

THE ADMINISTRATOR

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FELLOWSHIP PREPARES FUTURE MANAGERS

**By Chris Baucom
NCACC**

The past few years have seen a wealth of county management knowledge and experience exit the workforce. Having a pipeline of tutored talent ready to take the reins from these veteran professionals is essential to maintaining North Carolina's place as the top state for county government management.

The N.C. Association of County Commissioners is committed to helping develop the next generation of county management stalwarts. Through its

County Management Fellowship Program, the NCACC seeks to place a handful of recent Master of Public Administration (MPA) program graduates who have interest in North Carolina county management careers into full-time, one- or two-year fellowships with seasoned N.C. county managers.

North Carolina State MPA Student Michael James is working in Lee County with County Manager John Crumpton and staff as the first NCACC County Management Fellow. After one month on the job, James is already having an



impact and gaining valuable experience.

"My county manager has

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THE CHANGING FACE OF TECHNOLOGY

Local government management has no doubt changed over the years. But perhaps nothing has changed the profession more than technology.

As the N.C. City & County Management Association (NCCCMA) celebrates its 50th anniversary, The Administrator asked past presidents the question: How has technology changed the profession and life of a city or county manager?

Carolyn Carter, past president: "The changes in technology have mirrored all the breathtaking changes that have revolutionized society since 1976 when I was a student in the MPA program at UNC and learned how to program punch cards and take them to a processing center to do analytical projects. I thought that was rocket science. On a daily level, communication went from handwriting a

memo, giving it to a secretary to having it typed, back to me to sign it, putting it in interoffice mail to be delivered, the recipient reading it, writing a response, had it typed and put back in interoffice mail to me. (How did anything get done, other than by phone and in person?) The power of instant communication is the

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For comments or suggestions, please contact Matt Lail, editor, at 919-819-3979, or email at collards12@yahoo.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2014 N.C. City & County Management Association Summer Seminar

Charlotte
June 19-21, 2014

ICMA 100th Annual Conference

Charlotte
September 14-17, 2014

CATAWBA COUNTY'S HARRIS HONORED FOR HEALTH WORK

Dewey Harris, Catawba County assistant manager, was recently named the recipient of the Transforming Health Champion Award for his dedication to and continued support for creating healthier communities through tobacco-free policy work. The award was presented by the North Carolina Community Transformation Grant Project. Harris was honored from Region 4.

The Transforming Health Champion Award is presented to grant partners and community leaders who have created lasting health benefits and demonstrated ongoing commitment for positive health outcomes in the areas of tobacco-free living, healthy eating and active living. Catawba County is part of the grant's 10-county region.

"This award recognizes the good work Catawba County Public Health staff and our local and regional partners have done to make tobacco-free living a top priority in our community while encouraging wellness in all areas of life," Harris told the *Hickory Daily Record*. "I was honored to receive this award for my assistance in this effort, and look forward to rolling up my sleeves to do more."

Harris was recognized for his work in transitioning Catawba County government from a smoke-free campus policy to a tobacco-free campus in March 2013. He

continued to move the tobacco-free initiative forward by working with municipal leadership and Catawba County Public Health. Through his guidance and support, five municipalities have now adopted tobacco-free ordinances or policies and he continues to work with the remaining municipalities to move in this direction.



"Dewey Harris is a leader and advocate with a strong focus on making the environment healthier for Catawba County residents," said Carleen Crawford, tobacco-free living coordinator for Region 4. "He helped to keep the conversation going with municipal leadership and was an integral part of the endeavor."

Harris began working for Catawba County as assistant county manager in August 2008 after serving as director of the community services department and interim assistant city manager in Wilmington. He currently has day-to-day oversight of Public Health, Social Services, Catawba County Elections Office, the Catawba County Library System and the county's state and federal legislative program.

ETHICS: SEEK NO FAVOR

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Public service is a privilege. And as with life's privileges, it comes with a unique set of responsibilities and obligations. One key obligation for all officials, whether elected or appointed, is to seek no favor.

A public office or position should not be leveraged for personal gain. Conduct that creates even the appearance that personal gain trumps public duty must be avoided.

A LOOK BACK

In a bit of irony, ICMA was focused on encouraging local government professionals to follow that higher principle of public service, seek no favor, the very same year the White House embarked on one of the most egregious abuses of official power. Yes, Watergate.

