

The Administrator

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A host of recovery information available

There is no doubt at the federal recovery act is at the top of almost every local government manager's mind these days. As noted in previous *Administrators*, the upcoming summer seminar, to be held in New Bern/Craven County June 25-27, will focus on "Navigating the Federal Stimulus Package." In short, the seminar's theme is a testament to the times in which we find ourselves. (See page 4 for agenda.)

There are a number of recovery-related resources out there to help make your job as a local government manager hoping to find relief for your community easier. Perhaps first and foremost are the federal and state websites related to the recovery act. The federal page can be found at Recovery.gov. This page includes a look at where the funds have gone so far. The state website is NCRrecovery.gov and includes public meeting notices and more.

The League of Municipalities and the Association of County Commissioners both have web pages dedicated solely to the recovery package. The League's page is www.ncml.org/stimulus.htm. On this page is the

comprehensive *Guidance for N.C. Municipalities*, a subject-by-subject guide to those recovery programs most pertinent to cities and towns. The League's stimulus page also includes White House memos and much more.

In addition, the April issue of *Southern City*, the League's monthly publication, features a pullout section on the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act. This four-page, special publication attempts to answer key, frequent questions about the recovery and snapshots of the "strings attached" to the stimulus act.

The Association's website (www.ncacc.org/stimulus.html) offers much of the same information, as well as guidance from Sen. Kay Hagan, COBRA guidance, links to all federal recovery programs and more. Perhaps more important, the website offers a look at the impact of federal stimulus on N.C. and counties, and the estimated county Medicaid savings from stimulus. The Association's site also takes closer looks at county-related programs such as broadband, school construction, energy efficiency and more.

As for the summer seminar, there will be a host of sessions and speakers who will address the federal recovery. State economist Karl Smith will address the entire body on Friday, June 26, during the opening breakfast.

The opening general session is entitled, "Navigating the Federal Stimulus Package." The following concurrent sessions are all focused on aspects of the recovery: human services; economic/community development; and physical infrastructure. State Treasurer Janet Cowell (invited) is slated to address the seminar as the Friday lunch speaker.

And though not necessarily stimulus-centered, the Friday ICMA University workshops ("Capital Financing for Smaller Communities" and "The Manager's Role in Moving Communities from Good to Great") are both vitally important in a down economy.

Attendees on Saturday will hear from the executive directors from the League and the Association; they will no doubt touch on the global economic crisis and its impact on cities, towns and counties.

Get your MPA and work at the same time

North Carolina Central University is once again offering its Executive Master of Public Administration (EMPA) degree program.

This course is an 18-month, accelerated, Master's-level program for mid-career and senior-level professionals seeking to earn a Master in Public Administration (MPA) while continuing their employment.

This course is geared toward those that have five years of professional, executive or supervisory experience in the public, private or nonprofit sector or a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

The course features weekend classes, cohort learning and experienced and dedicated faculty from NCCU.

The next cohort starts June 26, 2009. If you are interested in participating in NCCU's EMPA program, contact Donnell Scott, director, at 919-530 5192.

Politics, issues and lame ducks

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Scenario: Ballot Measures

By a 4-1 margin, the city council placed a measure on the spring ballot to increase the local sales tax. The dissenter was the mayor. Generating new revenues to support service levels and capital investment had been an issue for debate even before the current economic tsunami hit. Because the vote to place the measure on the ballot was not unanimous, the city council decided that no members of the council should use their official titles to advocate either for or against the measure. The city manager sought advice on an appropriate role for both him and the senior staff.

Advice:

The ICMA Code of Ethics draws a distinction between activities on behalf of a candidate for elected office (such activities are not permitted) and advocacy for issues (these are permitted). The code recognizes that there is a legitimate role members can play in providing crucial information to governing bodies and the voters on the impact of ballot measures.

The guideline states that members may assist the governing body in presenting issues involved in such referenda as bond issues,



annexations, and similar matters. This makes sense given the professional expertise local government managers and staff contribute to the policy dialogue.

Members may also make financial contributions to issue-oriented political action committees (PACs), publicly express their views, and actively engage in the debate and dialogue. As members consider their involvement, they should keep in mind four caveats:

1. Know and comply with the law regarding use of public resources for ballot measures.
2. Consider where the governing body stands on the issue. If members are opposed, divided, or have taken the position described above, a low-profile strategy limited to providing background information on the measure may be wise.
3. Caution is necessary even if you decide to actively join the debate. Think carefully about the most effective role you can play and what impact your involvement may have on your ability to serve the local government.
4. If you feel compelled to raise funds for the measure, do not ask your staff to contribute, as they may not feel free to say no.

This advice works for senior staff as well as the manager. A strong argument can be made that the proper role for all staff is to provide the information and then let the voters decide. There is an equally compelling argument that, as professionals who have expertise in local government operations and a vested interest in the future of the community, it's an act of integrity on the part of managers to make their voices heard.

Scenario: Lame Ducks

Mix in a few retirements with some defeats and the county will soon be governed by a commission with one incumbent and four new members. Rather than retreating, the lame-duck commission is aggressively moving to leave its imprint. The outgoing chair has directed the county manager to place several items on the agenda for a vote during the remaining 60-day term.

Among the measures is a final vote on an update to the region's comprehensive plan. The sole incumbent and the incoming commission members are opposed to the measure. A vote by the county commission will cement a plan already approved by the other local governments in the region.

