonstration; an ice cream competition; pumpkin decorations; and the twentieth anniversary commemoration of 9/11.

The success of the Lucas Farmers Market is due in large part to the strong partnership between the city and the residents who serve on the market committee. Together, they identify needs and resources, address safety concerns, and resolve any conflicts. They have invested countless hours in the partnership to create a special experience benefitting the entire community. **PM**



North Liberty, Iowa, answered by establishing the Neighborhood Ambassadors program to close the information gap between the city and its residents and strengthen community connections by partnering with on-the-ground volunteer leaders. Before implementation, City Administrator Ryan Heiar asked the city leadership team to buy into a plan intended to enhance a sense of community safety, increase city information equity, increase positive engagements between city staff and residents, develop future local government leaders, and increase neighborhood-level problem solving, such as parking, barking, shoveling, mowing, and fireworks concerns.

The initial challenge was to increase communication with a diversity of residents. As city leaders approached this problem, they realized that they needed to address an even deeper challenge—how to build authentic connections between the city and its residents and build strong community among residents.

The challenge isn't unique to North Liberty, but it was exacerbated by several factors that tended to decrease ties between residents and the local community and discourage civic engagement—for example, residents living in new neighborhoods

10,000-49,999 Population

NEIGHBORHOOD AMBASSADORS

North Liberty, Iowa

Ryan Heiar, ICMA-CM, City Administrator

Jillian Miller, Community Engagement Coordinator



Ryan Heiar,
ICMA-CM



Jillian Miller

Community pride starts at a neighborhood level, and quality of life improves when residents feel safe and connected to those who live around them. Good neighbors create great neighborhoods and, ultimately, a strong community. So, how can the city foster that connection?



without long-term community ties or commuting to jobs outside the city.

Recruitment for the Neighborhood Ambassadors program started in 2020 using a video, social media, referrals, earned press coverage, and a series of online open houses to answer questions about the program. An initial 64 applicants were interviewed by staff and volunteer members of the Communications Advisory Commission, and 41 were appointed. The program fully implemented on January 1, 2021.

During the first year of the program, Neighborhood Ambassadors met quarterly in person or online as a group with city staff and elected officials. They took behind-the-scenes tours of city facilities; hosted neighborhood events (pool parties, ice cream trucks, block parties); engaged in comprehensive planning exercises; shared city news and feedback; and led and participated in critical community building both citywide and within their neighborhoods. One even ran for elected office.

The relationships have made it easier to proactively address neighborhood concerns. For example, in June 2021, a neighborhood pond experienced a sizable fish kill. Working through the Neighborhood Ambassadors, staff could explain what happened and the timeline for cleanup, avoid confusion and rumors, and address potential safety concerns.



At the end of the first year, 100 percent of the ambassadors reported that they had a greater understanding of how the city works, felt more “in the know” about city happenings, felt more comfortable reaching out to staff, and had a greater appreciation for community development. Substantial percentages reported feeling more personal pride in their neighborhood and more connected to their neighbors.

Local government can seem monolithic, and its operations are often opaque to residents. The Neighborhood Ambassadors program helps lift the curtain by providing opportunities to explicitly discuss and demonstrate the work local government managers do, including their planning and decision-making processes and the tradeoffs necessary to balance diverse needs. Local government managers are accustomed to hearing from upset constituents, and those moments are difficult. Proactively building relationships within neighborhoods lays the groundwork for more productive conversations.

The Neighborhood Ambassadors program has attracted domestic and international attention, and North Liberty has been approached by representatives of other cities. It is based on the understanding that building strong, long-lasting, respectful, trusting relationships takes time, intention, and effort. The program, and the city’s partnership with volunteer leaders, has already shown positive results and a strong foundation for community building in North Liberty. **PM**



50,000 and Greater Population

EMERGENCY RESPONSE CONNECTORS

Boulder, Colorado

Brenda C. Ritenour, Neighborhood Engagement and Services Manager

Ryan Hanschen, Community Engagement Manager



Brenda C. Ritenour

Ryan Hanschen

After fierce floods devastated Boulder, Colorado, in 2013, the city recognized the need to strengthen its efforts to engage less-connected community members by learning what they are experiencing, identifying their emerging needs, and connecting them to emergency information and resources.

In response, the city partnered with community organizations and residents to launch the Emergency Response Connectors (ERC) program in March 2020 and created a community engagement function within the city/county emergency operations center. The function was first activated during COVID-19, when it became particularly important to reach the city's less-connected and most vulnerable residents (e.g., Latinx, Nepali, low-income) with accurate information and basic needs resources. Traditional city communications were not reaching these communities, public health information was changing rapidly, and disparities in health were increasing.

Drawing on the city's Community Connector model and Better Together community resiliency classes, the city engaged a cadre

of ERCs to build trust with local government, meet the specific needs of vulnerable communities, and protect the community from COVID-19. The ERC team was launched with 12 bicultural residents representing manufactured housing and subsidized rental communities who receive a monthly stipend for engaging their neighbors and networks in culturally relevant ways. The program also includes two dozen volunteers who engage community members across the city. ERCs have been instrumental in co-designing outreach strategies and sharing accurate COVID public health information through multilingual graphics and surfacing emerging community issues, such as childcare needs and mental health support. ERCs convene for weekly bilingual check-in meetings that focus on two-way dialogue and share bite-sized updates and resources with their communities as well as community organization partners each week.

ERCs regularly connect with more than 1,000 households and have placed thousands of masks and hundreds of tests in community members' homes. In addition to identifying and addressing barriers to COVID testing and vaccination, they provided resources for residents facing food insecurity, those needing rent assistance, older adults who were isolated, and residents without internet access.

The impact of the ERCs in building trust between local government and less-connected communities is best captured in quotes from community members:

"I've seen a change in my community and the relationship we have with the Boulder [local government]; there's more trust and everyone's issues are being addressed in a more efficient way."

"During the pandemic, my community has been able to get services, help, and awareness through this program, which has helped to make their day-to-day life easier. This program makes it easy to share community concerns, problems, and difficulties with the local government. I feel I became more responsible toward my community after I joined this program."

"Wow! I have close to 20 years in Boulder and I had never been part of something like this or heard of something like this, where the city includes the community."

City staff, ERCs, and community partners have learned a plethora of lessons. They have a deeper appreciation for the power of ongoing dialogue and a more profound understanding of meeting people where they are. They've also witnessed the professional growth of community members as they've stepped into facilitation roles, supported one another, and dived into community-initiated programming. A final lesson is that the programs with the greatest impact are co-designed and adapted with community members, recognize the lived experience of historically marginalized communities, and invest in the expertise, time, and bicultural talents of community members.

ERCs have shared their experiences directly with several other municipalities interested in replicating this model and with participants at several national conferences. Boulder looks forward to supporting the continued evolution of similar programming that engages less-connected community members in other municipalities. **PM**



COMMUNITY *Sustainability*

Under 10,000 Population

BONDURANT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LAUNCH PROGRAM

Bondurant, Iowa

Marketa Oliver, ICMA-CM, City Administrator

Jené Nichelle Jess, Finance and Employee Services Director



Marketa Oliver, ICMA-CM
Jené Nichelle Jess

Located in the Des Moines metropolitan area, Bondurant has a rapidly growing single-family residential (SFR) tax base, as well as significant tracts of agricultural land. The city has experienced explosive growth, expanding from 1,846 in 2000 to 7,365 in 2020.

Growth brings challenges. Bondurant has abundant needs, yet a tax base slow to expand. Exacerbating the problem is the local government taxing structure in Iowa, where SFR properties are effectively taxed at approximately one-half or less of assessed valuation; agricultural properties are taxed at an even lower rate; and commercial and industrial (CI) properties are taxed at 90 percent. Thus, the mix between CI and SFR valuation is critical to the long-term sustainability of a community. It was clear that Bondurant needed to increase the proportion of CI properties in its tax base.

In 2017, the city developed a strategic plan to achieve this goal, leading to the development of the Bondurant Economic

Development Launch Program. The city council recognized that converting a few key properties could jumpstart CI development and empowered staff to streamline processes and procedures to ensure that Bondurant could move at the speed of business. The council and new city administrator determined that the best path was pursuing Certified Site status for a 169-acre parcel of agricultural land strategically located off a state highway and near the entrance to Interstate 80.

Iowa's Certified Sites program designates sites as "development ready." Application involves identifying ownership and easements or other property restrictions; creating utility maps; conducting environmental, historical, and architectural studies; delineating and/or mitigating wetlands; performing endangered species reviews; and estimating costs for site work essential for probable development.

It was an enormous undertaking, and Bondurant had only the city administrator for planning staff. She met with the private landowners (more than 12) to secure their partnership and recruited assistance in researching and compiling the required information from the Eastern Polk Innovation Collaborative (EPIC), a public-private partnership for economic development; staff members from Polk County and the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; and business contacts from MidAmerican Energy.

The wetlands, endangered species, environmental, architectural, and historical studies required external professional assistance from a local consulting firm. MidAmerican Energy helped offset the costs. The certification process took nearly two years, and its full cost was approximately \$72,000. Bondurant officially became home to Iowa's newest Certified Site on November 4, 2019—the first milestone of the Economic Development Launch Program. This project solidified to staff the value of collecting this type of information to market Bondurant to other developers and proactively reduce the development timeline.

While Bondurant pursued certification, the city invested \$735,836





to proactively extend utilities to the target area. The city met with developers seeking a site for a distribution center for a large national company—a project that would later be dubbed “Project Bluejay.”

