

President's column

By Mark McNeill, MCMA President, City Administrator, Shakopee

As my time as MCMA President will come to a close at the Annual Conference at Grand View Lodge in Nisswa, I thought it would be appropriate to look back and provide you with a status report as to what MCMA has accomplished during the past year:

1. MCMA is completing the first year of living with a slimmed down, more sustainable operating budget. Even with a 20 percent dues increase, we maintained our membership rolls. MCMA has had very positive financial outcomes for fiscal year 2012, and will likely end the year with a 40 percent fund balance, even after our contribution to ICMA's "Life, Well Run" campaign.

2. MCMA made the \$28,000 donation to the "Life, Well Run" campaign using money remaining from the 2005 ICMA conference. Minnesota and Wisconsin are currently the only states in the ICMA Midwest region to fulfill their commitments to this worthwhile cause.

3. We had nearly 100 people attend the MCMA dinner at that ICMA Milwaukee conference, in spite of the dinner being "Dutch treat" for the first time.

4. We worked on streamlining MCMA committee structures, and are currently exploring the possible consolidation of the Next Gen and Educational Initiatives committees.

5. We are exploring the possibility of APMA (the assistants' group) becoming affiliated with MCMA.

6. On Feb. 10-11, we held one of the more successful recent mid-winter conferences (at least in terms of turnout), with 50 people in attendance in downtown Minneapolis.

7. We continued one of MCMA's strategic goals of supporting regional managers groups by holding quarterly board meetings in New Ulm and in Waite Park.

8. To supplement veteran Bill Bassett, we added two range riders—Bob Thistle and Paul Sparks—to better serve MCMA members. It should be noted that Bob has already held one meeting of retired managers as a

possible way of keeping these reservoirs of knowledge and experience involved in the local government management profession.

9. A great Annual Conference has been planned for May 2-4 at the Grand View Lodge in Nisswa. This will be the first year with corporate sponsors, which is intended to help to keep registration costs down.

Being president of this great organization is the culmination of multiple years' of service. A member typically serves three one-year terms on the Board and, if so inclined and the positions are available, you must then be elected to serve additional single-year terms as secretary/treasurer, second vice president, and first vice president.

Much of a future president's efforts on behalf of MCMA is done during those six years of training. But that experience makes the job of actually being president much easier, knowing that you have many talented people helping to do the work.

As I pack up my tent and ride off into the MCMA sunset (OK, except for another year in the position of past president), I extend my appreciation to those dedicated people who have served on the Board, and to the dozens of you who are members of or chair the advisory committees. MCMA wouldn't happen without you.

And finally, I am most grateful to MCMA's Secretariat Kevin Frazell for his behind-the-scenes shepherding of MCMA's activities. His experience, diplomatic guidance, and gentle wit are the glue that holds MCMA together.

Ours is not an easy vocation; there are certainly many other ways to earn a living. However, in terms of the positive impacts that one can make on a community—both short term and with long lasting effects—local government management is a profession that can't be topped.

Thank you for your support—it has been an honor and a privilege serving you. ! ◻

2012 Midwest Regional Summit summary

By Mark McNeill, MCMA President, City Administrator, Shakopee

On March 29 and 30, MCMA was represented by Phil Kern and Mark McNeill (along with ICMA Senior Vice President Matt Fulton) at the 2012 Midwest Regional Summit in Columbus, Ohio.

They were joined by state association representatives from Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, and West Virginia.

Thursday afternoon's session consisted of a presentation by Dr. Gerald Gordon, CEO of the Fairfax County (Virginia) Economic Development Authority. Mr. Gordon has overseen the transition of the Washington, D.C. area from a rural crossroads 35 years ago, to the second largest suburban office park (in terms of number of square feet) in the nation.

Friday's session was led by new ICMA Midwest Regional Coordinator Dave Limardi, and ICMA staff. There was a discussion of the future of our profession, and ICMA as an organization. ICMA showcased the Knowledge Network section of its website, and demonstrated to attendees how it can help with management conundrums.

