

# The Administrator

A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA CITY AND COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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## Transition survey deadline is August 25

A local government management study by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte will examine city and county management succession planning and management capacity. The goal of the survey is to raise awareness about city management transitions.

The deadline for completing the survey is August 25. The survey can be activated at [www.ncmanagers.org](http://www.ncmanagers.org) or at <http://www.surveymshare.com/survey/take/?sid=74572>.

The study is being conducted by Professors Nicholas Swartz (James Madison University) and Joanne Carman and Suzanne Leland (UNCC), and it has been approved by the

University of North Carolina at Charlotte Institutional Review Board and the North Carolina City and County Management Association.

Participation in the study typically takes 10-15 minutes and is strictly anonymous. All responses are treated as confidential, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only. Participation is voluntary; refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time.

"The most important resource local governments have is their workforce," said Leland,

assistant professor in UNC Charlotte's political science department. "As you may already know, if you are following human resource management trends, the U.S. labor force is changing rapidly including the government sector. Many senior managers are planning to retire or move into other positions. As the generational shift takes place, transition planning becomes critical.

"We appreciate your cooperation in completing this brief survey in relationship to the future of North Carolina's local government workforce. Our survey results will be made available in September."

## Fourth PELA class graduates

The Public Executive Leadership Academy (PELA) recently graduated its fourth class. PELA is conducted by the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government. It provides city and county managers, assistants and key department heads the opportunity to learn more about themselves as leaders and to gain skills to lead and manage change in their communities.

Twenty-nine managers from all across the state, and from large and small entities, completed the course in mid-August. More than 100 professionals have completed the course in its short history.

"The feedback from the 29 participants indicated that the experience was valuable to them and that not only were they taking away some new skills but also they had expanded their net-

work of colleagues whom they can call upon for advice well after the program ended," said Carl Stenberg, the program's director.

"The network created among classmates will benefit all of our communities as we learned from one another and created lifelong bonds," said Blowing Rock Town Manager Scott Hildebran. "The professional and personal growth I gained as a result of my participation in PELA was outstanding."

"Changing demographics, the colliding of cultures, globalization, privatization, modern communication technologies, immense competition for public resources and the need for

leadership capable of creating a sustainable environment are just a few of the challenges public executives face in the 21st century," said Wendell Davis, Durham County deputy manager. "In this demanding and ever-changing environment, the successful public executive must equip him/herself with the proper tools to manage people, resources and circumstances. The PELA program compels the public executive to get out of their comfort zone and approach problem solving in ways that were unconventional 20 years ago. PELA is an intensive executive training module on the cutting edge of leadership thinking, augmented by some of the best academic minds in American business and



Hildebran

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# Ethical considerations for interim managers

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**Q** The retired city manager has become active in political activities, making financial contributions and writing letters of support for candidates. Recently, she was asked to serve as interim county administrator while the county recruits. She has made it clear she is not a candidate for the position. Under these circumstances, may she continue to make financial contributions and attend fund-raising events and similar political activities?

**A** Whenever ICMA members are working for a local government, they are expected to abide by all 12 tenets of the ICMA Code of Ethics, including Tenet 7, which prohibits political activities that support candidates running for any city, county, special district, school, state, or federal office.

**Q** A member in transition was offered the position of interim city manager on the same day that the city manager was fired. How should he handle this situation?

**A** The best approach is to reach out immediately to the former city manager and have a conversation with the outgoing manager before accepting the assignment. The ICMA Code of Ethics has a guideline that tells members not to



“seek employment for a position having an incumbent administrator who has not resigned or been officially informed that his or her services are to be terminated.” Lending support to a colleague is one of the hallmarks of the local government management profession.

**Q** The interim town manager was hired to help the town council with the recruitment process. There were fewer candidates than expected, but the interim manager put forward two resumes that met the minimum qualifications. The town council was not interested in interviewing either of them and asked the interim town manager if he would be willing to be considered. The interim manager said the job did not pay enough for him to consider it. The council said the salary was negotiable. How should the interim manager handle this?

**A** If the interim town manager wants to be considered for the job now that a higher salary is on the table, the most ethical approach is to advise the town council to re-advertise the position at the higher salary and to remove himself from the screening process. A broader pool

of candidates might become available at the higher salary, and there would be no appearance that the town manager was taking advantage of the situation.

—Elizabeth Kellar  
ICMA Deputy Executive  
Director  
Washington, D.C.