The returning incumbent has privately approached the county manager to discuss ways to ensure defeat of this effort. After all, the

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Calendar of Events

NCCMA 2009

Summer Conference

June 25-27, 2009

New Bern/Craven County

Public Executive Leadership Academy

July 5-10; August 2-7

Rizzo Conference Center

Chapel Hill

www.pela.unc.edu

ICMA Annual Conference

September 13-16, 2009

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

For information, go to

www.icma.org

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) 715-3929, fax to (919) 733-9519, or mlail@nclm.org.



ICMA Fund donors recognized in PM

From ICMA.org

In the April *PM* magazine, each of the 802 donors who contributed to the ICMA Fund for Professional Management in 2008 were honored. For the first time this year, new donors, sustaining donors (those who have given in each of the past 10 years), individuals honored or memorialized by a colleague's contribution, and members of the Fund Community Builders Legacy Society also were recognized. Given these tough economic times, ICMA is particularly grateful to each of its donors for their support.

We are excited to announce that this figure represents a 27-percent increase in the number of donors over the same period in 2007 and a 21-percent increase in total donations. With each gift, donors expand the Fund's ability to educate citizens around the country about the benefits of professional local government management and the council-manager form.

In 2008, for instance, the Fund contributed \$51,850 to five citizens groups in Florida, Illinois,

Kentucky, and Washington as they advocated for professional management in form-of-government campaigns. Four of those efforts were

successful. Additionally, the Fund contributed \$10,000 to the North Carolina City and County Management Association to update its successful K-12 civic education book, the text of which will be available on the ICMA Web site in the future as a template for others to use.

In January, we launched a new online contribution site for the Fund, which allows donors to make single gifts, honorariums, memorials, or pledge payments. We recently added a new feature that allows donors to have one-time or



recurring payments automatically drafted from their bank accounts. ...

A monthly, quarterly, or yearly schedule of contributions is also a great way to spread out the financial burden of a gift.

From the Fund's donation site, donors can walk through a log-in process with ICMA's bank, SunTrust, and establish the parameters for their contribution. While donors do not need to have a personal bank account with SunTrust to use this new feature, they will need to establish a username and password (separate from their ICMA username). If you have any questions about this donation option, contact customerservices@icma.org or 1-800/745-8780. Contact Abigail Lundy, manager of Fund development, at fund@icma.org, with questions, suggestions, or concerns about the Fund.

In addition, you can go to icma.org and click on the April issue of *PM* magazine to see the list of donors.

Don't forget to nominate an outstanding assistant

A reminder: If you wish to nominate an assistant manager for consideration for the NCCMA Outstanding Assistant Manager Award, the deadline is May 29, 2009.

In 2001, the executive committee of the North Carolina City and County Management Association (NCCCMA) authorized the annual recognition of one or more Outstanding Assistant Managers from our member jurisdictions. Assistant managers play important roles in the operation of local governments. NCCCMA members are encouraged to submit deserving assistants for consideration for Outstanding Assistant Manager recognition. Nominees can be long-time assistants or outstanding newcomers to the profession.

The award will be announced and presented at the NCCCMA Business Meeting on

Saturday, June 27, 2009, in New Bern, during the summer seminar.

Please complete the nomination form (at www.ncmanagers.org) and return via fax or

email to: NCCCMA c/o Yolanda Hart at 919-301-1057 (fax) or yhart@ncilm.org by May 29, 2009.

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election of a new commission is a signal that the public expects change!

Advice:

The rule of law is paramount here. While lame ducks they may be, they are legally empowered to act on behalf of the constituency until a new commission takes over. The strength of the council-manager form of government has been to represent and implement the actions of the governing body as a whole.

There is no ethical role for the manager to play in anticipating the wishes of a commission yet to be sworn in and ignoring the authority of the one still in place.

—Martha Perego, ICMA-CM
ICMA Ethics Director
Washington, D.C.
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2009 N.C. City & County Management Association Summer Seminar Preliminary Agenda

'Navigating the Federal Stimulus Package'

June 25-27, 2009

New Bern Riverfront Conference Center

THURSDAY, JUNE 25

9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Executive Committee Meeting and Luncheon

11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Registration and Vendor Exhibits Move In

1:00 p.m. Pre Conference Golf Tournament (Transportation by bus – buses depart at 11:45 a.m.)

FRIDAY, JUNE 26

7:00 a.m. Registration and Exhibitors Open

7:30 – 9:00 a.m. Full Buffet Breakfast & General Session Speaker: Economist Overview: State Economist, Karl Smith

9:00 – 9:15 Break

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. General Session: Navigating The Federal Stimulus Package

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Concurrent Sessions on the Federal Stimulus Package

- Human Services
- Economic/Community Development
- Physical Infrastructure

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch with speaker – Janet Cowell, State Treasurer or staff member

1:45 p.m. – 5:00 pm. ICMA University

Workshops:

- Capital Financing for Smaller Communities
- The Manager's Role in Moving Communities from Good to Great

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Reception and Entertainment (New Bern Convention Center)

Friday Evening Dinner on your own
Tickets provided to Christoph's Bar (located in the Sheraton New Bern)

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

7:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon Registration Open

7:30 – 9:15 a.m. Full Breakfast and Business Meeting

9:15 – 9:30 a.m. Break

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. NCACC Update, David Thompson & NCLM Update, Ellis Hankins

10:30 – 11:00 a.m. Break

11:00 – 12:00 noon General Session: Jim Keene, City Manager, Palo Alto, Calif.

12:00 noon Door Prize Drawing

Departure