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LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

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# The Manager

The official newsletter of the Michigan Local Government Management Association

A State Affiliate of ICMA  
Affiliated with the Michigan Municipal League

Winter 2016

## Note from the President

Michael F. Young, City Manager, Rockford

As I write this latest article for The Manager newsletter, I have had the opportunity to reflect on the last year as president of this fantastic association. It has been a very dynamic year for the board of directors. We have had the opportunity to tackle many important initiatives and refine a number of important elements of our committee structure.

As part of the 2016 Winter Institute, the association will have the opportunity to receive a report from the board and our consultants on our comprehensive branding initiative. Over the last year, the board has worked in concert with the Advocacy Committee, chaired by Grand Haven City Manager Pat McGinnis, to take a hard look at the association as to the perception of MLGMA by members, elected officials, and the public at-large. For years, we have discussed how we can better position our profession as leaders in the State and municipal management, and as an ideal career choice for college-aged students looking to make a difference in their community and the State.



We have a wonderful story to tell, but until now we have never assembled the materials to promote our "brand" and to shift away from the old brand that has limited us in the past.

On Thursday at the Institute, I am excited to moderate a presentation by the association's brand strategist, Phire Group. During this session, Phire Group will take us through the journey of developing our brand and the shift away from our old, outdated

*Continued on next page*

## *Note from the President Continued*

brand. Following that session, members of the association, in a more intimate setting, will have a chance to ask questions about the process and the direction we are heading.



This entire effort will culminate on Friday, during our annual business meeting, when the board will be asking the association to consider adopting a name change as an important element of this branding strategy. Oftentimes, the Friday session has sparse attendance because members are anxious to get back to their community to complete their important work. I would encourage all members to take the opportunity to attend the annual business meeting Friday at 8:30 a.m. to vote on what will be a very critical element of our brand shift going forward.

In closing, I would like to thank the association for your trust in electing me president, knowing how much I care about this association. I have marveled over the past year at the commitment of the members of the board of directors, committee chairs, and members to serve our association and promote the importance of the council-manager plan. I look forward to seeing everybody in Port Huron and getting your feedback on this comprehensive branding initiative.

Sincerely,  
**Michael F. Young**, City Manager, Rockford

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# ICMA Update

By Daryl J. Delabbio  
County Administrator/Controller, Kent County  
and ICMA Regional Midwest Vice President

It is timely that MLGMA is looking at branding for our association and profession. We live in an environment that is tremendously challenging and intellectually stimulating. Our roles as leaders in—and the impact we have on—our respective communities cannot be understated or overestimated. This element of leadership has been recognized by both our MLGMA membership, through the results of the branding study conducted in the past year, and by ICMA. As a result of ICMA's Task Force on Leadership, which met in 2013 and 2014, the ICMA Executive Board has recently created a Leadership Advisory Board (LAB). The LAB will provide advice to the ICMA board and executive director about how the "leadership" element of our roles can be more fully emphasized, nourished, and promoted.

Two other activities are taking place that will also impact ICMA for the next decade and beyond. First, the Executive Board is working on the recruitment of a new executive director. As you are probably aware, Bob O'Neill will be retiring at the end of this year after 14 years of leading our association. The tenure of our association executive directors is generally long. In my 39 years in local government, Bob is only the third executive director, and there have only been five full-time since 1929!<sup>1</sup> Input has been received from a wide variety of stakeholders, including many local government managers, and a position profile has been created by GovHR USA—the executive search firm retained to assist in this recruitment—and reviewed by the Executive Board. Plans are for the finalists to be interviewed this summer, with an announcement on Bob's replacement to take place at the ICMA Conference in Kansas City in September. Big shoes to fill!

Second, the last ICMA Strategic Plan was adopted in 2008. Last year, an ICMA task force was created and has been diligently working on the association's next



Strategic Plan. The task force has been very busy, and similar to what has been done for the executive director recruitment, input has been solicited and received from many city and county managers, assistants, and other stakeholders. The Executive Board and Strategic Planning Task Force met jointly in December 2015 to review the progress of this process and to work through some key priorities for our association. Midland County Administrator/Controller Bridgette Gransden is a member of this task force.

