

The Administrator

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Ogburn, Stenberg honored by ICMA

Two professionals associated with local government management in North Carolina were honored with awards by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) during the organization's 2011 annual conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in September.

Asheboro City Manager John N. Ogburn III was awarded the Community Sustainability Award for a community with a population of 10,000 to 49,999.

According to the awards program, Asheboro was struggling with rising fuel costs in late 2008. At that time, sanitation trucks were collecting garbage and recycling from every household twice weekly, while two bulk trash trucks and two brush/yard waste trucks would drive down every street looking for refuse—routes that could take from one to three weeks.

Sanitation department staff realized that if they could identify households that needed bulk trash or yard waste pickup service in advance, those trucks would not need to canvass every street.



Having decided to use mobile devices to collect information, the department contracted with a North Carolina company to develop software that would tie into the mobile devices it selected. City IT staff emphasized the need for a scalable product because they foresaw how valuable it would be for other departments.

Today, as a sanitation truck travels its route, the operators simply push a button on their mobile devices to mark the location of a bulk

item or brush pile. The GPS system stores this information, and the next morning, the bulk or brush truck operator can go directly to the point of pickup rather than covering a complete route. Along with lower fuel costs and vehicle maintenance expenses, this innovation has reduced the sanitation department's operations by 64 percent. No one has been laid off, and staff have more time to work on other projects.

The device is also used for reporting street-light outages, potholes and graffiti; tracking water and sewer lines and vehicle/personnel movements; and recording code enforcement issues.

Also recognized at the ICMA conference was UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government

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UNC Charlotte to name MPA program for Fox

On Thursday, October 27, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte will proudly announce the naming of the school's Master of Public Administration program in honor of longtime public servant Jerry Fox. Fox served as Mecklenburg County Manager for 20 years.

The MPA program will then be called the Gerald G. Fox Master of Public Administration Program.

Officials from UNC Charlotte invite all of the many people who worked with Fox or associated with him over the years to attend the event.

The event will take place from 5-6:30 p.m. at the UNCC Harris Alumni House (with a reception to follow). There is no registration fee; how-

ever, please contact Anne Davis (704-687-2577 or apdavis@uncc.edu) if you are interested in attending.

This event will take place during the UNC Charlotte 2011 Fall Alumni & Student Conference.

The Gerald G. Fox Master of Public Administration Program is housed in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at UNCC.

In addition to his time as Mecklenburg County manager, Fox also served as city manager of Wichita Falls, Texas from 1969-80; city manager of Fayetteville, Arkansas from 1966-



1969; city manager of Camden, Arkansas, from 1963-66; city manager of Ennis, Texas, from 1959-63; and as administrative assistant to the city manager in San Antonio from 1957-59. In addition, he served in an interim capacity as Gaston County manager from December 2001 until April 2002. Fox retired in October 2000; however, he has continued to serve as a lecturer for the UNCC MPA program since then.

Fox is a Life Member of the N.C. City & County Management Association.

Right, wrong, or just blurry?

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One common myth about ethics is that identifying right from wrong is easy. The reality is that the right solution to even seemingly straightforward ethical situations is not always crystal clear. Test your ethical skills by trying to solve these real-world situations.

1 While you are having drinks with your municipal attorney, he tells you that the council in a neighboring community, which he also represents, is talking about terminating the manager. You feel badly because the manager is competent and someone whom you like.

You wonder to yourself whether the manager knows that he is in this precarious situation. As you leave the venue, the attorney asks you to keep the news confidential. Should you respect the attorney's request?

A. Yes. This is confidential information covered by attorney-client privilege. You could cause harm to the other city if you were to disclose it.

B. No. The attorney is gossiping! He should not have relayed information about another

client to a third party, especially without a pledge from you, obtained in advance, to maintain confidentiality. Because he didn't do this, you are free to disclose it to your colleague.

Answer: B. Confidentiality requirements fall into two categories: that which you are legally obligated to keep confidential, and that which you are ethically obligated to keep confidential. This isn't a case where you are legally required to do so.

The attorney breached the confidence of his employer when he gossiped. The attorney-client privilege exists only between those parties. Because you were not asked in advance to promise confidentiality, you are not ethically obligated to do so. Consider your ethical and professional obligation to your colleague.

Professional respect and compassion should lead you to decline the attorney's request and let your colleague know that he may be in jeopardy.

2 At a summer picnic, the former mayor discloses to the city manager a secret. He knows firsthand that at a municipal league conference four years ago one of his colleagues on the council used an "escort service" and charged the expense to the city credit card.

According to the mayor, the expense was never challenged because the escort service had one of those creative names that con-



cealed the true nature of the business. Although the mayor thinks the incident is funny, the manager does not as this individual still serves on the city council. What should the manager do with this information?

