

MLGMA

www.mlgma.org

MICHIGAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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The Manager

The official newsletter of the Michigan Local Government Management Association

Affiliated with the Michigan Municipal League

Winter 2012

Note from the President

Steve Brock, City Manager, Farmington Hills, MI

“ And now, the end is near...”
from old Blue Eyes
himself, Frank Sinatra.

As I wrap up my year as your President, I thought I'd take a State of The Association approach to this last message.

In a word, good. Through your good graces, we have a comfortable fund balance while still investing in our membership in a wide variety of ways. Please take advantage of these. Membership is holding steady and I'm thankful for that. We're mostly behaving in a manner commensurate with our station and that is also a very good thing – especially these days, when that isn't true of some elected officials. “One bad apple don't spoil the whole bunch, girl” (The Jackson 5), but it can taint us. The more we act professionally, the better. Dashboard-wise, arrow up!

One initiative I wish would have gone better is the [Life, Well Run](#) campaign of ICMA.

Even with the match of your Association and ICMA-RC, we have not come close to our goal. You still have time, and you can still log-on to [ICMA's website](#) to donate. We'll also have forms and envelopes at the [Winter Institute](#) for your snail-mail folks. Your contribution will triple in value – “Viva Las Vegas” (too easy). Dashboard-wise, arrow neutral maybe even slightly down.

We've also had a number of excellent people retire under my reign (something I said?) and while we'll miss their presence, it creates opportunities for advancement and that's great. Thank you Karl, Ed, Mike, Randy, Mark (all past Presidents) and any others I may have missed.

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You're only as good as the plays in your book

Our annual MLGMA Winter Institute, 'Coaching a New Season' is inspired by sports

By **Michael F. Young**, City Manager, Rockford, MI
Winter Institute Planning Committee Chair

We are very pleased to provide this dynamic conference in the great city of East Lansing, home of the Spartans of Michigan State University. This site provides the ideal setting for the theme of our conference, "Coaching a New Season." As a diehard Detroit Lions fan, I know that there is never a more exciting time than the beginning of a season when everyone is undefeated and we begin working with new players, new coaches, a new play book and the goal of a competitive and successful season.

We, as City Manager's in Michigan, find ourselves in the same scenario where we are, "Coaching a New Season." With sweeping legislative changes, a new Governor, new legislature, new budget, and an entire new playbook, the challenges that face us are exciting and demanding. This year's conference will include a wide range of general and concurrent sessions that will help our managers meet the challenges of a new season. Our Planning Committee has been successful in securing high quality speakers, all centered around the sports theme we have developed.

As I speak to all of the second and third grade students that take tours through our community, I often equate being a City Manager to a coach. While we are not personally responsible for scoring a goal, stopping the puck, or getting the take down, we have to ensure that our "team" are in the best position to win, know the rules, know the score, and are trained to the highest level. Like a coach, we get blamed when our team loses and pile praise on our team when we win. Whether a sport imitates life or life imitates sports, we as City Managers' are responsible for the success of our team and "Coaching the New Season."

I look forward to seeing you all in East Lansing, as part of the 2012 Winter Institute and personally thank the Planning Committee for all of their efforts.

*Note from the President
Continued from Page 1*

Hope to see you "Further on up the road" (Eric Clapton). Dashboard-wise, arrow down and up (just one of the problems with dashboards).

Casting a gaze ahead to the horizon, it feels to me like the listing ship of State has been steadied by those at the helm, although obstacles may still lie on our course. So "Steady as she goes" (a beer in E.L. to the first who can tell me the band who did this one).

Your MLGMA Board under the anxiously anticipated leadership of **President Curtis Holt** is ready to keep us moving forward. Keep up the good work out there. People need you "Now more than ever" (John Mellencamp). I look forward to seeing you in East Lansing for our Winter Institute. GOD bless and keep your arrow up! lol

Sincerely,

Steve Brock
MLGMA President
City Manager, Farmington Hills, MI
SBrock@fhgov.com

MGLMA Winter Insitute
January 31-February 3, 2012
Marriott at University Place, East Lansing

The Value of Public Service:

Pursuit for Professional Public Management in 2012

By **Clay Pearson**, City Manager, Novi, MI

Originally published in the Alliance for Innovation's "Transformation," January 2012



We have left the 2011 year that included the massive earthquake and tsunami over Japan that killed over 19,000 and devastated infrastructure and industry. Local communities there have pursued recovery with determination while their people are steadily rebuilding their lives and homes. Communities of people are getting positive things done every hour of every day, steadily. Democratic local governments with elected representatives of the people, aided by professional local government managers, have vast opportunities and responsibilities.