One potential barrier was the company’s extremely aggressive timeline. Because the city council had given staff the go-ahead to streamline processes, the time from the first meeting with developers until the day the graders were at work on the property was 47 days.

When the program began in 2017, SFR valuation made up 87.43% of the city’s tax base and CI represented only 9.92%. The Bluejay project raised the CI valuation to 17.71% and lowered the SFR percentage to 80.32%. In total, the city has landed six projects, improving the ratio even further. Businesses targeted under this program created more than 2,200 jobs between 2020 and 2022.

The Economic Development Launch Program contributes to Bondurant’s long-term financial sustainability, providing resources that improve public services and quality of life. **PM**

10,000-49,999 Population

RETHINK RECYCLING CAMPAIGN

Lake Forest, Illinois

Jason Wicha, City Manager



Jason Wicha

Americans generate more waste per capita than residents of any other country, and municipalities play a critical role in handling it. As cities grow and international political developments affect material markets, communities must find creative solutions to manage their waste flows responsibly and economically.

The city of Lake Forest, Illinois, has provided curbside recycling service since 1991, and single-stream recycling since 2008. From 2000 to 2017, the city averaged \$45,000 in revenue per year selling recycling, scrap metal, and electronics to help balance the city’s sanitation budget and offset volatility in waste disposal costs. When Asian restrictions on material imports went into effect in 2017, the city’s net recycling processing costs ballooned to \$140,000 in 2018 and exceeded \$200,000 in 2019. The city was faced with the decision of potentially reducing recycling services or eliminating its program. However, with more than 90 percent of households actively recycling, the city embraced this challenge by focusing on enhancing the quality of its recyclables to reduce processing costs.

The Rethink Recycling campaign, which launched in January 2020, is a two-year marketing and civic education program aimed to reduce the city’s recycling contamination rate from 25 percent to 10 percent and lower processing costs by 25 percent to achieve an annual savings of \$50,000. The campaign leveraged social media, online, and interactive engagement platforms to change recycling behavior using an animated spokesperson, Bart the Cart. The campaign also employed brochures, signage, and support services for face-to-face outreach at schools and youth programs. The campaign focused on four guidelines designed to target the largest contamination culprits:

1. Empty and rinsed.
2. No plastic bags!
3. No Styrofoam or #6 plastics.
4. No tangles, like extension cords and hangers, which damage sorting equipment.

After 10 months, an audit found that the city’s overall contamination rate had fallen from 25 percent to 19.24 percent. In 2021, interns conducted outreach to schools and youth camps, but because many were canceled due to COVID-19, they shifted to curbside recycling audits. Inspecting curbside bins for contaminated material, identifying common contaminants, tying “Oops!” tags to bins, and communicating with residents. By late 2021, the rate had fallen to just below 16 percent, indicating

that the campaign had elevated contamination awareness and encouraged responsible recycling behavior. Not only have contamination rates fallen, but processing costs are also anticipated to drop from a high of \$222,400 in 2019 to \$135,700 in 2022.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to predict the effects of COVID-19 on the city's efforts. The city could no longer conduct regular audits with its processor. Businesses and residents used and disposed of more single-use items (plastic bags, cardboard, Styrofoam), and homes were turned into offices and schools, resulting in a greater volume of waste per household. In response, the city adjusted messaging, targeting younger audiences by focusing on environmental benefits over economic considerations, mobilizing door-to-door audits to promote positive recycling behavior, and supplementing online resources with print materials.

Translating policy and vision into real results through efficient and equitable approaches to community challenges is a hallmark of professional local government. The success of the Rethink Recycling campaign depended on an organizational structure that promoted innovation and creativity, organizational alignment between policy goals and resources, data-driven decision-making, and an unrelenting focus on policies that benefit the entire community. Lake Forest's approach to the recycling challenge illustrates the value of professional local government in reconciling financial and environmental sustainability and promoting the overall welfare of the community. Its success can serve as a model to other municipal organizations whose leaders are determined to do what is right, and not what is easy. **PM**



50,000 and Greater Population

RECYCLED ASPHALT PAVEMENT PROJECT

Richmond, British Columbia, Canada

George Duncan, Chief Administrative Officer (Retired)



George Duncan

All asphalt roads in Canada must be replaced regularly, creating hundreds of thousands of metric tons of asphalt waste that is disposed of in landfills. However, asphalt waste is a valuable resource that can be reclaimed. The National Zero Waste Council (NZWC) encourages Canadian cities to use recycled asphalt pavement (RAP) in their paving mix to increase efficient use of materials, reduce the energy required to extract raw materials and manufacture asphalt, and minimize carbon emission and waste generation. Canadian cities have generally limited the proportion of RAP in road pavement to 10 percent because of concerns about the product's durability.

The city of Richmond undertook a pilot project to test the effect of using a higher percentage of RAP in its road pavement as part of its continued commitment to sustainability by moving toward creating a circular economy—one in which materials are reused instead of discarded. The city engaged and collaborated with regional industry stakeholders, including producers, consultants, contractors, municipalities, Metro Vancouver, and the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, to ascertain the feasibility of using a 40-percent RAP in pavement mix. The industry provided feedback that a monitored pilot project would be critical for building industry capacity and buyer confidence.

Richmond collaborated with NZWC and Lafarge Canada, a provider of sustainable building materials, to test the performance of the 40-percent mix throughout its life cycle. In November 2020, Richmond became the first Canadian city to apply 40-percent RAP on a municipal road—in this case, an 800-meter (approximately one-half mile) segment of a high-traffic volume arterial road. The asphalt pavement performance is being monitored annually and so far the project has been very successful.

The costs for the pilot were included in the annual paving program, and the city negotiated to keep the unit cost for the reclaimed asphalt mix similar to the cost of the typical mix. As the use of higher percentage RAP becomes more common, the city expects to see savings resulting from efficiencies in processing greater volumes. Given that this project did not result in additional expenditures, the use of RAP is very sustainable for the city in the future.

Outcomes of the pilot project include:

- More than 2,000 metric tons of reclaimed asphalt pavement have been diverted from landfill and used as raw material in new asphalt pavement.



- Monitoring data has confirmed that 40-percent RAP pavement performs as well as conventional asphalt pavement and that no additional pavement maintenance is required.
- The technology used for production and application of the 40-percent RAP is currently in place regionally; no specialized equipment was required.

- The city has introduced new purchasing practices to leverage the use of RAP, which aligns with the city's sustainability and circular economy initiatives.
- Greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced because of decreased extraction and transportation of virgin materials.

Given the success of the program, the city created an online toolkit to help other local governments introduce RAP to further their sustainability goals while maintaining quality. By early 2022, Richmond had used 40-percent RAP on 4,740 meters (about three miles) of multi-use pathways, as well as on the arterial road.

In planning and implementing the pilot, Richmond learned the following lessons:

- Early engagement of industry stakeholders was critical in making the pilot feasible and securing regional transition toward a circular economy.
- Regional stakeholders became confident enough to implement their own pilot projects to increase the RAP proportion in road pavement.

Richmond has raised awareness of the city's contribution by publicizing the project's environmental and sustainability benefits, conducting peer-to-peer workshops, organizing webinars to promote the toolkit, continuing regional engagement, and maintaining an open dialogue with stakeholders.

To date, the feedback has been positive, and several municipalities have shown an interest in implementing similar projects. **PM**



STRATEGIC Leadership & Governance

Under 10,000 Population

STRATEGIC CONTINUOUS OPERATIONAL REDESIGN AND EVALUATION (SCORE)

Bondurant, Iowa

Marketa Oliver, ICMA-CM, City Administrator



Marketa Oliver,
ICMA-CM

Bondurant, Iowa, grew almost 300 percent in 20 years, and that growth brought challenges in terms of capital, service, and organizational needs. In 2017, the city had little organizational structure, antiquated legacy software, and no e-government or collaborative capabilities. The organization could not effectively launch, measure, and revise programs, services, and staffing.

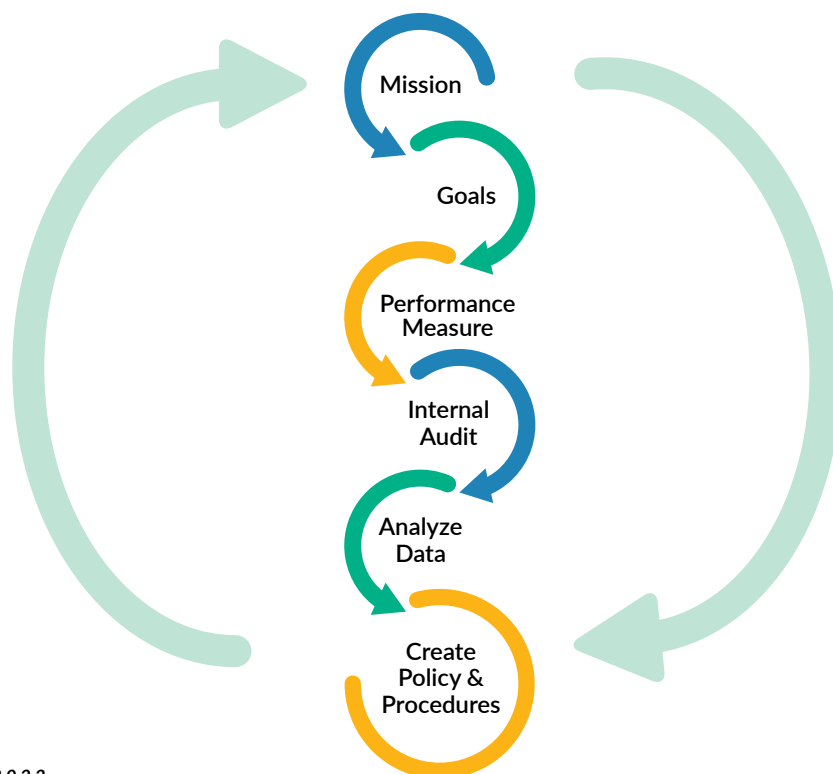
Throughout 2017 and 2018, new management team members were hired—first, a new administrator, and then public works, finance, and planning directors. The new team brought a philosophy that evolved into a systematic program: Strategic Continuous Operational Redesign and Evaluation (SCORE). Employing SCORE, the management team took the following actions:

1. Examined department mission statements to ensure alignment with the city's mission.
2. Reviewed departmental goals.
3. Developed performance measures.
4. Audited roles, resources, and responsibilities, as well as department policies, processes, and procedures, to evaluate ability to achieve the goals.
5. Analyzed resulting data.
6. Recommended improvements and efficiencies.

