

THE ADMINISTRATOR

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ICMA CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS SOON

Those interested in attending the 2017 International City/County Association (ICMA) Annual Conference may begin registering for the conference and hotels on **Wednesday, June 28** at noon EDT. This year's annual conference will be held in San Antonio, October 22-25.

ICMA has a block of conference hotel in downtown San Antonio for the annual conference. Note that to take advantage of the conference rates, reservations must be made through the conference website and cannot be made directly with the hotels. Again, online hotel reservations open June 28.

Please visit the [ICMA website](#) to learn more about the conference and to download the preliminary program.

'Building Bridges'

Under an overall theme, "Building Bridges: Serving the Whole Community," this year's conference features keynoters:



Rabia Siddique, who uses her personal story of resilience, courage, strength and forgiveness, in addition to her psychology, military and legal training, as an effective speaker on topics including authentic leadership, resilience and equality & diversity.

Richard Florida, one of the world's leading urbanists, writer, and journalist, having penned several global bestsellers and the founder of the Creative Class Group, which works closely with governments and companies worldwide to provide leading insights to achieve growth and prosperity.

Anna Maria Chavez, an attorney, inspirational speaker, writer, community leader, and the first woman

of color to lead the iconic Girl Scouts of the USA in their 104-year history, travels the country inspiring individuals and communities to step out of their comfort zones and do what only they can do to make the world a better place.

Simon Bailey, a bestselling author, Hall of Fame speaker and the CEO of Simon T. Bailey International, Inc., a company specializing in creating learning and development opportunities for individuals and organizations. He will challenge you to commit to becoming the chief breakthrough officer in your organization.

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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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2017 ICMA Southeast Regional Summit

Courtyard Marriott Gatlinburg
Downtown
Gatlinburg, Tenn.
April 27 & 28, 2018

2018 NCCCMA Winter Seminar

Benton Convention Center
Winston-Salem, N.C.
February 6-9, 2018

TROY ADOPTS BIGFOOT FOR TOURISM ASSIST

Towns large and small all over America are often trying to find new ways to promote their offerings. The town of Troy is definitely thinking outside the box.

Troy, according to the *Asheboro Courier-Tribune*, is thinking of creative ways to incorporate the legendary creature Bigfoot into the town via its tourism, promotional materials and in various festivals throughout the year.

"We want to embrace the aspect of the Uwharries being centrally located," Johnson Bray, the town of Troy's planning director, told the newspaper. "We think of ourselves as the base camp to adventure and want to gear ourselves towards more physical activity.

"Bigfoot is one thing some people like, and again, some don't. Even then, if you think about it, it brings out the child in you. A lot of people are embracing the idea (of incorporating him in the town's rebranding)."

Believe it or not, there is more to it than just a whimsical tourism

campaign. There have been Bigfoot sightings in Montgomery County off and on since the 1990s – most famously when Michael Greene of Salisbury says he captured a thermal image of the creature in the forest in 2009, using a Zagnut candy bar as bait. And in 2011, producers and a crew from television network Animal Planet even made a stop in Montgomery County in hopes of catching a glimpse of the elusive creature for a television series entitled, "Finding Bigfoot."

Bray hopes to incorporate Bigfoot into a new event in September, the Uwharrie Festival on Sept. 23. The festival will introduce the Bigfoot Chase Trail Run as an event.

"We see ourselves as being in a great position to be the outdoor capital of North Carolina with two lakes, the Yadkin River and being in the heart of the Uwharrie National Forest," Bray told the newspaper. "We want to be able to keep a steady stream of events for residents and visitors. We are trying to keep the ideas fresh and to keep Troy special."

OPINION: RESTORE CIVILITY TO SAVE AMERICA

The following piece was written by Earl Mathers, Gaston County Manager. This was originally written for ICMA.org's blog. It has been edited for space; the full article [is here](#).

The history of the

United States can be characterized by the struggles and challenges our nation has endured, including civil war. ... Overcoming these crises has been facilitated by leaders who managed to maintain a degree of civility in their dialogue with the opposition, which lead to dispute resolution. Recent survey results from the [National Institute for Civil Discourse](#) points out that 75 percent of Americans believe incivility is a major problem in society today. ...

This crisis of incivility has become a chronic condition of public life. Consequently, incivility is compromising the success of American society and especially the viability of the government. We should not, however, assign the blame exclusively to our leaders. As a people, Americans have become highly desensitized to behaviors that would have been outrageous not so many years ago. Indeed, in some circles this misconduct is cheered on and rewarded. ...

The list assembled below does not include any groundbreaking ideas. In fact, the methods of

practicing civility in dealing with others are well known, if frequently ignored. Nonetheless, these commonsense suggestions will have a definitive impact on overcoming the increasingly dire consequences of incivility, if they are applied:

Allow the other person to speak and listen empathetically while he or she is speaking. Stephen Covey said, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." This continues to be great advice decades after the publication of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

Refrain from immediately blaming the other side or your opponent for everything that goes wrong. Assigning blame to someone else is a defense mechanism at times and on other occasions is used to denigrate others. If we pause for introspection from time to time, we may find that we share the responsibility for specific mishaps.

Recognize that people aren't always morally bankrupt or mentally defective if they disagree with you. We are all subject to a number of influences and biases. Everyone has a tendency to define reality in accordance with their personal beliefs. Be objective and acknowledge other opinions.

Speak in measured tones and avoid shouting people

down to win arguments.

Such victories are short-lived and produce lingering resentment. Displays of anger rarely inspire confidence and well-reasoned counterpoints will likely foster greater support.

Avoid social media

diatribes. Thoroughly consider the impact of your words before hitting send. Have a respected advisor review your statements if you have any doubts. The practice of engaging your brain first obviously applies to speech as well.

Speak the truth and avoid lying or exaggerating to convince people. When in doubt about the facts, it is reasonable to say, I don't know, but I will check into it. Although it is often tempting to manipulate the facts to our advantage, doing so ultimately compromises an individual's integrity.

Seek the common ground. Most of the greatest triumphs of humanity were the result of collaboration and, yes, even compromise.

To revitalize American society, our leaders need to recognize there is far greater value in achieving long-term goals that fulfill the American dream than in short-term political victories. It is possible to deal with key points of contention openly if both parties are committed to producing broad-ranging, long-term benefits rather than short-term personal advantage.