We need to keep going strong. For all the work that has happened during this Great Recession to consolidate, collaborate, and conserve, so much more is ahead. The way our professionally-managed local governments can be successful is to re-double our pursuit of organization, community, and personal

improvements. I say pursuit because that is a term in an article by Mike Myatt (Forbes, December 2012) that grabbed me:

A failure to embrace pursuit is to cede opportunity to others. A leader's failure to pursue clarity leaves them amidst the fog. Their failure to pursue creativity relegates them to the routine and mundane. Their failure to pursue talent sentences them to a world of isolation. Their failure to pursue change approves apathy. Their failure to pursue wisdom and discernment subjects them to distraction and folly. Their failure to pursue character leaves a question mark on their integrity. Let me put this as simply as I can – you cannot attain what you do not pursue.

For those of us in the public sector, unchecked patience and deliberation are an easily-accessible salve for the tumult of life. However, that salve just takes out the burn and most often does not heal the wound. We are the ones that have the leadership responsibility and opportunity to pursue improvements. I know in my community that I am fortunate that our team at the City of Novi is given the space and encouragement to make changes and choices, to improve ourselves with new technologies, training, and tools. Some of that space has come naturally because of the nature of the community. Much of that space comes because we have earned that over that last decade-plus of positive successes and delivering results through good times and bad, when making fewer changes in each situation would have been an option to pursue. Pursuing success over the long-haul follows what Myatt encourages for us, "the best leaders are simply uncomfortable with anything that embraces the status quo."

I admire and respect my friends and colleagues such as Katy Simon in Washoe County, Nevada and Ed Koryzno in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Washoe County and Ypsilanti have experienced housing value declines an order of magnitude greater than most of the rest of us. Each has been long-tenured (15 years+ each) consistent at their community and pursued excellence in face of huge revenue declines.

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The Value of Public Service
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To me, these two people are like you at your best; the kind of professional local government managers who say what needs to be said in public about changes that must occur. Inside their organizations, Ed and Katy have privately made incredibly hard decisions that have affected people they know, along with themselves. Incredibly, each continues to smile, to mentor, to benchmark to find out where opportunities exist for improvements, and to contribute to the profession by staying involved with their State association, ICMA, and groups like the Alliance for Innovation whose members pursue busting up status quo wherever it makes sense.

Along with pursuit comes a need for sense of urgency. Again, for whatever reason, it seems that our public sector can lack the sense of urgency to act. Failing to carry out and execute on recommendations compounds problems and leads to backlogs that overwhelm. Breaking down a sense of urgency amounts to knowing what is important to get done, owning the tasks to get done, and one of the best management resources we share around with our administrative team is the [Manager's Tools](#) podcasts.

Those podcasts give very practical and effective advice. A common theme is that managers are responsible to get things done. Specifically, a recent podcast talked about project reporting and the best way to get things done. When giving project updates, a sin is to ask project status and get back the answer, "fine." The objection is with both the manager asking a general question that generates such a non-committal, non-productive answer and the responder. Whether assessing tsunami disaster recovery at the Sendai City airport in Japan or implementation of an EMS/Fire Department company inspection plan, managers need to know the status of their project work's solid specific results and deliverables. A sense of urgency to get things done, to obtain that which we have pursued, marks individuals of the highest class.

On the whole, results beget other results and more opportunities. In Novi, we have been able to expand and deepen our communications and outreach work. That awareness and marketing helps us accomplish improved citizen perceptions on sense of community as measured by the National Citizen Survey. That sense of community brings greater involvement in volunteerism such as with the 200+ residents who have become Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trained.

That citizen involvement heightens our emergency preparedness readiness so we can communicate about the need for self-planning and "the first 72 hours are on you," which enables our staff to train and do other prevention work like the company inspections of businesses for fire and safety hazards. Which promotes more community awareness and involvement of the City; and so it goes.

We must keep after identifying the right objectives and pursuing them relentlessly. Local government managers have opportunities to identify those goals with their organizations and communities and then to get after that attainment. Whether a local government on the Japanese eastern seaboard, a Nevada County with outsized property foreclosure counts, or a southeast Michigan City with industrial disinvestment, the local government managers are the ones who can make 2012 and beyond times when great things are achieved with their communities.