SCORE is implemented on a continuous cycle (see Figure 1) in which the management team (including the new hires, as well as the two tenured members of the team):

- Reevaluates positions to ensure that duties align with organizational and department needs and vision and reorients positions as needs change.
- Evaluates systems design, changing or modifying technology.
- Holds strategic mini-retreats.
- Engages external subject-matter experts for strategic planning and system review.
- Pursues ongoing staff training.
- Promotes public engagement and communications, soliciting feedback on service delivery priorities.
- Coordinates biennial strategic planning retreats and regular workshops for the city council.

The management team guides the SCORE process and departments implement it. Key individuals in each department serve as champions. With the city council's support, the city has been able to:



10,000-49,999 Population

NEW DEVELOPMENT FISCAL ANALYSIS

Fate, Texas

Michael Kovacs, City Manager

Justin Weiss, ICMA-CM, Assistant City Manager



Michael Kovacs
Justin Weiss,
ICMA-CM

The history of Fate, Texas, goes back to the 1880s, but significant growth did not occur for well over 100 years. In the 1970s, suburban expansion from Dallas moved eastward along Interstate 30. Just 30 miles east of Dallas, Fate captured the attention of home developers, who purchased land and waited until the early 2000s to begin construction. Like many suburban cities, Fate depends on one-time permit revenue from new growth to maintain and replace the aging infrastructure of these once-newer neighborhoods. This dynamic, which Chuck Marohn of Strong Towns calls the “Growth Ponzi Scheme,” has fueled the sprawl of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex for decades.

Fate’s leadership recognized large disconnects between the revenues and costs associated with single-family residential development patterns and the fiscally productive growth the city needed to cover its liabilities while providing high-quality public services. As a result, the focus of leadership became figuring out ways to manage exponential population growth while limiting major property tax rate increases, issuance of debt, and degradation of city facilities.

To address the disconnect between the land-use patterns and the overall fiscal sustainability of the community, the city developed a fiscal analysis tool in March 2017. This tool calculates fiscal productivity, or the amount of private wealth created by a proposed project. Fiscal productivity is also measured as value per acre, which creates an apples-to-apples comparison between parcels of different sizes and land uses. The analysis tool also estimates the ongoing revenues, maintenance costs, replacement costs of infrastructure, and the costs of public safety and other general municipal services. The city provides a downloadable spreadsheet on its website (fatetx.gov/fiscalanalysis) for developers to estimate these calculations.

While this fiscal calculator shows whether a project will promote long-term fiscal sustainability, it is not the sole factor in deciding whether a project is approved or denied. Sometimes projects that are not “fiscally sustainable” may still be desirable for other reasons, such as community parks.

A measurable outcome of the city’s new approach is the redevelopment of Fate’s nascent downtown. The first new development was a three-story mixed-use building completed in 2020, with 18 apartments and four commercial businesses, including a full-service sit-down restaurant. This high-quality

- Completely overhaul financial systems and create e-commerce capabilities.
- Embrace e-government, automating multiple functions and reducing the need for additional staff (an achievement positioning the city to offer services virtually during COVID-19).
- Enhance transparency.
- Research, create, and implement best practices in training, safety, financial management, and other areas.
- Eliminate work silos, foster a team-oriented atmosphere, and refocus on strategic goals.
- Create an internal controls policy that received a Program Excellence Award from the Government Finance Officers Association.
- Realize significant cost savings.

Organizational functionality has improved significantly, increasing the number of projects staff have been able to complete. By implementing SCORE, staff have:

1. Saved \$48,300 by partnering with the county for road resurfacing.
2. Researched and proposed a flex spending program, saving the city money while improving employee satisfaction.
3. Collaborated with design professionals on value engineering, saving \$144,000.
4. Deployed new safety protocols, reducing workers compensation premiums by more than \$60,000.

In implementing SCORE, the management team appreciated that changing an organizational culture can be a minefield, but overcoming resistance to change was fundamental. Getting input from key stakeholders and staff early in the process was critical to building the relationships necessary to gain trust.

Another pain point was implementing technological infrastructure. Staff built the business case for technology and connected the council’s goals for the city with the need to upgrade technology. The efficiencies achieved through automation were impressive and essential, as our local government is continually tasked to do more with fewer resources, and city council had a goal of lower tax rates.

Staff include information about SCORE in budget documents and highlight the savings or efficiencies that it produces. The program further enhanced the city council’s trust and confidence in staff’s leadership. Often the image of city managers or government is that they are outdated or bureaucratic. Employing SCORE, residents instinctively feel the difference. They can access government more easily and enjoy improved services, expanded programming, and finalized projects—all with a lowered tax rate. **PM**



compact development is the most fiscally productive type of project in Fate and has become a standard of performance. Currently in downtown there are four additional multi-story mixed-use developments underway, continuing the path where new developments contribute more to the community than they cost to serve, now and in the future.

The lesson learned with this program is that doing the math is the easy part of changing a community's business model. Fate's elected officials proved willing to do the more difficult part in educating residents about the long-term impacts of near-term growth. A year-long comprehensive planning process helped the city gain

support from its residents. Subsequently, the community adopted a plan with this fiscal model at the forefront (forwardfate.com).

Fate is one of few communities nationwide implementing Strong Towns' principles in innovative ways. Assistant City Manager Justin Weiss, who champions and manages the fiscal analysis program, and City Manager Michael Kovacs have spoken at nationwide conferences and written articles for national and Texas publications. Thanks to the initiative and support of city leaders, Fate is experiencing significant momentum toward making the city a lasting and vibrant place that showcases the value of professional management. **PM**

50,000 and Greater Population

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACCESS PROGRAM

Coral Springs, Florida

Frank Babinec, ICMA-CM, City Manager

Michael McNally, Fire Chief



Frank Babinec,
ICMA-CM



Michael
McNally

Many public servants are exposed to cumulative stress and traumatic events. This is especially true for first responders dealing with emergencies. They are subject to substantial trauma and stress that can profoundly affect their mental and physical health during and after their careers. Statistics obtained by Coral Springs indicated that the suicide rate for first responders outweighs line-of-duty and exposure deaths.

These statistics, together with the city's commitment to the safety, health, and wellness of its employees and their families, spurred the city to launch the Behavioral Health Access Program (BHAP), a comprehensive, integrated, multi-component program for employee mental health, wellness, and crisis intervention.

The program started in the Coral Springs-Parkland Fire Department in 2017. It was later expanded and is managed by a Safety, Health, and Wellness Committee (SHWC) under the direction of the city's safety, health, and wellness officer.

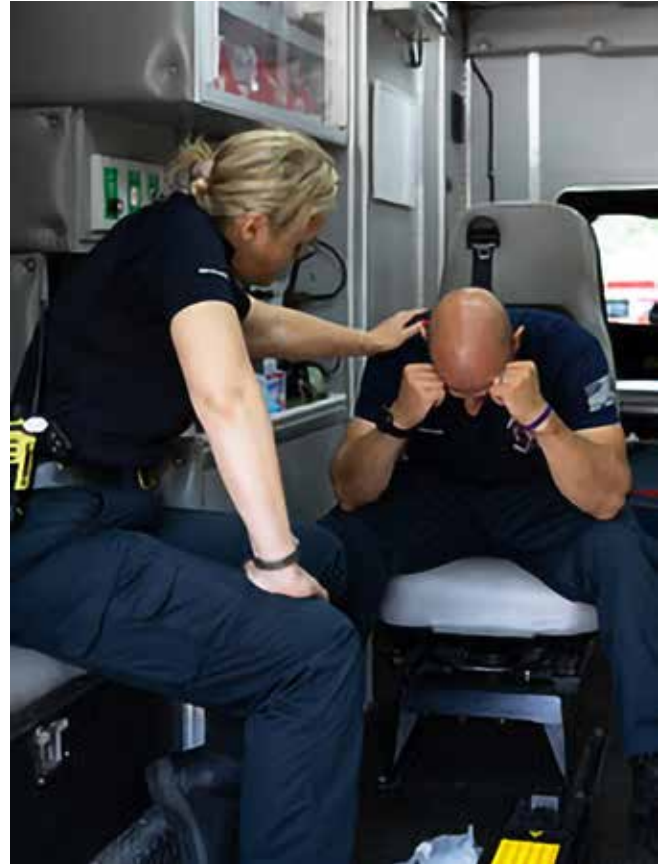
BHAP was employed in 2018 for public safety and civilian staff following the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School mass shooting in Parkland, as many employees had children or family members at the school. This tragedy shook the community to



its core, and having these resources available to staff and their families provided comfort and relief. Over the past several years, the city has lost the lives of several employees to different causes, and the resources were in place to provide the necessary support to assist members.

