



MLGMA

<http://www.mlgma.org>

**MICHIGAN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

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The Manager

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Winter Institute Offers 'Extraordinary' Programs

by Brian Murphy, Beverly Hills City
Manager; Chair, 2004 Winter Institute
Planning Committee

Ist gut für sie. You may have seen the billboards on I-75 and elsewhere in the Flint/Saginaw area. The billboards are advertising the "new" Frankenmuth Brewery (since 1862).

"Ist gut für sie." Loosely translated, it means, "It's good for you." In many ways, a trip to Frankenmuth is good for you—especially for this year's Winter Institute. The Winter Institute Committee has prepared a program that is sure to be worth your while.

Theme

The theme of the program this year is, "Extraordinary Times, Extraordinary People, Extraordinary Skills." Derived from a quote by Sir Edmund Hilary, the conference's theme highlights the challenges and the opportunities before us.

These are extraordinary times. The financial and organizational stresses—while not unique—are unparalleled. As local government managers, we are up to the challenge. We are blessed, as a state association and as a profession, with extraordinary people willing

to make a difference. It is important that we develop and maintain extraordinary skills, to better serve our communities, and our professional and personal lives.

Program

When the committee got together to talk about the program, we saw a theme emerge. We wanted to create a program that was grounded and pragmatic - a "nuts-and-bolts" kind of conference. We looked toward ICMA's Core Competencies, identified as skills required of an effective local government manager, as a foundation for the program. The conference provides lessons, exercises and sessions that address 15 of the 18 identified competencies.

We have partnered with ICMA for a pre-conference workshop on Tuesday, to start our program events. The workshop, "Godfather and Babe: The Only Things You Need to Know," uses clips from these movies to demonstrate management techniques.

Highlighting Wednesday is the morning General Session, titled "Managing Generational Differences." This fast moving workshop examines the differences, similarities

continued on page 4

ICMA News

Midwest VP Report

by Jane Bais-Disessa, Berkley City Manager

I hope many of you were able to attend this year's ICMA Conference in Charlotte/Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. The theme, "Banking on Change: The Future of Management." was appropriate to today's world.

I particularly enjoyed listening to the presentation given by physiotherapist, Amanda Gore, who provided us with inspirational and humorous techniques to help reduce our stress levels (I still need to buy that magic wand). And the thought-provoking presentation given by futurist and gerontologist, Ken Dychtwald, who provided an incredible forecast on the aging of America. All I can say is—I hope I look 30 when I'm 50!

The conference concluded with a Celebration of Service to the Profession, which recognized more than 650 members who have at least 10 years of local government service. I was so proud to see many Michigan managers receive their service award, and prouder still to watch Jim Hock, City Manager of Oak Park, receive his Assistant Excellence in Leadership award, given in memory of Buford M. Watson Jr.

This award is presented to a local government management professional who has made significant contributions toward excellence in leadership while serving as an assistant to a chief local government administrator or department head. If you weren't able to attend the conference, but would like to view these and other conference sessions, please contact ICMA at www.icma.org for purchasing information.

For me, the concluding session was also the most nerve-racking.

I felt certain that my legs would give out after being inducted as the newest ICMA vice-president for the Midwest region. For that privilege, I wish to thank everyone for his or her support. To date, ICMA Director, Bob O'Neal, has kept me busy working on critical issues/items which strive to make our jobs as city/county managers better. Also, by now, I hope everyone has received the ICMA Board Update Report (sent by email) prepared by your ICMA Midwest Executive Board representatives. In a nutshell, the following is a summary of some of the current key issues facing the ICMA Board:

- establishing a process for selecting the ICMA President for 2004-2005;
- continuing our efforts on the credentialing of all managers (Note: Congratulations to Jim Leidlein, City Manager of Harper Woods for achieving this goal.);
- reviewing member concerns regarding our ICMA dues; and
- identifying strategic initiatives regarding proposed services and programs provided by ICMA.

As the newest member, I will serve as Executive Board Liaison to Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Other Midwest vice presidents include: David Limardi, City Manager of Highland Park, Illinois, who will serve as liaison to Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa; and Juliana Maller, Assistant City Manager of Park Ridge, Illinois, who will serve as liaison to Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota.

As your representative, please feel free to contact my office at (248) 546-2470, or email me at jbais-disessa@berkleymich.org if I may be of any assistance.

MLGMA News

2003 Senior Executive Institute

by Daryl J. Delabbio, Kent County Administrator/Controller

I had the privilege earlier this year to attend the 2-week University of Virginia Senior Executive Institute (SEI), with the support of my employer and the MLGMA Scholarship provided by the Professional Development Committee. I can honestly say it has been one of the most thought-provoking experiences of my career and, I might add, well worth the investment of time to attend.

