

# THE ADMINISTRATOR

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## N.C. BOASTS FIVE ICMA FELLOWS

**The International City/County Management Association (ICMA)** recently congratulated the 2014 Local Government Management Fellows.

This is a special year for the LGMF as it marks the 10th year of the program, coinciding with ICMA's 100th anniversary. It is also a banner year with the largest single number of Fellows in a single class (35).

North Carolina was well represented with five members in this year's class of Fellows:

**Megan Dale**, Catawba County;

**Sarah Hazel**, City of Charlotte;

**Mattie Sue Stevens**, City and County of Durham (2nd Year);

**Jenifer Della Valle**, City of Hillsborough; and

**Michael James**, Lee County

**What is the LGMF?** ICMA, in partnership with the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, the National Forum for Black Public Administrators, and the International Hispanic Network, welcomes applicants and host communities to apply for the Local Government Management Fellowship program. This highly competitive career-development opportunity is designed to generate interest

in local government careers among recent master's program graduates. Selected Fellows are placed in a full-time management-track local government positions, shaped by direct mentorship under senior government leaders and rotational assignments.

**Who is eligible?** Recent graduates and students enrolled in public administration, public policy, or related master's degree programs at [NASPAA-member schools](#) graduating in this academic year are eligible to apply to this fellowship program. This is an annual fellowship program with a fall application process for spring/summer placement.

## CHEATHAM A 'DISTINGUISHED PRACTITIONER'

**The Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECoPA)** recently named Wilmington City Manager Sterling Cheatham the 2014 recipient of its annual Distinguished Public Service Practitioner Award, according to a release from the city's communications office.

"This Distinguished Public Service Practitioner Award recognizes sustained, outstanding achievement in, and contributions to, public administration and public service through applied practice in the field," explained SECoPA's website. "The recipient of this award must be, or have been, a practitioner with a significant and established

record in public service."

Cheatham assumed the role of city manager in 2003.

The chair of this year's selection committee was Tom Barth, director of the Master's of Public Administration department at

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*The Administrator* is a monthly newsletter of the North Carolina City and County Management Association, a professional association for city and county managers and assistant managers from counties and municipalities throughout the state of North Carolina.

For comments or suggestions, please contact Matt Lail, editor, at 919-819-3979, or email at [collards12@yahoo.com](mailto:collards12@yahoo.com).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ICMA 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

Charlotte

September 14-17, 2014

### 2015 NCCCMA Winter Seminar

Sheraton RTP

February 4-6, 2015

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR CHARLOTTE & ICMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**By Mary Furtado**  
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*Edited for space.*

**Wear comfortable walking shoes --** There are lots of great things to do in Charlotte – restaurants, museums, shopping, etc., and most conference attendees dress in business casual or business attire. If you don't want to be limping along or planning where to spend your time based on how far your tired feet will carry you, make sure you bring along a pair of shoes that will serve you well over the course of the trip.

**Grab a stack of business cards to take with you –** you will surely be re-connecting with old friends and colleagues as well as meeting new people who will eventually become old friends or colleagues, so make those interactions count by having your cards on-hand and easily accessible when you need them.

**Take some time before the trip to review the agenda and plan your own individual itinerary –** Attending an ICMA conference is like drinking from a fire hose! There are so many activities packed into such a short time, from educational sessions and networking luncheons to field demonstrations and social

gatherings of various state groups or universities, etc. If you don't map out where you want to be, and when, you will likely miss out on some great experiences that you could have capitalized on with just a little bit of planning. ...

**Don't forget to have a little fun!** While the main purpose of the conference is definitely professional development, and we all need to remain mindful of our obligation to maximize the benefits our community will reap by supporting our attendance – both financially and in terms of time away from the office – we also need to remember that all work and no play is a sure-fire recipe for burn-out. Don't feel guilty for taking a little bit of time away from the gaggles of ICMA attendees armed with name badges and conference programs to enjoy yourself. (Note that I said "a little bit" – use good judgment here!) You'll be that much more geared up to absorb all of the great information that's available to you if you grant yourself this flexibility.