Because no one program or service meets all needs of every person, BHAP offers a variety of resources:

- **Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM):** Trained teams use the SAFER-R model of individual psychological crisis intervention, which serves as a protocol or procedural guide for individual and/or group interventions.
- **Chaplaincy:** Chaplaincy remains a significant part of the BHAP program. Its primary purpose is to help in the event of an injury or death and to assist in grief counseling. Chaplains lend an ear to those who need to talk about something bothering them, such as physical or emotional stress. A chaplain's goal is to aid, comfort, and help employees and their families and refer them to vetted resources to assist in recovery.
- **Peer Support:** An internal peer support team is trained to provide knowledge, experience, and emotional, social, or practical support to individuals in need.
- **Clinician Response Team:** A trained interagency clinician response team provides assistance from licensed mental health professionals.
- **Employee Assistance Program:** An employee assistance program is available to first responders, general employees, and their families.



- **Recovery Centers:** Fixed facility centers provide specific treatment and care for those recovering from substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other co-occurring issues.

All interactions within BHAP are strictly confidential. BHAP allows for the flexible use of these services to reintegrate the employee into normal operations after their return to stable, healthy conditions.

Because mental health issues often have a stigma that can prevent many from seeking help, a campaign reminding employees that "It's OK not to be OK" was launched, featuring photos of coworkers rather than stock images to help remove the stigma.

In 2021, BHAP expanded to provide access to all Coral Springs employees. BHAP has become recognized among public safety entities and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and has been a model for other communities. The state of Florida employed the program following the tragic collapse of the Champlain Towers in Surfside in June 2021. Florida has now adopted the program as part of its emergency response program.

Now more than ever, ensuring employee access to resources that protect their safety, health, and well-being is one of the city's most important priorities. BHAP has returned benefits to the city in the form of greater employee retention, employee satisfaction, an incentive for recruitment, and an overall positive work environment. **PM**

Gary L. Sears, ICMA-CM (Retired)

During a career that spanned 44 years, Gary Sears worked as a professional for five municipalities in Colorado—Loveland, Greeley, Silverthorne, Glendale, and Englewood. Along the way, he applied the knowledge and experience he gained to improve the quality of life in each of the communities he served. He consistently sought win/win solutions and innovative approaches to the issues affecting local government, while giving back to the profession both as a practitioner and after retirement.

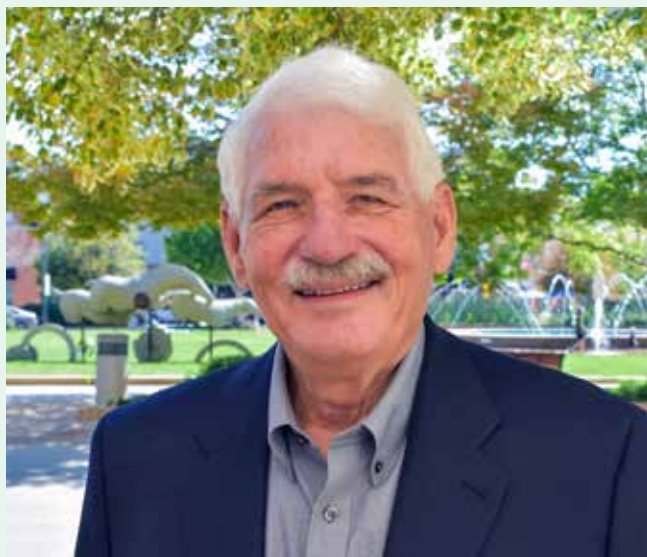
During much of his career, he managed the challenges posed by growth in a geographic area where ranching and mining coexist with ski areas and other recreational amenities that attract new residents and visitors. Regional planning and development issues required coordination with other municipalities, business groups, citizen activist groups, local elected leaders, planners, developers, staff members, and residents. Sears provided leadership on such projects as construction of an innovative town hall in Silverthorne, negotiation of water rights for Glendale, the revitalization of the Cinderella City Shopping Mall in Englewood into an award-winning mixed-use transit-oriented development, and numerous parks, recreation centers, senior facilities, and other improvements. At the forefront was the need to ensure adequate power and water supplies, sound wastewater treatment, flood mitigation, and transportation.

Sears has received numerous local, state, and national awards recognizing his leadership and innovations in water supply and wastewater management, public-private partnerships, and development projects, as well as contributions to local civic events. Upon his retirement from Englewood in 2014, the Colorado State Legislature recognized him in person with a citation that said in part:

“Gary Sears . . . has been a well-respected and valued public servant . . . His dedication to his community has helped shape Englewood into one of the best places in the world to live, work, and raise a family. The members of the Colorado House of Representatives are proud to recognize and thank Gary Sears for his commitment to public service, and for the contributions that he has made over the years not only for Englewood, but to the entire state of Colorado.”

A member of ICMA since 1971, he is the ICMA Liaison to Colorado and has served on the ICMA conference planning and host committees, spoken at the conference on diversity in municipal organizations, and contributed two case studies to ICMA's book, *Managing Local Government: Cases in Effectiveness*.

Sears's leadership in regional, state, and national management associations includes service on the board of the Colorado City/County Management Association, multiple terms as president



of the Denver Metro Managers' Association, and honorary life membership in the Colorado Municipal League after his service as president.

In several communities, Sears has been active in Rotary, coordinating exchange programs of young professionals with those from other countries and hosting students from abroad. His interest in international connections continued with his involvement in an ICMA exchange program, in which he developed a relationship and exchanges with Belm, Germany.

Sears has taught undergraduates and graduate classes at the University of Colorado in Boulder and Denver for many years and has served as a guest lecturer. He is the mentor for the ICMA Student Chapter at the University of Colorado Denver, a school that received an ICMA award for its New Directions Program, which offers “best and brightest” internships that have led many graduates to government careers. He was selected as a site visitor reviewing graduate schools' applications for accreditation with the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) and served on the NASPAA board as the “practitioner” member.

In addition to the case studies published by ICMA, Sears has contributed articles to *Colorado Municipalities*, *Public Works*, *Town and City* (published by the Texas Municipal League), and the National Civic League's 1987 Privatization Report.

Said Sears: “My work and hands-on experience in the early part of my career in the agriculturally diverse and full-service cities of Loveland and Greeley helped me in meeting the challenges and community improvements that I faced later.” The Distinguished Service Award recognizes Sears for his leadership and contributions to local government over a decades-long career. **PM**

Teodoro J. Benavides

Associate Professor of Practice, University of Texas at Dallas

Teodoro J. (Ted) Benavides turned to academia in 2005 after a lengthy and successful career in local government, most recently as city manager in Denton (1996–1998) and Dallas, Texas (1998–2004). He is currently the MPA Director and Associate Professor of Practice in the Public and Nonprofit Management program in the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences at the University of Texas at Dallas, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses on a wide range of local government management topics.

He also serves as the internship coordinator, drawing on his sizable professional network to ensure that students receive top-quality experiences and job opportunities. His ongoing interaction with city leaders from around the state and around the nation keep him at the forefront of issues facing local governments, which he incorporates into the courses he teaches.

He frequently mentors students on how to successfully navigate working in the public and nonprofit sectors, and the authenticity he brings to the classroom makes his courses of tremendous value. Benavides also coordinates a Local Government Management Graduate Certificate Program, managing teaching contracts with Allen, Anna, McKinney, Plano, and Richardson, Texas, that provide for classroom instruction of city employees, culminating in a certificate in local government management from the university. In 2021, ICMA awarded Benavides the Academic Award in Memory of Stephen B. Sweeney in recognition of his significant contribution to the formal education of students pursuing careers in local government.

Other awards also recognize his distinguished service. He was elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) in 2000. The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) selected him for the Paul Van Riper Award for Excellence and Service in 2020 and awarded him a Presidential Citation of Merit for outstanding leadership in hosting the 2008 ASPA annual conference in Dallas. The North Texas Chapter of ASPA named him Public Administrator of the Year in 2004. He received the Academician of the Year Award from the Texas City Management Association (TCMA) in 2017 and has received several recognitions from the North Texas chapter of the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA), including the Mark of Excellence Award in 2006. He has also received awards and recognitions from organizations in Denton and Dallas.

Over the years, Benavides has shared his knowledge and expertise by providing technical assistance and managerial advice to cities and legislators on organizational issues and by making presentations on budgeting, fiscal crisis management,



benchmarking, and other topics at conferences and symposiums convened by Austin College, NFBPA, and ASPA.

Benavides continues an active research and publishing agenda with colleagues from across the nation. While he is not bound to perform research or publish in his current position, he feels that these activities are beneficial for the department and the profession since they add knowledge to the field of public administration and benefit the community. He has authored and co-authored books, including peer-reviewed books, on human resources information systems, city planning, local government management, and nonprofit organizations.

As a leader in the profession, Benavides has served the North Texas chapter of ASPA as vice president and president. For NFBPA he chaired the International Relations and Public Policy Committee, has been on the Executive Leadership Institute and Mentoring Program Evaluation Task Force and the Investment Committee, and served on the board of directors from 2002–2010. He was vice-chair of the TCMA University Relations Task Force in 2005.