Matt Fulton was among the ICMA regional vice presidents present who updated the participants on ICMA activities. Attendees adopted a new nominations process for regional vice presidents, and approved an ICMA Midwest regional agreement.

Finally, Minnesota and Wisconsin were recognized for their upfront payments in support of ICMA's "Life, Well Run" campaign. We should be proud! ☐

**Your
Range
Riders
are here
to help!**

MCMA Officers/Board Members

President:

Mark McNeill, City of Shakopee

First Vice President:

Phil Kern, City of Delano

Second Vice President:

Melanie Mesko Lee, City of Hastings

Secretary/Treasurer:

Tim Houle, Crow Wing County

Directors:

Bart Fischer, City of Chaska

Brian Gramentz, City of New Ulm

Lisa Henning, Dakota County

Shaunna Johnson, City of Waite Park

Barry Stock, City of Savage

Ex-Officio Members

Immediate Past President:

Curt Boganey, City of Brooklyn Center

APMP President:

Matt Stemwedel, City of Coon Rapids

LMC Executive Director:

Jim Miller

AMC Executive Director:

Jeff Spartz

Range Riders:

Bill Bassett

(507) 243-4346

wbassett@hickorytech.net

Paul Sparks

(507) 377-0449

ptsparks@charter.net

Bob Thistle

(763) 755-3563

r.thistle@comcast.net

MCMA Newsletter is published three times a year for the members of the Minnesota City/County Management Association by MCMA's Secretariat:

League of Minnesota Cities, 145 University Avenue West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55103-2044

Contact: Kevin Frazell, Director of Member Services, kfrazell@lmc.org • (651) 281-1215 • Fax: (651) 281-1296

Mid-Winter Seminar recap

*By Melanie Mesko-Lee, MCMA Second Vice President,
Assistant City Administrator, Hastings*

Forty managers and 10 partners gathered at the beautiful Depot Renaissance Hotel in downtown Minneapolis on Feb. 10-11 for the Mid-Winter Professional Development Seminar. The program topic? Dealing with difficult personalities!

Presenter Lisa Carver facilitated a session devoted to identifying difficult personalities and corresponding strategies to effectively interact with those we may find more challenging.

Using a number of interactive methods, Lisa engaged the group to share real-life hot button experiences and use those to discuss different ways to approach those difficult relationships. Some key takeaways from the session:

- Be proactive, take some time, and choose your response rather than being reactive and risk regret over that most immediate response. Shorthand for that? Mind the gap!
- We can only control ourselves and our own reactions.
- Communicate considerately—including awareness of body language and its impact on your communication.

In addition to some practical and fun learning, Shakopee City Administrator and MCMA President Mark McNeill and his partner Sheila led a breakfast discussion on ways MCMA can support connections among MCMA members and families.

Feedback on the Mid-Winter Seminar was positive, and it was a great opportunity for members and partners to find a great mix of professional development and social networking. The Professional Development Committee is also in the midst of reviewing the member survey on professional development needs to determine how future events can best meet the needs of our members. ○

Reaching the MCMA Secretariat

For MCMA Secretariat services, contact:

Kevin Frazell, Director of Member Services
League of Minnesota Cities
145 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55103-2044
(651) 281-1215 • Fax: (651) 281-1296
kfrazell@lmc.org

You can also contact Amy Mansager, Event Coordinator (amansager@lmc.org), or Jim Miller, Executive Director (jmiller@lmc.org).

All can be reached at (651) 281-1200.