A. Leave it alone! It's gossip about a situation that—even if it really occurred—happened too long ago to matter.

B. Research the matter to find out whether the information relayed is accurate.

Answer: B. Misuse of public funds is a serious matter. The manager should not ignore this information. A discreet review of city records should be done to determine whether the inappropriate charge was paid by the city and the extent of the activity.

If it turns out to be true, the manager should report the matter and take steps to obtain repayment. Doing nothing allows the risk of wrongdoing to continue and places a cloud, if only in the manager's mind, over the reputation of the council member.

Remember the Watergate-era mantra: What

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Calendar of Events

NCLM Annual Conference
October 23-25, 2011
Raleigh Convention Center

2012 NCCCMA Summer Seminar
June 28-30, 2012
Asheville Renaissance

NCCCMA Winter Seminar
February 1-3, 2012
Sheraton RTP

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For comments or suggestions, please contact Matt Lail, editor, at (919) 715-3929, fax to (919) 733-9519, or mlail@nclm.org.



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faculty member Carl W. Stenberg III, the director of the school's Master of Public Administration program. Stenberg was awarded the Stephen B. Sweeney Award.

Stenberg joined the School of Government in 2003. Just two years later, he was named director of the school's Public Executive Leadership Academy, which he had founded. In 2006 he was named director of UNC's MPA program. Stenberg also serves as faculty liaison to the North Carolina City and County Management Association, where he helped to establish the ICMA University workshops and helps to design summer and winter conferences that promote continuing education for managers and assistants throughout the state.

UNC's School of Government is unusual in that faculty members are not devoted exclusively to the MPA program. Rather, they continue to be rooted in what is practical, working with city and county managers, assistant managers and public officials through training, research and advising. Stenberg has fully supported both the academic and practical components of local government management. Under his leadership, the UNC MPA program has

increased enrollment and expanded its curriculum to coincide with the demands of the contemporary field of public service and the expectations of employers. Even in the current dismal economy, most students have found employment within four months of graduation.

With his understated manner, Stenberg daily builds connections for students, develops programs to promote lifelong learning for professionals and bridges the academic and local government worlds. A tireless ambassador for the local government profession, he will never stop helping new MPA students and midcareer managers realize their full leadership potential.



Ogburn and Stenberg were award winners; however, a number of North Carolinians were nominated for ICMA awards.

Both Wake County Manager **David Cooke** and Salisbury City Manager **David Treme** were nominated for the Award for Career Excellence in Honor of Mark E. Keane.

The city of Fayetteville's Community Wellness Plan, led by City Manager **Dale Iman**

and Assistant City Manager **Doug Hewett**, were among the nominees for the Community Health & Safety Program Excellence Award (populations 50,000 and greater).

Durham County's Computers 4 Kids, led by County Manager **Mike Ruffin**, and Catawba County's Educational Services Initiative for Children in Foster Care and Post-Care, led by County Manager **Thomas Lundy**, were nominees for the Community Partnership Program Excellence Award (populations 50,000 and greater).

Orange County's Lands Legacy Program, led by Manager **Frank Clifton Jr.**, was a nominee for the Community Sustainability Program Excellence Award (populations 50,000 and greater).

And Wake County's Accountability Tax Check Portal, led by **Cooke** and Deputy County Manager **Johnna Rogers**, was a nominee for the Strategic Leadership & Governance Program Excellence Award (populations 50,000 and greater).

Congratulations to all the nominees.

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did you know? When did you know it? What did you do about it? When faced with allegations of wrongdoing, doing nothing is not the right option.

3 A personal investment firm located in your city has offered a new, free service to all police, fire, and EMS personnel. As a show of support for all the fine service these individuals provide to the public, the firm is willing to provide free estate planning and wills. The value of the service ranges from \$1,000 to \$3,000. The investment firm does no formal business with the city. Is this okay?

A. Yes. The offer goes to individuals who have the choice to either use the service or not. Plus, there is no direct connection between the

work the staff members perform and the investment firm.

B. No. This is a benefit being offered to only a limited group of employees. In addition, public employees should not accept gifts from businesses located within the community.

Answer: B. At first blush, this offer looks pretty free of ethical pitfalls—just a nice gesture from a grateful public. The investment firm making the offer isn't a vendor, so it's unlikely that a reasonable person would view this as either an attempt to garner a favor or a payback for special treatment, right?

But, although this firm has no formal business with the city, it is a constituent. Could this gift create appearance problems down the road

if the firm has official business with the city or requires services from these employees?

Offering such a valuable gift to a limited pool of employees can also create morale issues within the organization. Because this is a significant gift offered to a differentiated pool of employees and could create appearance issues, the offer should be declined.

—Martha Perego
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