A member of ICMA since 1981, he has participated as a member of the Digital Strategies Committee, the Conference Planning Committee, the Center for Performance Measurement, and the Municipal Utilities Owner Committee and Utilities Consortium.

Peers and colleagues support his selection for ICMA's Distinguished Service Award, saying that he has demonstrated the highest qualities of teaching, scholarship, and service to the department, school, university, and community. **PM**

Mark E. Wollenweber, ICMA-CM (Retired), AICP

ICMA Senior Advisor; Extension Specialist, Michigan Department of Treasury

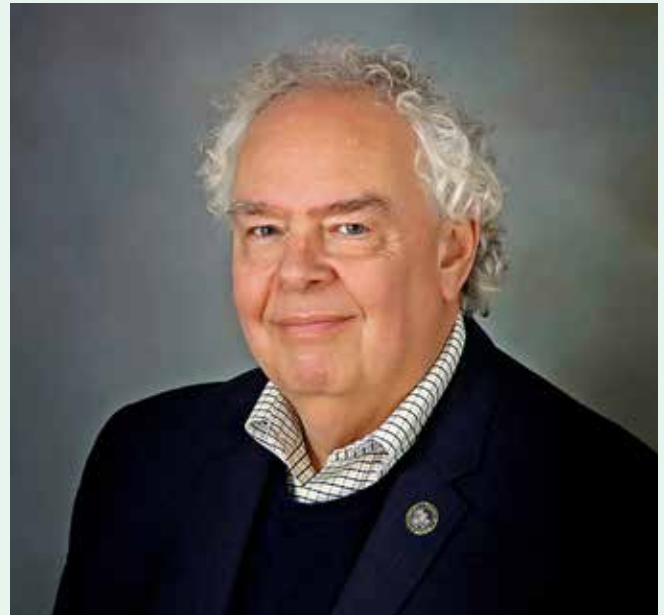
Mark Wollenweber has been a role model, leader, mentor, and friend to emerging and established professionals in Michigan and throughout the United States during a career spanning 50-plus years. In the early 1970s, while completing a master's degree at the University of Detroit, he began work on the staff of the Michigan Municipal League before moving on to progressively responsible positions in local government until he retired in 2019 as city manager in Grosse Pointe Shores.

In his city manager positions, Wollenweber was cited for “thinking outside the box.” He spearheaded the Intergovernmental Cable Communication Authority that provided cable service to nine communities in Oakland County, Michigan. It was one of the largest cable consortia in the country at the time and continues today. In St. Clair Shores, he was responsible for the development of Lac Sainte Claire Park, which included a marina development and a refurbished municipal pool. It was funded by the largest recreational bond issued at the time. And he was responsible for what became the Nautical Mile, a commercial TIF district and merchants association along Lake Saint Clair—the first successful development in that area after two failures.

Wollenweber has consistently encouraged and mentored young professionals and helped them launch rewarding careers in local government. He supported and promoted women in leadership positions as early as the 1980s, when women were not generally encouraged to pursue local government careers. He was a frequent guest lecturer in MPA programs and served on the Wayne State University MPA program review committee for many years. He hired and supervised more than a dozen interns from the University of Michigan-Dearborn, Michigan State University, Oakland University, Grand Valley State University, and Wayne State University.

A leader in supporting managers in transition, Wollenweber served on ICMA's Task Force on Members in Transition and led an initiative by Michigan Municipal Executives (MME), the state association of managers, to provide counseling free of charge to managers who were in trouble and/or faced termination. Whenever possible, he hired managers in transition for city projects.

Contributions to ICMA have included a term as midwest regional vice president; membership on conference planning and evaluation committees; the Awards Evaluation Committee; the Data and Information Services Committee, which he also chaired; and the Telecommunications Committee. He continues as a Senior Advisor, a leadership development mentor, and a legacy leader.



MME has tapped Wollenweber's wisdom and experience as well. He continues as a member of its Experience Committee and the MIT Committee. In the past he served as president, a member of the board of directors, chair of the ethics committee, and a participant in numerous other committees. One of his major accomplishments was leading a succession of MME presidents and past presidents in a successful effort to amend the Michigan Home Rule Cities Act to provide that manager contracts could include severance provisions, thus undoing a court decision that had removed severance protections from managers' employment agreements.

Wollenweber's service has been recognized with the John M. Patriarche Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor conferred by MME; the Michigan Municipal League Special Award of Merit; and a scholarship to attend the Harvard University JFK School of Government Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government, awarded by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and the Taubman Company. In 1982, the Detroit Metro Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration named him “City Manager of the Year.”

Wollenweber's service did not end with his retirement. He continues to lend a hand to cities and local government professionals as a consultant and mentor. Colleagues praise him for his strong moral compass, his passion for local government and professional management, and his humble, servant-leadership approach, all of which have earned him ICMA's Distinguished Service Award. **PM**

Alison McKenney Brown

City Attorney
Lakewood, Colorado

Alison McKenney Brown has served local governments for almost 30 years, bringing experience and expertise in city administration, legal services, project administration, economic development, and personnel management. She earned a bachelor's degree from Kansas State University, an MPA degree from Wichita State University, and a JD degree from the University of Kansas.

She has served as city attorney for two cities in Colorado (Lakewood and Englewood) and three cities in Kansas (Bel Aire, Haysville, and Colwich). Other positions include city prosecutor in Bel Aire, Wichita, Goddard, and Cheney, Kansas; assistant county counselor for Sedgwick County, Kansas; pro tem judge in several communities; and interim city administrator in Bel Aire. From 1998 to 2017, she was a faculty member at the School of Community Affairs at Wichita State University, where she educated city managers, police officers, and other local government professionals.

Brown's legal and management expertise helped Bel Aire avoid lawsuits over personnel missteps. She helped the city update its personnel policies, including police policies; trained staff in personnel management, sexual harassment, discrimination, and performance reviews; and guided staff in hiring, discipline, employee evaluation, and termination. She also mentored personnel to understand that effective government service required always balancing the four elements of governance: politics, policy, law, and finance. Many of those individuals have gone on to become local government leaders in their own right.

Brown worked closely with elected officials, helping them formulate policies, resolutions, and ordinances, as well as understand their roles in local governance. She helped build partnerships in the community with boards, committees, homeowners associations, and other local groups and provided liaison with county and state governments.



In Bel Aire, Brown was involved in economic development, helping establish a land bank, community improvement districts (CIDs), and a transient guest tax. The land bank was a valuable tool in holding land owned by the city and reducing carrying costs. The CID is being used to develop a business park (Sunflower Commerce Park) and other commercial areas. Her legal expertise was key in negotiating land contracts and economic development incentives.

Throughout her career, Brown has published books and articles. Topics have included policing (use of force, career preparation), human trafficking, and police personnel matters. Drawing on her experience in economic development, she published an article on CIDs for PM magazine.

Brown is recognized as a community advocate and supporter of staff who is always looking out for the best interests of the residents she serves. Motivated and results-focused, she has demonstrated a commitment to the local government management profession. **PM**

Alison McKenney Brown is recognized as a community advocate and supporter of staff who is always looking out for the best interests of the residents she serves.

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CELEBRATION OF SERVICE

In recognition of ICMA members' years of public service, these members will be presented awards in 2021.

55-Year SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

R. Michael (Mike) Eastland, executive director of the North Central Texas Council of Governments since 1992, has worked in Texas since the start of his career. He was city manager in Carrollton (1984–1992), deputy city manager in Waco (1981–1984), city manager in Killeen (1976–1981), assistant city manager in Richardson (1974–1976), assistant general manager with Gulf Coastal Waste Disposal (1970–1974), assistant to the city manager in Wichita Falls (1970), and administrative assistant in Wichita Falls (1967–1970).

50-Year SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Russell A. Jones Jr., deputy township manager of Livingston, New Jersey, has devoted his career to the town. He has also served as acting township manager/deputy township manager (2016–2018), deputy township manager (2008–2016), deputy township manager/finance director treasurer (1990–2008), assistant to the township manager (1979–1989), planning assistant (1975–1979), assistant building inspector (1973–1979), and health department field representative (1972–1973). He also has served as the appointed recycling coordinator since 1987.

Terrance E. (Terry) Stewart is currently city administrator in Arcadia, Florida, a position he assumed in 2015. Before taking that position, he served five other Florida cities: in Delray Beach, he was interim city manager (2014); in Fort Myers Beach, he was interim town manager (2010–2011) and town manager (2011–2014); in Cape Coral, he served as city manager (2002–2009); in Pembroke Pines, he was

assistant fire chief (1989–1994) and assistant city manager (1994–2002); and in Lauderdale Lakes, he worked in the public works department (1969–1970) and the fire department (1970–1986) before becoming fire chief (1986–1989).

Rodney A. Storm, city administrator in Blair, Nebraska, has also served as city administrator in Plainview, Nebraska (1986–1989), in construction management in Garden City, Kansas (1984–1986), and as general manager with the Middle Missouri Natural Resources District in Nebraska (1972–1984). The district later merged into and became part of the larger Papio Missouri River Natural Resources District, headquartered in Omaha.

45-Year

SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Barbara L. Beckett, city administrator, Winchester, Missouri, has devoted her entire career to Winchester. She started there as city clerk/treasurer/court clerk (1977–1996) and moved on to become city administrator in 1996, a position she still holds today.