Finally, each year, ICMA Regional Summits are held for the purposes of professional development, updates on ICMA, and to interview potential candidates for the regional vice presidents. During the upcoming Regional Summit on March 3-4 in Middleton, Wisconsin, there will also be an opportunity to discuss the state of the profession. If you are interested in attending the Summit, you can register online at [http://icma.org/en/icma/members/benefits/regional\\_summits](http://icma.org/en/icma/members/benefits/regional_summits). Incoming MLGMA President Dale Kerbyson, City Manager of Lapeer, will be serving on the panel that will be interviewing ICMA Midwest vice presidential candidates and selecting the person, who will have a board term of 2016-2019.

If you have any questions about ICMA, please do not hesitate to contact me at [daryl.delabbio@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:daryl.delabbio@kentcountymi.gov). I count it a privilege to serve on the ICMA Executive Board representing the Midwest Region, especially Michigan!

<sup>1</sup> ICMA Executive Directors have included Clarence Ridley (1929-1956), Orin Nolting (1956-1967), Mark Keane (1967-1983), Bill Hansell (1983-2002), and Bob O'Neill (2002-2016).

# Positive Results for City of Phoenix's Customized Organizational Review Process

by Ed Zuercher, City Manager and Milton Dohoney, Assistant City Manager, City of Phoenix, AZ

*Reprinted from Innovation Edge, Alliance for Innovation, January 2016*

What do an onion, fire pumpers and public records have in common for the city of Phoenix? These are just a few of the topics that have been deeply discussed and examined for the past year as part of Phoenix's "CORE" – Comprehensive Organizational Review Evaluation.

CORE is a citywide program involving staff at all levels who are charged with reviewing key areas such as how we are doing business, what can be improved and what's hindering us from success.

Organizational reviews are not new. Numerous governments and corporate entities use organizational reviews to examine structure and processes in terms of efficiency.

In Phoenix, we needed to customize and update our review process based on the current organization. For example, when we started CORE the city was still coming to terms with being 3,000 less people from the beginning of the recession. We had to be honest and make sure that a review of our processes was based on the reality of a smaller workforce expected to provide the same level of service.

The assistant city manager was tasked with implementing the review. A list of 90-plus questions was given to departments citywide. They were required to answer the questions and peel back the layers of the onion (a phrase we used often during this time) to take a conscious look at how we work. We began 'silo busting' conversations forcing departments to attack projects from an interdepartmental team perspective instead of doing their own thing.

As we peeled our onion to the CORE we listened to departments who told us certain work processes were too laborious, irrelevant and out-of-date. One example was our hiring process. Staff spoke up saying the processes in place for years no longer matched the modern job market. Staff said the process had too many layers and put us at a disadvantage. We removed layers to implement a hiring strategy resulting in the city being able to bring top talent to the organization in a timely manner.



Forcing departments to work together collaboratively allowed the city's fire department and public works department to execute a lease purchase agreement for 14 fire pumpers leveraging \$1.2 million. For this project, we combined resources by having staff in these two large departments work side-by-side to creatively review organizational practices and partner together to create an efficiency and save the city money.



## *Positive Results for Phoenix Continued*

In many cases our practices were so entrenched we weren't always sure why we were doing it that way, we just were. An analysis of the city's public records process showed weaknesses and the need for centralizing the process. CORE team members reviewed best practices from other organizations and implemented a plan to customize a new process to fit our current needs. One critical point when looking at other organizations is acknowledging the benefit to customize programs for our city as what works elsewhere might not be a perfect fit here.

We learned lessons such as the need to increase communication on what we were doing and why. We had to educate staff on the value of the process as some were skeptical or resistant to the changes. Another lesson, be prepared to not just review processes and programs, but city policies and administrative regulations as you make changes.