The SEI is the product of 18 years of planning, listening to managers, and learning from the reaction of class participants. The topics and general approach are based on three principles of adult learning:

1. Adults learn best when they are involved in their own learning.
2. Adults learn in different ways, which means it is necessary to use a variety of teaching methods.
3. The most stimulating learning environments are those in which everyone has a stake in the result. That means that all faculty and participants must be both teachers and learners.

The 38 participants that were in the 2003 SEI came from 15 states, two countries (Serbia and Korea), and one representative from ICMA. The format of "learning" included lecture, team activities and exercises, small group discussions, readings, case studies, use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and large group interaction. Facilitators included a healthy mix of academicians, practitioners, and retired executives. The result was a high-quality learning environment that emphasized leadership skills in a variety of theoretical and practical settings.

Prior to our arrival to the two-week program, the 38 participants were divided into five teams. Team members were selected on the basis of several factors, including their

particular Myers-Briggs “type,” ethnic background, gender, position, and geographic location. Before the entire 38 class participants met, the individual teams met to discuss our expectations and goals, as well as sharing some basic information about ourselves. Throughout the two weeks, the teams met on numerous occasions and, at least in our case, personal and professional bonds were developed.

The first week, while including topics such as creativity and leadership, focused significantly on the High Performance Organization (HPO) model developed by Dr. John Pickering. It is difficult to summarize the concept of HPO, because it is complex and must be implemented almost on a trial-by-error basis, depending on the organization. It integrates the theories of Maslow, Likert, and Covey into an organization framework that looks at leadership (philosophy, functions, and form), values and visions of the organization, and strategy, structure, and systems. It includes seven key diagnostic questions for an organization to ask (and answer):

1. What is High Performance for us?
2. How would we know if we were?
3. According to whom are we?
4. Why be High Performance?
5. Are we doing the right “what”?
6. How good are we at it?
7. How are we treating each other and our customers?

Numerous opportunities were provided to allow participants to interact with one another, and while evening activities existed, there were a couple of opportunities to socialize and interact on a more personal level. For instance, a group of about ten individuals went to Monticello and to Jefferson Winery on Saturday, providing “intergroup” socializing.

The second week didn’t have any singular focus, but general discussions

about leadership took place, both within teams and with the entire group. Two speakers that provided impressive presentations were ICMA Executive Director Bob O’Neill, who provided a case study on “change.” What I appreciated most about his presentation was in answer to a question related to best practices. He said he didn’t believe in “best practices,” but did believe in “leading practices.” That is, what may be best for one community or situation may not be the best for everyone, so it’s more of a leading practice than a best practice. This was an interesting, and I might add, valuable comment that put proper perspective on what we commonly refer to as “best practices.”

The second speaker was Professor John Nalbandian from the University of Kansas, who spoke on HPO: Governing Bodies. The most significant part of his presentation involved defining political values which include representation, efficiency, individual rights, and social equity. These values must be balanced when staff interacts with elected officials. Too often, staff is focused on the efficiencies of operation, while we should also hold the values of representation, social equity, and individual rights in the same light as we make recommendations to the governing body.

The capstone event for the two weeks was a series of outdoor exercises designed to further develop teamwork and trust. The major exercise of the outdoor event was that the teams were required to build, with limited supplies, a raft to rescue an endangered species of alligator. All members of the team had to not only participate in building the raft, but also trek across a river to rescue the alligator. It was phenomenal (no other word can describe it) at how much trust and confidence had developed among our group (and other groups I’m sure) during the course of the two weeks.

I also would like to thank the MLGMA for providing a \$2,250 scholarship to help defray costs associated with the SEI. I would encourage any MLGMA member who is interested in the numerous professional development opportunities to seriously consider SEI and to definitely consider applying for a scholarship through the Professional Development Committee of MLGMA.

Summer 2004 Conference

by Jeff Mueller, Lathrup Village Assistant City Administrator

The news is out—we’re saddling up and moving from the JJ Ranch in Rothbury (due to a pending lawsuit between the Village of Rothbury and the JJ) to Boyne Highlands near Petoskey and Harbor Springs.

As we are still in the very early planning stages, there is still much work to be done. The “tradition” of the conference has been to focus on the “personal” details of the profession. The Committee will make every effort to offer a conference that will aid all of us with our professional as well as family lives.

Please mark July 21-23, 2004 on your calendars now, and plan on bringing your families. Much more information will be provided in the next edition of *The Manager*. Please feel free to share any thoughts you might have about the upcoming conference. E-mail me at jlmv@comcast.net I look forward to seeing you at this summer’s conference.

DEADLINE

MLGMA members are encouraged to submit articles for publication in *The Manager*. Please submit all copy for the March 2004 issue to the editor, Sue Lee, [leeford@comcast.net] by Monday, February 2, 2004.