Randy J. Bukas became city manager in Freeport, Illinois, in 2020 after serving Freeport in positions as deputy city manager/finance director/city treasurer (2017–2020). Before that, he was accounting administrator/city treasurer in Effingham, Illinois (2017), city administrator in Flora, Illinois (2011–2017); city manager in Olney, Illinois (2009–2011); municipal manager in Germantown, Ohio (2005–2009); village administrator in Whitehouse, Ohio (1996–2005); city administrator in Lodi, Wisconsin (1993–1996); town administrator in Weston, Wisconsin (1991–1993); village administrator in Saukville, Wisconsin (1989–1991); assistant city manager in Meadville, Pennsylvania (1987–1989); administrative assistant in Meadville (1983–1987); administrative assistant in Barrington, Illinois (1979–1982); administrative assistant with Kane De Kalb County CETA, Illinois (1979); rehabilitation specialist in De Kalb, Illinois (1978–1979); and a housing inspector in Chicago Heights, Illinois (1974–1975).

Roger J. Desjarlais, county manager in Lee County (Fort Myers), Florida, has devoted his career to cities and counties in the state. He started in emergency medical services in Lee County (1975–1989) and went on to serve the county as public safety director (1989–1992), deputy director of public services (1992–1993), and assistant county administrator (1993–1997). Next he moved to a county administrator position in Broward (1998–2005), a position in business development with the Tilt-Con Corporation (2007), and chief deputy with the Lee County Property Appraiser (2008–2013) before assuming his current county manager position.

John F. Hansley, deputy county administrator in Greenville County, South Carolina, has devoted most of his career to the county of Greenville. He held the positions of systems analyst (1977–1978), management and budget analyst (1978–1981), budget coordinator (1981–1988), interim personnel director (1988–1989), finance director (1989–1993), and director of finance and administrative services (1993–1995). From 1995 to 1997, he served as deputy city manager in Dayton, Ohio. He returned to Greenville County as director of finance and administrative services (1997–2000), acting county administrator (2000), and deputy county administrator/director of general services (2001 to present).

Bruce E. Henry, township administrator in Hanover, Butler County, Ohio, since 2005, began his career in the highway division of the state of Ohio (1973–1974) and as a planning intern in the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (1974–1975). He went on to become assistant and county administrator in Clermont County, Ohio (1975–1979), director of management services for Santoro Engineering Company (1979–1981), director of public safety in Blue Ash, Ohio (1981–1985), deputy city manager and director of public safety in Blue Ash (1985–2003), instructor/teacher with the Great Oaks Police Academy (1983–present), and managing partner with Clerrenton Corporation Consulting (1984–2016).

Michael McLaurin, ICMA-CM (Retired), has spent his entire career serving local governments in North Carolina. He came out of retirement to serve as town manager in Indian Trail, a position he began in 2020. Previously, he was interim town manager in Selma (2019), Angier (2018), Oxford (2015–2016), and Claremont (2014–2015), town manager in Waxhaw (2006–2014), interim manager in the town of Stanley (COG) (2005–2006), and senior planner with the Centralina Council of Governments (1985–2006). Earlier, he held two positions in the Charlotte Police Department (now the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department): communications center supervisor (1980–1985) and telecommunicator (1976–1980).

Ernie B. McNeely, ICMA-CM, is currently manager in Lower Merion Township, Pennsylvania. Before that, he served four other jurisdictions in the state. He was borough manager in West Chester (1987–2014), borough administrator in Bridgeville (1980–1987), CETA private industry council director in Fayette County (1980), and administrative assistant to the mayor and council in Washington (1977–1980).

Mark K. Ryan, currently a senior advisor with ICMA, was city manager in three Florida cities: Indian Harbor Beach (2014–2022), Titusville (2007–2014), and West Melbourne (1980–2006). In Titusville, he also served as economic development director (2006–2007), and in West Melbourne, he was parks and recreation supervisor (1979–1980). Before that, he worked in Lowndes County, Georgia, as a utilities plant trainee (1977), parks and recreation coordinator (1977–1978), and special projects coordinator (1978–1979).

William L. Sorah, ICMA-CM, has been employed by the city of Bristol, Tennessee, since 1991 and has served as Bristol's city manager since January 2014. Prior to his appointment as city manager, he served as deputy city manager for operations (1991–2014). He was previously employed by the city of Bristol, Virginia, as purchasing agent (1989–1991), assistant director of parks and recreation (1979–1989), and parks superintendent (1977–1979).

Michael (Mike) C. Van Milligen, city manager in Dubuque, Iowa, started his career as a police officer in Carbondale, Illinois (1977–1984) and administrative assistant to the police chief in Skokie, Illinois (1984–1986). In Skokie, he went on to become assistant to the village manager (1986–1987) and assistant village manager (1987–1992) before assuming his current position.

Dr. Mark S. Watson has served as city manager in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, since 2010. Before that, he was city administrator in Yuma, Arizona (2005–2010); city manager in Temple, Texas (1999–2004); city administrator in Billings, Montana (1993–1999); an associate with the Texas Innovations Group (1992); and city manager in three Texas cities: Grapevine (1989–1992), Mission (1985–1989), and Stamford (1981–1985). Earlier, he was assistant to the city manager in Wichita Falls, Texas (1978–1981), administrative assistant in University Park, Texas (1977–1978), and management aide in Overland Park, Kansas (1976).

40-Year

SERVICE AWARD

RECIPIENTS

Scott A. Adkins, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Roseville, Michigan

Kris M. Busse
City Administrator
Owatonna, Minnesota

Steven S. Crowell Jr.
City Administrator
Jefferson City, Missouri

Robert James Daniels, MPA
Town Manager
Sewall's Point, Florida

Jeffrey S. Earlywine
County Administrator
Boone County, Kentucky

Douglas R. Elliott Jr.
City Manager
Oxford, Ohio

Ron R. Fehr
City Manager
Manhattan, Kansas

William J. Fraser, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Montpelier, Vermont

R. Lee Gilmour
City Manager
Perry, Georgia

John W. Grande
Town Administrator
Tisbury, Massachusetts

Robert T. Grimm
Town Manager
McCandless, Pennsylvania

Paul A. Hofmann
City Manager
Bastrop, Texas

Ralph M. Hutchison
Township Manager
East Lampeter, Pennsylvania

Keith D. Johnson
City Manager
Miamisburg, Ohio

A.J. Johnson
City Manager
Urbandale, Iowa

Mark M. Krane
Township Administrator
Warren, New Jersey

David G. Kraynik
Township Manager
East Coventry, Pennsylvania

Richard J. Lemack, ICMA-CM
Town Administrator
Davie, Florida

William Henry Lindley
Town Administrator
Highland Park, Texas

W. Christopher Lochner
Municipal Manager
Hampton, Pennsylvania

Thomas L. Mattis
City Manager
Elgin, Texas

Robert Mellor
Village Manager
Carol Stream, Illinois

Spencer R. Nebel, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Newport, Oregon

Marc Anthony Ott
CEO/Executive Director
International City/County
Management Association
Washington, DC

Donald C. Pepe
Borough Manager
Zelienople, Pennsylvania

James J. Proce, MBA, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Anna, Texas

Carl R. Rogers
Town Manager
Barre, Vermont

Christopher Russo
City Manager
Sunny Isles Beach, Florida

William A. Shepeluk
Municipal Manager
Waterbury, Vermont

Tom Simonson
Assistant City Manager/
Community Development Director
Shoreview, Minnesota

Patrick Shaw Stallings
City Manager/Public Safety Director
Seagoville, Texas

Andrew J. Takata
City Administrator
Dupont, Washington

Alan Thornton
City Manager
Oxford, North Carolina

Matthew D. Zimmerman
City Manager
Hazelwood, Missouri

35-Year

SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

David Dale Ashburn
 Ellen Jean Baer, ICMA-CM
 Timothy J. Barth
 Michael R. Beimer
 Robert Ben Bifoss
 Mary Blair-Hoeft
 Ron Bow
 James F. Bowden
 Paul C. Boyer Jr.
 Christopher J. Brady
 Karen M Brooks
 William F. Bruton Jr.
 James Kent Cagle
 John M. Call
 William D. Cargo
 Stephen A. Carter
 Michael J. Cassady
 Dr. Kenneth L. Chandler, ICMA-CM
 David Corliss
 Rodney Cumby
 Mark S. Cundiff
 Dorothy Ann David
 Larry M. Davis
 Bristol S. Ellington, ICMA-CM
 Terry A. Emery
 Edward L. Faison
 James Feuerborn
 Daniel Fox
 Denis C. Fraine
 Peter P. Garwood
 Laura S. Gill, ICMA-CM
 Marcia E. Glick

Al Grieshaber Jr.
 Scott A. Hahn
 Penny Hill
 James Richard Howell Jr.
 Scott K. Huebler
 James A. Inman
 Alex R. Jensen
 Allen Johnson
 Joseph M. Kernell
 Robert Lapham
 James H. Lewellen
 Mari E. Macomber
 G. K. Maenius
 James J. Malloy, ICMA-CM
 Jeffery Mark
 Stephanie J. Mason, ICMA-CM
 Richard L. Meyers
 Sheryl L. Mitchell Theriot
 Scott W. Mitnick
 Neil A. Morgan
 Chad C. Olsen Jr.
 Ron K. Patterson Jr.
 Gregory M. Porter
 Mark Joseph Relph
 Ann Ritzma, ICMA-CM
 Bruno R. Rumbelow
 Raymond R. Rummel
 Victoria Runkle
 Irene Sasyniuk
 Brent Schleisman
 Joyce A. Shanahan
 Dean E. Shankle Jr.