Tenet 12 of the ICMA Code of Ethics establishes the profession's standard regarding the issue of personal gain. Written in 1972, the tenet is a merger of a statement from the original Code drafted in 1924

that reads: "Believe that personal aggrandizement or profit secured by confidential information or by misuse of public time is dishonest" with "seek no favors," which was added in 1969 (perhaps ICMA was a bit prescient about the conduct to come from the executive branch?).

The current Tenet 12 reads: "Seek no favor; believe that personal aggrandizement or profit secured by confidential information or by misuse of public time is dishonest."

The tenet's guidelines cover a broad range of issues that are both common and significant to professionals working in local government: gifts, conflicts of interest, investments, personal relationships, use of confidential information, outside employment, and endorsements.

ERA OF MORE TRANSPARENCY

Much has changed since the tenet and guidelines were written in 1972. The level of transparency in local government has vastly improved with the passage of strong open records laws. As a consequence of more transparency, the scope of what is truly confidential information is pretty narrow.

Gone are the days of managers being fêted at upscale venues by vendors and bond dealers. Most

professionals understand that those gifts are just like free cheese in a mousetrap. Both come with significant consequences.

Technology and social media bring a new set of ethical challenges. Consultants and vendors now use websites, Facebook, and other social media venues to market their products and services. That possibility was certainly not envisioned by ICMA when the guideline on endorsements was drafted in 1972.

In addition, there are other hot topics for the profession that are not directly addressed. The Code, for instance, does not include any guidelines on member compensation.

While ICMA adopted a set of principles and best practices on compensation in 2010, they were not incorporated into the Code. An opportunity may exist under the principle "seek no favor" to address issues where the Code is silent.

MOVING FORWARD: THE RELEVANCY OF TENET 12

Given the importance to the profession and the length of time since it was written, Tenet 12 and its guidelines have been selected as part of ICMA's annual Code review process. Members will have

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the opportunity to engage in the discussion about the relevancy of the tenet and guidelines to the profession.

As the dialogue begins, consider these questions:

- Is the tenet still relevant to the profession? Why or why not?
- Are there parts of the tenet that need refinement or clarity?
- In today's environment, what are the areas of greatest risk where local government professionals could improperly seek favor?
- Tenet 12 and the guidelines do not specifically reference the topic of compensation. Does the tenet's statement "seek no favor" make it clear that members should not accept unreasonable or excessive compensation? Should ICMA add a guideline to address issues related to compensation?
- How do you define an endorsement? What situations involving endorsements have you encountered that either don't appear to be addressed by the guideline or aren't clear? For example:
- Is serving as a reference for a vendor or consultant okay?
- Is it ethical for a member to "Like" on Facebook or other social media platforms a business in his or her community that he or she frequents on a personal basis (i.e., restaurant, coffeehouse, dry cleaners)?
- Is it okay for a member to "Like" a vendor or consultant who provides services to the city or county?
- Is it an endorsement under the Code if, on LinkedIn, you "endorse" the skills of an individual who works for a vendor or consulting firm?
- As you engage in social media on a personal or professional basis, what ethical concerns do you have?
- The guideline on investments does not specifically limit the type of investment members may have in the community where they work. Should the guideline be revised to state that a member's investment in the community should be limited to the purchase of a personal residence and/or residence for a family member?

As you review the tenet and its guidelines, what are the areas that you would like to see addressed that aren't? What recommendations do you have for changes to the guidelines? Please give it some thought.

Let the dialogue continue!

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SOG'S FLEMING BELL RETIRES

North Carolina's local government professionals said goodbye to Fleming Bell, a distinguished colleague and resource, upon his retirement in January. Bell, a professor of public law and government, served North

Carolina for more than three decades as a city-county planner, attorney and expert in a multitude of municipal topics.

Bell joined the School of Government in 1982, but

most recently as a liaison to the North Carolina Association of Municipal Clerks.

According to UNC School of Government Dean Mike Smith, it's because of Bell's work that North Carolina's certification program is a national model.

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done a good job of getting me involved in a lot of projects that will translate into any county or any local government," said James.

James has begun work primarily in economic development. He has been asked to research county incentive programs, and his research was a part of the information used by the county board there to make a decision about the county's incentive program.

He has also worked on updating the county's Capital Improvement Program and State of the County Report, as well as other projects.