## ICMA Young Professionals to meet in Georgia

ICMA University's Young Professionals Leadership Institute invites managers, assistant managers and those just beginning their careers to come to Savannah, Ga., March 4-5, 2009, for a chance to build your leadership skill set through the art and practice of Leadership.

These workshops are being presented as a special offering to Young Professionals. Workshop topics include leadership and life balance. Also scheduled is a networking opportunity.

For more information, please go to [ICMA.org](http://ICMA.org).

## Calendar of Events

### NCACC Annual Conference

August 21-24, 2008  
New Bern/Craven County

### ICMA Annual Conference

September 21-24, 2008  
Richmond, Virginia

### NCLM Annual Conference

October 12-14, 2008  
Charlotte/Mecklenburg County

**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](mailto:mlail@nclm.org).

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## Penny to ICMA executive board

**R**ocky Mount Assistant City Manager **Charles Penny**, a past NCCCMA president, recently took part in a breakfast/orientation meeting with ICMA staff and incoming board members. Penny himself will become ICMA's Southeast region vice president when the association meets for its annual



**Penny**

conference in Richmond in September.

Also joining Penny at that breakfast were incoming president Dave Limardi, city manager of Highland Park, Ill.; Darnell Earley, city man-

ager, Saginaw, Mich. (president-elect); Cheryl Hilvert, Montgomery, Ohio (Midwest); Jim Bennett, city administrator, Lewiston, Maine (Northeast); Karen Pinkos, assistant city manager, El Cerrito, Calif. (West Coast); and Ric Cortes, assistant city manager, Seguin, Texas (Mountain Plains).

## PELA, continued from page 1

government. Every public executive willing to endure the PELA experience will walk away with a renewed sense of purpose. PELA is the premier public executive leadership training program in North Carolina."

For the second consecutive year, the PELA sessions were held in a residential format at the Rizzo Center in Chapel Hill, allowing participants to forge close-knit friendships.

"Network building is an important part of leadership development programs," Stenberg aid. "The advantage of the residential format is that members bond relatively quickly. They have plenty of time outside of sessions to get acquainted and build those manager-to-manager relationships and achieve a degree of comfort and trust that are so important to the participants long-term."

Stenberg stated that administrators have had a chance to reflect on the recent version of PELA to see, once again, ways to improve it.

He stated that the 360-degree evaluation aspect will likely continue and be improved upon for next year.

"It's a little risky," he said, "but I think we're getting it to the point where the participants will benefit from using it."

Another piece that will continue is "Peace Park," a hypothetical exercise where participants study the major players in the plans around a community park.

Stenberg added that they learned from this

recent class that a session on social equity in local government is important and well-received.

Also, next year's class will probably have a session on fitness and nutrition.

"It's good advice, and it links into the issue of wellness. This is not just a personal issue; it's a community issue."

"Each session was strategically scheduled to raise the probability of having an 'a-ha!' moment," said Hildebran. "The small learning teams, case studies and simulations ... were all effective. All of the instructors provided valuable insights and experiences and are some of the best in the country."

"Our required community change project, if implemented, could have great impacts on our local jurisdictions but ultimately the state of North Carolina."

As PELA is coming upon its fifth year of existence, Stenberg alluded to a possible class reunion.

"The program has a growing problem," he joked. "When you do the math, we've got 103 people who have graduated from PELA, and all but just a few are still in North Carolina and active in local government management. It continues to grow."

PELA's growth can be attributed to word-of-mouth; Stenberg estimates that half of this year's class members were there as a result of someone who had taken the class before and recommended it.

"I would recommend the course to any manager," said Lenoir City Manager Lane Bailey. "It

gives you a chance to look at your management style and help you develop both personally and professionally. I developed a bond with my classmates and made many new friends

that I can call on for advice."



**Bailey**

That momentum, as well as the support from the N.C. City/County Management Association (which provides scholarship support), have re-energized Stenberg and PELA's staff.

"We all came away tired, but really energized by the commitment of the class," he said. "They worked hard, they were very serious about participating and the simulation. We just saw a lot of commitment, not just to personal development but also to North Carolina local government that confirmed that local government in North Carolina is in good hands if our PELA cross section is a reflection what's going on in cities and counties across the state."

"This executive program took place at an important time in my career," added Hildebran, echoing Stenberg's comments. "As a local government manager in late mid-career, I was experiencing a desire to evaluate my style of leadership, but did not know exactly what to do. This extensive program gave me the tools, understanding and encouragement to embrace the changes needed to become a more collaborative and catalytic leader."