Curtis E. Snyder, ICMA-CM
 Patrick E. Titterington, ICMA-CM
 Frederic E. Turkington Jr.
 Mark D. Vanderpool
 Terri Velasquez
 Patricia A. Vinchesi
 John P. Vodopich
 Ann E. Wall
 Matthew U. Watkins
 David Scott Wayman
 Thomas R. Webster
 Steven D. Wilke
 Tai J Williams
 Sandra Renee Wilson, ICMA-CM
 Scot W. Wrighton
 Shana Yelverton

30-Year

SERVICE AWARD

RECIPIENTS

Michelle D. Amberg

Bill Atkinson

James E. Barnes

John Baumgartner

Robert V. Belleman

David Kevin Boatright, ICMA-CM

Debra L. Bottoroff

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Local Government Hispanic Network: Strengthening Communities, Growing Leaders

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, hear how the growth of LGHN and its expansion of chapters are positively impacting local government.

BY RAYMOND H.
GONZALES JR.

Since 1980, the Hispanic population of the United States has quadrupled to more than 62 million people, and the rate of growth is faster in regions not traditionally home to many Hispanics, such as the Upper Midwest and the South. That demographic growth is changing everything from workplaces and housing to schools and marketing. It is also changing local government, where Hispanics remain underrepresented and daily decisions impact Hispanic residents and businesses.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins September 15, marking an opportunity for local governments to evaluate their efforts to support Hispanic employees and community members. The Local Government Hispanic Network (LGHN) was founded with a mission to grow future local government leaders and increase the Hispanic cultural literacy of host communities. LGHN has grown alongside the country's Hispanic population, from roughly 200 members in 2013 to around 1,000 in 2022, and is currently expanding its chapters across the United States.

"There's a little secret formula to a successful LGHN chapter, and it's not hard," says LGHN board member Marcus Steele, finance manager for Mesa, Arizona's arts and culture department. "You get city manager buy-in and a half-dozen people willing to do the work. That's it, and once it's built, people flock to it."

As chapters are founded and begin to grow, they are taking on a range of issues related to LGHN's mission. Here are stories from three existing and developing LGHN chapters and their efforts to raise the profiles of Hispanics in local government.

Mesa, Arizona: Growing Hispanic Leadership

In 2018, the city of Mesa, Arizona reviewed internal and external demographics and found that while the city was roughly one-third



Mesa, Arizona

that sort of thing, but what we're finding is we need to go out and reach our field staff—they're so time-constrained," Steele says.

The program enlists about 25 "folks in steel-toed boots" a year to learn how to use computer programs, the basics of human resources, and other skills needed for supervisory roles. The program has graduated about 70 people so far, with roughly half of them moving into management within a year of graduation.

"LGHN leverages the people in middle management to get involved and make an impact," Steele says. "It's a group of people that are truly the embodiment of public servants, not only to the residents, leaders and businesses of Mesa, but also to each other."

Evanston, Illinois: Building Bridges to Employees and Residents

The city of Evanston, Illinois, is just north of Chicago, which is home to the country's

Hispanic, only about 15 percent of city employees were, and the number dipped to about five percent in the city's pool of managers. That same year, the city manager, Chris Brady, encouraged employees to start an affinity group for Hispanic employees, and the city's chapter of the Local Government Hispanic Network (then known as the International Hispanic Network) was born.

One signature activity of the Mesa chapter is a lunch-and-learn series that brings in internal and external speakers to inspire employees. Speakers include local leaders such as former Maricopa County Recorder Adrian Fontes and Dr. Maria Harper-Marinick, former chancellor of the Maricopa County Community College District. Equally popular are presenters who speak to the region's Hispanic culture, such as James Beard award-winning chef Silvana Salcido Esparza and members of a local low-rider club. There's an annual event celebrating civil rights leader Cesar Chavez and events to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month.

"We engage employees around professional development because LGHN is focused on recruiting and retaining Hispanic leaders, but the way you draw people in is through the cultural stuff," says Steele.

An employee named Isaias Garcia Romero, with the help of LGHN, created a professional development apprenticeship program focused on helping field staff develop the skills to move into

management. Romero, an Air Force veteran, moved from a temporary equipment operator to lead operator, then foreman, then council assistant, and now serves as the city's solid waste business and programs administrator. He understood both the leadership potential of many field staff and how to build the specific skills they need to get there.

"[When] you do professional development, a lot of people who are desk jockeys flock to



Evanston, Illinois

fifth-largest Hispanic population, numbering nearly 820,000. As elsewhere, the Chicago region's Hispanic population is spreading outward, from the city to the suburbs. In Chicago, the Hispanic population grew three percent from 2000 to 2010 and another five percent from 2010 to 2020, while Evanston's Hispanic population nearly doubled between 2000 and 2020—albeit with significantly smaller numbers than the big city to the south.

With the growth in Evanston's Hispanic population comes greater visibility and a corresponding need to provide services to Hispanic residents, businesses, and city employees. The city last year elected its first Hispanic official, City Clerk Stephanie Mendoza. And its Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations include a block party with food trucks, entertainment, and a chance for city officials to meet with residents.

As the city of Evanston's LGHN chapter establishes itself, members are looking for how best to help both Hispanic employees and residents flourish in the city. A prime example is within the city's library system, where LGHN board member Mariana Bojorquez serves as Latino engagement librarian for the Evanston Public Library. In the branch library located in the Robert Crown Community Center, for example, there is an emphasis on hiring bilingual speakers.

"From the moment (the library) opened, we have had a lot of bilingual visitors who came specifically because there are bilingual staff members there," Bojorquez says.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins September 15, marking an opportunity for local governments to evaluate their efforts to support Hispanic employees and community members.



Of course, that requires intentional work to accommodate and support both visitors and employees. Evanston can't compete with Chicago when it comes to translating city documents into Spanish, since nearly everything in Chicago is routinely translated for the city's hundreds of thousands of Hispanic residents. Because producing translated documents is expensive and time-consuming, Evanston officials must decide where to focus their translation efforts, which are expanding alongside the city's growing Spanish-speaking population.

The city of Evanston's Hispanic workforce has kept pace with the city's overall Hispanic population. Hispanics make up roughly 10.4 percent of the city workforce, closely mirroring the city's overall Hispanic population of 11.2 percent. In a time of great turnover throughout local government, retaining and promoting those employees is a priority for the local LGHN members.

That means ensuring the city is open to candidates with different backgrounds and experiences who can do a job well despite a lack of traditional qualifications. For instance, there aren't many Spanish speakers with master's degrees in library and information sciences, so hiring managers need to consider candidates who may lack an advanced degree but can contribute in other important ways—and then ensure they are supported throughout each stage of their careers.

"As we hire new Latino employees into the city, they're faced with huge problems that they don't

know how to handle because of systemic issues," Bojorquez says. "If the city supports this group and looks for solutions, they will be better able to respond to residents' needs."

San Antonio, Texas: Mentoring Future Leaders

San Antonio is a natural place for organizations like LGHN to flourish. As the seventh-largest city in the United States, with nearly two-thirds of its residents Hispanic, San Antonio is the largest American city with a majority Hispanic population. While the San Antonio area is in the process of creating a regional LGHN chapter, the roots of the organization are deep there: in 2018, San Antonio hosted the first meeting of the ICMA Hispanic Network at the annual ICMA conference, with city and county managers from across the United States gathering to explore how to promote Hispanics within their local governments.

Former San Antonio City Manager Alex Briseno was a champion of the initiative, along with former assistant city managers Rolando Bono and Frances Gonzalez. Current City Manager Erik Walsh supports the plan to bring LGHN to local government throughout the region—Bexar County and smaller municipalities, as well as San Antonio.

"From my perspective, LGHN is a proven organization that provides a platform for Latinos to pursue professional development and career opportunities," says Ramiro Salazar, library director



San Antonio, Texas

for the San Antonio Public Library, who is working on the effort to launch the regional LGHN chapter.

For now that effort includes webinars, mini-conferences, networking opportunities, and the initiative that Salazar is perhaps most excited about: the Padrinos/Madrinas mentoring program. In some Hispanic cultures, padrinos and madrinass are godparents who provide wisdom and guidance; in the LGHN program, aspiring managers and others interested in career advancement are paired with seasoned, established leaders. The ensuing relationship allows for the passage of wisdom and the cultivation of skills that benefit both mentor and mentee. Salazar points to other mentoring programs as a model LGHN needs to follow.

"I'm very passionate about mentoring," Salazar says. "I experience it and I practice it. There is a need to provide opportunities like these to people of color. In my profession I've had a lot of mentors, not necessarily people of color, but I understand the importance of it." **RM**

Membership in an LGHN regional chapter is an affordable option for local governments to grow their team and offer high-quality professional development experiences to more employees. Regional chapters offer unlimited membership to participating jurisdictions. Current and forming LGHN chapters include Phoenix, Mesa, and Glendale, Arizona; Austin and Bexar County/San Antonio, Texas; Oregon; Florida; Illinois; Washington; Washington, DC; and California.

For more information, visit lghn.org or email info@lghn.org. There are LGHN-affiliated events planned for the 2022 ICMA Annual Conference in Columbus, as well as an LGHN Membership Meeting scheduled for November 4, 2022, in Chicago.

LGHN is an affiliate of ICMA and a conduit to ICMA resources, programs, and professional development offerings. LGHN develops and supports public-sector leaders who reflect the communities they serve. In addition to ICMA, LGHN maintains comparable affiliate relationships with a number of other local government membership organizations, including:

- National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA).
- International Network of Asian Administrators (I-NAPA).
- National Association of County Administrators (NACA).
- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).