*For those first-time attendees or folks for whom it's been a while since you've gotten the opportunity to come, don't be shy about asking for help, guidance, or advice if you need it. .... Don't waste the opportunity to receive what they have to offer.*

## ETHICS: NAVIGATING THE CAMPAIGN SEASON

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**Q:** The contest for city council is pretty fierce. A resident contacted the city manager after receiving several mailers regarding one of the candidates. The mailers referenced a pending investigation into the candidate's alleged violation of several city ordinances.

The resident, who notes that she is undecided and neutral so far, wants the city manager to provide her with the facts: Is there an investigation by the city? Did this candidate occupy a home without a permit? Was this candidate cited for violating city zoning laws?

What's the most ethical course of action for the manager in this situation?

**A:** Part of any local government manager's job is to respond to questions and provide information about the locality's business. But it is not a staff function to research and analyze information generated by a third party—especially by candidates or political campaigns in the midst of an election—to determine if the

information is factual.

While it's nice that the resident has confidence in the manager's objectivity, the manager should decline the request kindly noting that it is not an appropriate use of public resources (i.e., time) and suggest that the information may be available under a public records request for any resident to review and to draw conclusions.

**Q:** The director of the local chamber of commerce e-mailed the town manager to inform her that the governor was coming to town and asked if the town manager would please forward an attached invitation to a "meet and greet" sponsored by the chamber to the mayor and council. The message also asked the manager to please RSVP so that the chamber will know whom to expect.

The town manager replied that she would be happy to assist. It's nothing out of the norm for the manager's office to be the conduit for invitations extended to the governing body by various community or civic groups.

When the manager opened the invitation, however, she realized that this event, while held in a public venue, was advertised as an opportunity to support the governor's reelection effort. The manager was uncomfortable even

forwarding the e-mail, let alone asking who was planning on attending.

Is she right to be concerned about the propriety of this request?

**A:** Yes. The town manager should respectfully decline the chamber director's request. Public resources should not be used to invite anyone to a political campaign event. And given the manager's commitment to remain politically neutral, even the small act of sending along the invite could be construed as engaging in political activity.

**Q:** A local business owner is hosting one of the candidates for state legislature at an open house at his office. The invitation extended over the phone to the city manager promises that no donations will be asked for or accepted. It is purely an opportunity to meet the candidate and talk about issues.

Should the manager attend?

**A:** Since the event is for a candidate running for elected public office, the manager should decline the invitation. Even if it is not a fundraiser, this is a tactic in a larger effort designed to get that

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## CHEATHAM, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

UNC-Wilmington.

Barth said Wilmington Deputy City Manager Tony Caudle nominated Cheatham, who beat out four other nominees, from Arkansas, Mississippi, Florida and North Carolina.

"Mr. Cheatham's service to the City has been

characterized by collaborative, effective leadership punctuated throughout by initiatives designed to move the community forward," Caudle wrote to Barth in a 10-page letter outlining Cheatham's various accomplishments in detail, according to the *PortCityDaily.com*



## ETHICS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

person elected.

Even appearing at a private meeting can create the appearance that the manager endorses or supports this candidate. Better to adopt a policy to attend only those events that are truly open to the public, do not require any donations, and/or are debates designed to inform.

**Q:** The local government has two critical bond measures on the ballot. One is to support additional funding for new schools and the other is for a new light-rail system to bolster economic development.

It is unfortunate timing because the debt imposed on taxpayers if both measures are approved would be pretty stiff. Hence, each measure has a fairly well-financed, vocal, and entrenched constituency. Plus, there are candidates running in the next election whose platform is based on their issue-centric

position.

As the issues worked their way through the long process of development and public vetting, the county manager has reflected on more than one occasion that this is the quintessential ethical situation of "right versus right." Each project aligns to the county's values and strategic plan.

Each has merit, benefits a segment of the community, and is a valid use of local public funding. In advance of the voting, the county manager is seriously considering joining the advocacy effort on behalf of the light-rail project.

Would doing so violate his ethical commitment to the profession's ethics?

**A:** Local government professionals do not lose their right to voice their opinion by virtue of the job. During the debate last year

on the boundaries of political neutrality as expressed by Tenet 7 of the ICMA Code of Ethics, a guideline was added to clarify this point.

**Tenet 7** calls members to refrain from all political activities that undermine public confidence in professional administrators. But on issues either related to their local government or of personal concern, members may voice their opinion and engage in advocacy efforts, including making a financial contribution to an issue-oriented political action committee or putting a bumper sticker on their personal vehicles.

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