Clay Pearson

City Manager, Novi, MI

Alliance for Innovation Member

Calendar of Upcoming Events

MLGMA Winter Institute 2012

January 31 - February 3
Marriott at University Place, East Lansing
[Event Website](#)

The nuts and bolts of community management are at the heart of MLGMA's main training workshop. Winter Institute Planning Committee Chair Michael F. Young, Rockford City Manager, invites MLGMA's membership to our annual conference on Page 2.

Michigan Municipal League Capital Conference and Annual Expo

March 20-21
Lansing Center, Lansing, MI
[Event Website](#)

"Everyone's talking about the fundamental role of placemaking in the economic revitalization of Michigan's communities. But the economics of place has to start with the politics of place. Without legislation that provides a framework for the necessary funding and policies, we can't move ahead on any of the initiatives that are so crucial to making our communities into the vibrant places where people want to live in the 21st century.

"Capital Conference is where you'll hear about key state and federal issues that impact our communities, from the development of mass transit to the future fate of brownfield tax credits," according to the MML.

Regional finalists in the "Race for the Cup," Community Excellence Awards competition, will be praying for your vote. Capital Conference attendees will pick the winner.

Register for the event and out about conference sessions, the Annual Expo, Regional Roundtable, pre-conference opportunities, and more on the MML's [Capital Conference website](#).

ICMA-RC Young Professionals Leadership Institute

March 28-29
Columbus, Ohio
[Event Website](#)

A special ICMA University leadership program that offers young professionals a way to build their leadership skill set through the art and practice of leadership; ICMA University workshops are being presented as a special offering to young professionals, preceding the ICMA Regional Summits that are scheduled for March, April and May 2012 in the Southeast, Northeast, Midwest, and Mountain Plains/West Coast regions.

The Midwest workshop precedes the ICMA's Midwest Regional Summit.

ICMA Midwest Regional Summit in Columbus, Ohio

March 29-30
Columbus, Ohio
[Event Website](#)

The cavalries converge in Columbus, Ohio this March for the ICMA Midwest Regional Summit, "a networking and professional development opportunity for members and state officers in the Midwest," announces the International City/County Management Association.

Highlights include "MAIN STREET AMERICA: Economic Development Lessons Learned and the Role of the Professional Manager," presented by **Dr. Gerald L. Gordon**, president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, and a stimulating dialogue with ICMA Executive Director, **Bob O'Neill** and Director of Leadership Development **Felicia Logan** will explore the role of the professional manager and how the current trends offer leadership challenges and opportunities," according to the ICMA.

Ed Koryzno retires from his post as Ypsilanti City Manager

New goals are on Ed Koryzno's horizon as he retires from his 16 year post in Ypsilanti. He moves into his new position with the Department of Treasury to help ailing communities get back on financial track and avoid emergency managers. Former 52nd district representative and Dexter Schools superintendent John Hansen has filled the spot as Interim City Manager, bringing lots of interim administrator experience with him. May your new ambitions pay off!

Algonac City Manager Karl Tomion wraps up his career

Karl Tomion began his work in city administration at the fresh age of 23. Now, 36 years later, he looks forward to retiring in Port Huron, doing some traveling, and continuing to impact the community as a volunteer, according to a recent interview he gave the Times Herald. He has served Algonac for two years, after managing Port Huron, Midland, and Dowagiac. Bon Voyage, Karl!

Michael Herman retires from managing Michigan's cities

After 33 years in the biz, Michael Herman retired this January. He served as Albion City Manager for 12 years after serving Hudson and Howell. The word is that he doesn't have plans to get another job. As Interim Manager Kevin Markovich, Albion's director of public service who got a unanimous vote from City Council, takes the helm, Herman departs for new adventures.

Not yet a member?

Take a gander at MLGMA's membership registration form online;

www.mlgma.org/membership.html

or email membership@mlgma.org

Any Suggestions?

Do you have an idea for an article you would like to see in The Manager newsletter?

Do you know of an upcoming event?

Would you like to comment on something you read?

Email ideas to jennifereberbach@gmail.com

The Michigan Local Government Management Association is the professional association for local government managers from municipalities, counties, and townships throughout the state of Michigan. The non-profit organization is the Michigan section of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), and members follow ICMA's code of ethics. MLGMA is affiliated with the Michigan Municipal League. *The Manager* newsletter is edited for MLGMA by **Jennifer Eberbach**, a contract writer and journalist in Ann Arbor, MI. jennifereberbach@gmail.com