In memory of Joel D. Valdez, a founder of LGHN, former city manager in Tucson, Arizona, and former ICMA board member.

RAYMOND H. GONZALES JR. is

president of the Local Government Hispanic Network. The former county manager of Adams County, Colorado, he has more than 25 years of experience at nearly every level of government administration and currently serves as president of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation.



Greg Bielawski Announces Retirement as an ICMA Senior Advisor and the Program's Coordinator

Celebrating a legend as he steps down after 20 years

BY DAWN PETERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ILCMA; MARK MCDANIEL, ICMA-CM (RETIRED); KEVIN DUGGAN, ICMA-CM (RETIRED), REGIONAL DIRECTOR, ICMA; AND ROSALYN CEASAR, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER, ICMA

After two decades of service to the ICMA Senior Advisors program, Greg Bielawski has retired as of June 30, 2022. He is retiring as a Senior Advisor for the Illinois City/County Management Association (ILCMA) and the Chicago Metro region and as ICMA's Senior Advisor Coordinator.

Senior Advisors (SAs) are retired city managers and assistants who volunteer their time and lend their experience and confidential counsel in support of ICMA members. It's truly a noble mission. As you can imagine, it would take a very special person to lead this group of honorable members, and Greg Bielawski is that person. For 17 of the 48 years that the Senior Advisors program has been in existence, Greg has been at the helm as the national SA program coordinator, acting as a liaison between SAs, ICMA, and state local government associations. As Kevin Duggan states, "If you find it challenging to work with and be responsive to five or seven elected officials, can you imagine trying to coordinate the efforts of 100 or so former city managers and 29 state partners? Greg Bielawski has done just that with skill, dedication, and effectiveness. He has been a stable, steady presence, helping to anchor incoming SAs in the program and helping long-serving SAs continue their support of members navigating the sometimes turbulent waters of local government service."

The development and maintenance of these key relationships with the SAs and state partners required effective and timely communication and coordination. In many respects, the credibility and reputation of the program rested on Greg's shoulders. Whether coordinating quarterly SA calls, planning annual meetings during ICMA conferences (and ensuring SA program presence in the exhibit hall), compiling quarterly activity reports, or providing information to prospective SAs and state partners, Greg's commitment to the success of the program was always apparent.

Greg's commitment to the success of the program was always apparent.



Greg Bielawski with his wife Nancy

Range Riders to Senior Advisors

According to Kevin, one of Greg's greatest accomplishments as program coordinator was the total refresh and rebranding of the program in 2014 (in conjunction with the program's fortieth anniversary). While the most visible change was transitioning the program name from "Range Riders" to "Senior Advisors," the program guidelines were comprehensively reviewed and updated. Greg coordinated the efforts of a committee composed of individuals representing the program participants, the state partners, and ICMA members in general. Greg's skill at finding consensus was critical to the successful outcome of the effort. He then shepherded through the necessary program updates with the state partners. These changes positioned the program and its partners to better to serve managers and members in all states that participate in the program.

Growing the Program

Mark McDaniel, ICMA-CM (retired), remarked that Greg was an incredible source of support, wisdom, and advocacy over the years. When serving on the ICMA executive board as membership chair in 2014–2015, one of Mark's areas of focus was enhancing existing SA programs in several states and establishing more SA programs in states where no such program existed. Having already established and attempted to establish SA programs in numerous states, Greg was keenly aware of the steps and hurdles involved. "Together, and really under his humble direction, we went about enhancing programs and establishing new programs, including in my home state of Texas," said Mark. As a result of Greg's help and leadership, Texas now has a half-dozen SAs and the program has become an integral and strategic part of the state's support for city managers, as well as a keystone in the strong ICMA/TCMA working relationship. "Simply put," says Mark, "This would not have happened without Greg's servant leader approach to the relationship and his many years of experience and wisdom regarding the Senior Advisor program."

Commitment, Caring Nature, and Compassionate Advocacy

Rosalyn "Roz" Ceasar, senior program manager at ICMA and administrator of the ICMA Senior Advisor program, worked closely with Greg over the years. "There are a number of wonderful qualities about Greg that have played a part in his positive contribution to the program."

The first she mentioned is his unwavering commitment. "He always reaches out early in the year without fail to discuss potential agenda items for SA meetings. Greg is always thinking ahead about the needs of SAs. Once he identifies an area for discussion (or a need), he remains laser-focused throughout the year in making this a priority for all." Second, Roz spoke about Greg's care and concern for SAs. "You can see this in his consistent outreach to SAs who may be experiencing a life challenge, such as an illness or the death of a loved one. His dedication is also evident in the way he makes himself readily available for both SAs and ICMA staff. There are over 100 SAs, but we have never heard that someone did not get a call back from him or was unable to reach him!" A third wonderful quality that Roz points out about Greg is his posture as an advocate for SAs. "He invariably seeks clarification and direction from ICMA on behalf of SAs where needed. He makes a concerted effort to ensure that strategies for resolution meet ICMA ethics standards so that he can provide clarity for SAs facing complex and nuanced scenarios."

An Admirable Career and Beyond

Greg has had a full 55-year career in local government, in addition to his two years of service in the U.S. Army. Dawn Peters describes how Greg impacted the SA program in Illinois. Upon his retirement from local government, Greg was recruited by Bob

"I tell all new Senior Advisors that they will find this to be one of the most rewarding activities in their local government professional life."

— Greg Bielawski

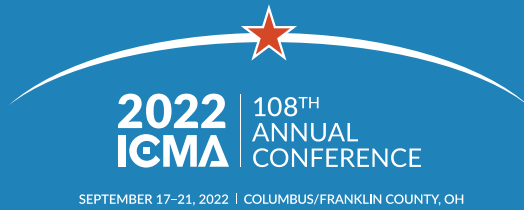


Morris, one of the first ICMA/ILCMA Range Riders (now called Senior Advisors), to help cover the Chicago Metro area. He was very active in ILCMA during his career, having served on the IML Managers Committee and the ILCMA Board, eventually working his way up to the role of ILCMA president in 1986. He was the recipient of an ILCMA Special Service Award, and in 2002, was recognized with the ILCMA Robert B. Morris Lifetime Achievement Award. He is a Life Member of ICMA and was honored with the ICMA Distinguished Service Award in 2011.

Not only has Greg been recognized by these two professional associations for his contributions, the village of Carol Stream honored Greg when he retired by naming the Carol Stream Village Hall the "Gregory J. Bielawski Municipal Center." This is an honor for which Greg is especially proud. At the February ILCMA Board meeting, they voted to rename the ILCMA Service to the Profession Award as the "Gregory J. Bielawski Service to the Profession Award."

Greg has given so much to professional local government management throughout his career, and upon retirement, he continued to give to the profession through the ICMA/ILCMA Senior Advisors program. He noted in his resignation letter, "I tell all new Senior Advisors that they will find this to be one of the most rewarding activities in their local government professional life. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the program since 2002, and I hope I have provided support and guidance that ILCMA members find valuable and that ILCMA deems valuable as well."

We are all indebted to Greg for his unrelenting and tireless work to champion ICMA, to support our members, and to build bridges with state associations across the United States and elsewhere. Greg's selfless provision of time, attention, and energy to the Senior Advisor program, ICMA, the state partner associations, and professionals across the country is not only an example to be emulated, but has had a lasting impact that will continue to serve thousands of local government managers long into the future. **PM**



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Roger Kemp's background and professional skills are highlighted on his website. Dr. Kemp was a city manager in politically, economically, socially, and ethnically diverse communities.

He has written and edited books on these subjects, and can speak on them with knowledge of the national best practices in each field. Call or e-mail Roger for more information.

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Jorge M. Gonzalez, ICMA-CM

Village Manager
Bal Harbour, Florida
ICMA Member since 1996

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The Highlight of My Career

I grew up in Miami, so the opportunity to serve the city of Miami Beach as its city manager is really the highlight for me. I started serving there when I was 33 years old, so I was the youngest and longest serving city manager in that community. It's something that I'm especially proud of because that's my hometown. Going on 10 years since I left that community, I was inducted into the Miami Beach Hall of Fame, which is a special honor. Only nine others in the history of Miami Beach have been recognized in that manner, so I'm very proud of that.

I've Been a Member of LGHN for Decades

It was the first professional organization that I joined when I first became an administrator. It really opened a lot of doors for me and also opened my eyes to a lot of challenges. I was able to meet a lot of the early founders of LGHN, one of them being my mentor, who is one of the original "seven samurai." I learned a lot about how they had to break down doors and remove barriers to entry to create opportunities for people like me and others who were coming up in the profession. I respect what they did and my membership with LGHN has remained solid throughout the years for that very reason. A lot has been given and it's our obligation to give to others as well.



Dive Right In

Local government management is a profession that I kind of fell into, but have zero regrets doing so. I discovered it as a graduate student and never looked back. We all have highs and lows in our career, but everything has been a teaching moment. The opportunities that I've been given at a very young age in my career I likely never would have seen in the private sector. I became the city manager of a Fortune 500 corporation called the city of Miami at the age of 33. That and the diversity of experience that you get working in the public sector is not something that I think most people find in the private sector.

How ICMA has Helped Me

The networking opportunities and the lifelong friends and colleagues that I've made along the way when I was young in my career and living in close proximity to ICMA's main office really gave me a leg up and an opportunity to get to know not just other professional managers, but the folks who actually work at ICMA and how much they do for the organization.



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