Our work is not done. Many items have been checked off the CORE list and many more have been added. CORE team members meet regularly in addition to carrying out their daily duties in departments throughout the city. Updates are provided to the Mayor, Council and city staff and posted on the CORE website on the city's intranet.

While CORE is customized for the city of Phoenix, other organizations could benefit from building their own internal review system that fits their needs. CORE is still relatively new to Phoenix, but the results are so far showing that being honest with a self-reflection and the ability to embrace change can open the door to new opportunities, create efficiencies and positive growth for the future.



### **About**

*MLGMA and MML and the Alliance for Innovation are partnered in efforts to provide members of both organizations exposure to national innovations along with sharing the innovative initiatives and projects of Michigan local governments.*

*The Alliance is a network of local governments driving innovation throughout their organizations. You can learn more about the Alliance for Innovation and or the joint Alliance and ICMA Knowledge Network at [www.transformgov.org](http://www.transformgov.org) or contact our Regional Director, Greg Stopka at [gstopka@transformgov.org](mailto:gstopka@transformgov.org).*

## MLGMA Website Keeps You Informed

MLGMA.org is filled with current news stories, shared content, blogs, and links to MLGMA programs and educational opportunities that will keep you in the loop year-round. It also contains the latest thoughts from the MLGMA president, as well as profiles of municipal managers and communities. You can also find current and past issues of this newsletter on the website.

If you have any ideas for some new content that you think would be valuable to MLGMA members, please let us know. In the meantime, **click through the following links** to read full versions of content posted on the website, or visit it for something new.

## MLGMA Blog

### Bringing Coaching and Mentoring to the Forefront

With the New Year here, it's time we get a new blog post up. Originally, I was planning to write about New Year's resolutions, but our fearless ICMA leader Bob O'Neil stole my idea. Well, come to find out, January is National Mentoring Month—a much more fitting topic as we get closer to the annual MLGMA Winter Institute.

I have personally appreciated the coaching and mentoring that I have had access to over the years. As I have invested my time with the Professional Development Committee, we have worked to bring coaching and mentoring back to the forefront of MLGMA. Our team has been working hard during 2015 to develop a program that will provide value not just to our members, but future members as well, and those who have yet to find their way to our noble profession.

Recently, my personal experiences provide insight into the value of strong coaches and mentors. Six months ago, I lost “next door” access to who I now know as one of my most important professional mentors. I can look back and recognize mentoring moments that did not seem to be so at the time.



Having recently been a first-time candidate for a City Manager position, his feedback and support have been invaluable.

However, in our profession, you're not going to make it far with just one person to lean on. It takes a village and you can bet that I've tapped into that village.

In February, Port Huron will serve as the backdrop to the rebirth of MLGMA's Coaching and Mentoring efforts as we learn from Surry Scheerer, executive coach and leadership trainer. She will be sharing with us the power of using coaching skills to build leadership capacity and to foster professional relationships and organizations. Following her keynote address, we will have the opportunity to “jump in” and practice some of these skills—leaving with a framework to build on and apply.

I invite you in this month (National Mentoring Month) leading up to our Winter Institute, to reflect on your most important coaches and mentors. Do you have more to offer our profession? Have you made time to meet with a student? Can you give back by being part of the village that supports your peers? Bring these reflections to the conference and we will do our part to help you leave with the tools you need to be a strong coach and mentor.

As for New Year's resolutions – I resolve to invest more time in my mentors and coaches (particularly on the water with a fly rod in my hand).

I hope to see you in February.

*Contributed by Nate Geinzer,  
Asst. to City Manager, Farmington Hills*

## 2016 League Capital Conference



Michigan communities face a myriad of challenges every year, and keeping informed on legislative issues is at the top of that list. How will your municipality's finances be affected by changes in pension funding and revenue sharing? Do you need to begin thinking about how car sharing services, taxi alternatives, self-driving vehicles, and other new mobility options will impact your community? Capital Conference is the source for answers on all the state and federal issues that impact local communities. It's also the best place to network and make your voice heard on matters of public policy. Join us!