Appointments and other professional news

- **Judith Bodway**, Interim City Manager, Winona, has been appointed City Manager there.
- **Tony Chladek**, City Administrator, Merrill, Wis., has been appointed City Administrator, Crookston.
- **Jeff Dahl**, City Administrator, Osseo, has been appointed Assistant City Administrator, Chaska.
- **John Gunyou** is retiring as City Manager of Minnetonka in June; council has already indicated its intent to appoint Assistant City Manager **Geralyn Barone** to the position.
- **Scott Johnson**, City Administrator, Big Lake, has been appointed City Administrator, Medina.
- **Larry Kruse**, former City Administrator, Albertville, is in transition.
- **Josh Malchow**, recent graduate of MSU-Mankato URSI, has been appointed City Administrator, Slayton.
- **Heidi Nelson**, Assistant City Administrator, Ramsey, has been appointed City Administrator, Wayzata.
- **Molly O'Rourke**, former Deputy County Administrator, Washington County, has been appointed County Administrator there.
- **Mike Robertson**, former City Administrator, Otsego, has been appointed Interim Community Natural Resources and Economic Development Educator, St. Croix County, Wis., and University of Wisconsin Extension.
- **Jim Schug** has retired from Washington County.
- **Sandie Thone**, City Clerk, Mendota Heights, has been appointed City Administrator, Lake Elmo.
- **Mike Ericson** (Hugo), **Brian Heck** (Shorewood), and **Sara Irvine** (Afton) remain in transition.

A peek into the MCMA soul

By Kevin Frazell, MCMA Secretariat Officer

Well, not quite, but the headline got your attention, didn't it?! And you did give us a look into your professional development needs through the recent online member survey that was completed by an astounding 102 members! Thank you!!!

Of course, that response still represents less than half of the total MCMA membership, so as you read the results below, keep that in mind. Also realize that some of the questions were "pick one" while others were "check all that apply," so add up the numbers accordingly.

Annual Conference. Twenty-nine percent just love it and 45 percent think it's good and worthwhile. Since almost 15 percent of you said you rarely attend, this is a nearly 90 percent approval rating from those who make it an annual priority to be there!

Mid-Winter Seminar. Well, 60 percent of you rarely attend, but of those who do, about two-thirds rate it either worthwhile or love it. So it continues as a smaller event for those who are "into it."

Where else do you go for professional training? Seventy-eight percent go to association meetings like the League of Minnesota Cities or Association of Minnesota Counties; 66 percent go to meetings of managers in their area of the state; 63 percent go to the ICMA Annual Conference; and 63 percent get professional training by doing independent reading or other study. Only about 25 percent of you indicated that you attend other types of workshops, including online seminars.

Are you interested in having MCMA offer two major annual conferences, like some of our surrounding states? Well, 19 percent of you said you would definitely come, while 48 percent said maybe. Another 34 percent said nope, no way, can't afford the money and/or time.

What other types of educational events might interest you? More than 64 percent said you would like in-person seminars on "cutting edge practice" type topics, perhaps offered in cooperation with groups like the Alliance for Innovation. Meanwhile, 59 percent of you said you would also appreciate additional seminars on general management and leadership topics. Another 27 percent said more online seminars might be helpful. Only around 18 percent were interested in more events like the current Mid-Winter Seminar, focused on broader life topics and time for socializing with members and partners.

What are the barriers that keep you from attending educational events? Limited \$\$\$\$ was cited by 64 percent, and 54 percent of you said you couldn't take additional time away from other work duties. Conflicts with family and other personal time were checked by 32 percent. Twenty-nine percent said the content just often isn't that appealing. Only 15 percent of you indicated a lack of support from the governing body or concern about community criticism for attending.

Are you an ICMA-credentialed manager?

- Yes—28 percent.
- Should be, but I'm not—35 percent.
- Don't see the value—19 percent.
- I don't yet meet the education and experience requirements—17 percent.

Would you like to get together with other MCMA members and their partners for more informal social events?

- Yes—35 percent.
- No—65 percent.

What should be MCMA's highest strategic priorities going forward?

- Supporting development of the Next Generation—64 percent.
- Supporting managers in transition—60 percent.
- Promoting ethics—54 percent.
- Supporting regional groups of managers—48 percent.
- Enhancing MCMA use of technology—44 percent.

And who completed the survey?