James had aspirations of becoming a politician, but began to realize that his passion was more in the implementation of programs than the creation of policy. That realization led him to seek a career in management. After attending North Carolina State for his undergraduate degree in Political Science, James had several internships in the General Assembly.

"A lot of people told me. Of all the levels of government, if you really want to make a difference, the local level was the place to go," James said.

Seeing that his research in economic development programs has already

contributed to a decision on policy, James felt it confirmed his choice to work at the local government level.

"That's why local government is exciting to me," James said. "You can get information together, make recommendations to your board, and they can act on it quickly."

James said he hopes to have a well-rounded experience in the fellowship and that so far it has at least met if not exceeded his expectations. He has plans to be a city or county manager in the future, and believes this will continue to be a great experience for preparing him.

He recommends that other MPA students seek this fellowship to help them in their preparation for a management position in city or county government.

"You'll have an opportunity to work with seasoned managers who are willing to help you and mentor you, and who will help give you the experience you need to be an effective city or county manager," James said.

Anyone who would like to know more about the program should visit the NCACC website at www.ncacc.org for more information. Interested students should visit the

International City/County Management Association (ICMA) website at www.icma.org to apply for the program.

ICMA screens applications and provides the NCACC with a pool of pre-screened, North Carolina-based applicants, ensuring high-quality talent for participating counties. The Association will then share those applications with interested host counties, which can then choose which applicants to interview. The host county controls offers of employment, start and completion dates of the fellowship, and other employment details.

The Association is currently seeking interested host counties for placements that begin in the July 2014 timeframe. Counties selected to participate as hosts will receive NCACC assistance with salary and other potential incentives (handled on a negotiated, individual basis).

If you have questions about the program, contact NCACC Associate Director of Education Jason King at (919) 715-0045 or jason.king@ncacc.org.

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currency of change and the path to staying relevant in today's society."

Lewis Price, Lenoir city council: "I don't know whether technology has been all that helpful. Managers today always have a phone in their hand, or an iPad, or some other contraption. That would not be for me. I'm sure information is more readily available and communications quicker. Managers today can stay in touch with more people on a less personal basis. They should have a lot more time to play golf than I did."

Dee Freeman, past president: "Technology has and will continue to change our profession. When I first began work, the computer was just emerging and soon evolved into the indispensable tool we know today.

"Technology is more than a tool, however, with the advent of social media, mobile devices, and the rapidity in which new generations of technology renews itself. All managers must have, as a baseline skill, an understanding and working knowledge of technology. Technology has improved the profession, to be sure, but there are more wonders ahead and I look forward to seeing the advances it will bring to the manager's office."

Jerry Ayscue, Vance County: "For more seasoned local government managers, it may be more of a challenge than for younger managers to stay abreast of, effectively utilize, and properly manage the rapidly evolving world of technology. Transparency, accountability, communication, access to data, professional development, and so many other aspects of local government management have been enhanced by today's technology. It is not unusual for citizens to have accurate and detailed information on an evolving situation in our local government before the city/county manager knows that it happened. It is a continuous challenge to keep pace, and hopefully remain at least one step ahead, with ongoing events. Technology has opened up many avenues and opportunities for solutions to problems while creating challenges along the way.

Cal Horton, past president: "I believe the technology that permits managers to have instant access to persons and information is both valuable and a source of pathology that, unrestrained, will result in a new manager's psychosis. Those who suffer this affliction will delude themselves into believing that communication is more important than purpose and accomplishment; they will lose the ability to enjoy solitude and thinking. Wise

managers will use the technology when they need it, and guard their solitude for their most important work: thinking."

John Ed Whitehurst, past president: "It has placed every member of the board in your front pocket about every moment. Also has made the managers life very public and very little privacy."

Pete Connet, past president: "I have also seen a great deal of change in the way we do our jobs with the help of technology. Everyone has a computer on their desk, we have cell phones, laptops, and iPads to do our jobs and stay in touch with our offices when traveling or sick at home with an illness. It used to be that if you had a question about a municipal issue you got on the phone and phone your manager mentors and cohorts and to see how they took care of a particular issue. Today we use the internet and just post the question on the listserv and in minutes you have several responses from across the State. These are just a few of the changes – good and bad – that I have seen over the last 40 years."

Lane Bailey, Lenoir: "Obviously, technology has improved efficiency in local government. There are apps available for about any service you can imagine. One negative I see, however, is we are sometimes too tied to smart phones and tablets and thus are never away from work."