Age

- Age 51–60—37 percent.
- Age 31–40—32 percent.

The rest rather evenly split among other age groups.

Position

- CEO—80 percent.
- Assistant—10 percent.

Years of service in profession

- 10–20—31 percent.
- 21–30—21 percent.

Rest evenly split.

Location

- Metro area—62 percent.
- Greater Minnesota—38 percent.

Size of jurisdiction

- 2,500–7,900—27 percent.

The rest evenly split mostly in larger sizes.

Again, a big thank you to everyone who took time to complete the survey. Next year's Board of Directors and Professional Development Committee will put it to good use as they plan the programs and services most important to support the local government management profession in our state. ☺

Memorandum from the edge

Jon Hohenstein, Community Development Director, Eagan

In the days before on demand movies and downloads, before DVDs or even video-tapes, if you wanted to see an older movie, you had to wait for a broadcast television station to replay it or you needed to find a second run movie theater that shared your tastes for particular genres or titles. In the late 1970s, a small bar near Fenway Park began to show movies on a pull-down screen, and they did it in a way that ensured them full nights of steady revenue until recorded video made movies readily available first in living rooms and now on handheld devices that get faster and more functional every three to four weeks.

The place was named Frank 'n Steins and, in addition to the movies, their niche was quarter-pound hot dogs with your choice of toppings and a broad and eclectic beer menu, served throughout the films. They ensured three different audiences per night by alternating the types of the films they screened. The first and third show might be a comedy, spaghetti western, or spy drama, while the second would be an art film, chick flick, or European period piece. The strategy was reinforced by the fact that after two hours of hot dogs and beer, you felt the need to get up and move anyway.

I first saw "Slap Shot" at Frank 'n Steins and, like several million other low brow goof balls, I knew immediately that I had discovered genius. I was not and still am not a big hockey fan, but that didn't matter. The characters, story, and dialog are hilarious and, oddly, within the insanity of the Hanson brothers, the bizarre radio interviews and the one liners, there was a message I didn't fully appreciate until recently.

As part of his effort to motivate the team to play more aggressively to get attention from potential buyers for the team, Paul Newman's character, Charlestown Chiefs player-coach Reggie Dunlop, goes on the radio and announces that he'll pay a \$100 bounty to the first Chief who really nails Syracuse player-coach Tim McCracken. He no sooner gets home from the interview than the team's manager, Joe McGrath, played by another of my favorites, Strother Martin, calls and screams, "Are you nuts? A bounty? We could all end up in the clinker for this! You can't put a bounty on a man's head!"

Now I'm not sure whether New Orleans Saints Coach Sean Peyton was ever at Frank 'n Steins or whether he's ever seen "Slap Shot." It would have been good if he had, because Joe McGrath is right. Putting a bounty on a man's head is nuts and someone who does should end up in the clinker.

In the aftermath of the Saints bounty scandal, responses from the Vikings and the public have ranged broadly. Vikings punter Chris Kluwe blogged that some Saints team members should be banned from the NFL for life. Others have said almost philosophically that the Vikings can't expect to win when they commit five turnovers in a game. Some note that NFL football is an inherently violent game and that players are encouraged to "punish" their opponents and apply hits they will remember; the difference in this case was that the behavior was monetized when it was particularly harmful to specific players.

Belonging to a profession that is defined by a code of ethics and high personal expectations, all of this occupies a much different plane than we do as local government managers. One would hope that all professions would be defined by and function under standards that place a higher value on other people than was the case here. The current debate focuses on whether the NFL sanctions against the team and participants fit the crime. In "Slap Shot," the Chiefs' goalie, Denis LeMieux, explained the consequences of penalties in hockey: "Against the rules. You know you're stupid when you do that. Just some English pig with no brains, you know. You do that, you go to the box, you know. Two minutes by yourself, you know, and you feel shame." Good idea. Only in this case, it should be much more than two minutes and a lot of shame. ◻

**Be sure to
check out
MCMA's
web site:**

www.mncma.org