## MLGMA Professional Development Scholarships

The [MLGMA Scholarship Program](#) assists members with accessing educational and professional development opportunities. Eligible applicants can apply for assistance covering costs, like tuition, travel and boarding, of a wide variety of conferences, institutes and training events. Round one applications are due March 1.

Complete program details and application requirements are available under the Professional Development tab on the [MLGMA website](#) or contact Nate Geinzer at [ngeinzer@fhgov.org](mailto:ngeinzer@fhgov.org).

## FOIA Resources

Contributed by  
**The Michigan Municipal League**

The Michigan Municipal League has created a [FOIA Resource Packet](#) on 2014 changes to Michigan's Freedom of Information Act. The packet contains our One Pager *Plus* Fact Sheet, an article from *The Review* magazine, Summary of the Act, sample procedures/guidelines, two sample fee itemization forms, and the Act with the new amendments.

We are also offering a webinar entitled "[Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\) Changes](#)." This On Demand Webinar is available anytime for \$20. This is a must-attend webinar for all local government attorneys, clerks, and other officials.

## 2016 ICMA Emerging Professionals Leadership Institute

The [2016 ICMA Emerging Professionals Leadership Institute for the Midwest Region](#) will take place in Evanston, IL, March 2-3. Managers are encouraged to invite early career professionals and emerging leaders to attend this two-day event. Content includes identification of effective management and supervision styles, a session on life balance in a 24/7 work world, and much more.

## 2016 ICMA Midwest Regional Summit

The [2016 ICMA Midwest Regional Summit](#) will be held in Evanston, IL, March 3-4. This Summit is a networking and professional development opportunity for Midwest members and state officers.

The featured workshop—“The Art and Science of Persuasion”—will focus on how the top six traits of effective sales people can improve your ability to work with elected officials, citizens, and staff.



The League is presenting a workshop on [How to Effectively Use Social Media](#). The program will explore different social media platforms, their benefits and pitfalls, social media etiquette, and more. It will also touch on Public Act 269, the new campaign finance law that has implications for public entities in regard to distributing information about a ballot proposal 60 days before an election as this pertains to social media. This session will be held in the League's Ann Arbor office, Feb. 17.

## New ICMA Coaching Program

In January, ICMA launched the [ICMA Coaching Program](#), a complimentary service to local government teams and staff. The ICMA Coaching Program provides resources on best practices and career development to local government professionals nationwide and to a growing global community in service. The program uses the knowledge and expertise of experienced managers and leaders to inspire, support, and guide emerging and mid-career professionals.

## Join ICMA's Legacy Leaders Program

ICMA invites credentialed managers to become a “[Legacy Leader](#)” and help enrich the profession by coaching the next generation, supporting their professional development, and encouraging them to belong to ICMA. Credentialed managers who fulfill the commitments each year will belong to the Legacy Leaders in honor of the legacy they bring to the profession every time they advise a young professional about the rewards of life in the local government trenches.

## ICMA's Voluntary Credentialing Program

ICMA's [Voluntary Credentialing Program](#) recognizes professional local government managers and promotes lifelong learning. The next application deadline is April 1.

## MEDA's Upcoming Events

The Michigan Economic Developers Association hosts events of interest to local government professionals. Upcoming events: [Capitol Day](#) in Lansing, Feb. 23, [MEDA Emerging Leaders Spring Program](#) at the League's Lansing office, March 31, and [Spring Economic Toolbox](#) in Lansing, June 9.



**Aaron Desentz** made a career change from Shelby village administrator to city manager of Leslie. Congratulations on your new position, Aaron!

**Corey Schmidt**, who served as assistant city manager and finance director for Loveland, Ohio for the past 3 years, is the new Marlette city manager. Welcome to Michigan, Corey!

**Dan Swallow**, formerly the director of economic and community development for the city of Monroe, is the new Tecumseh city manager. Good luck, Dan!

**Thad Taylor** is now the city manager of Manistee after serving as city manager of Cedar Springs since 2012. Cheers, Thad!

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## *Not yet a member?*

Register to enjoy the benefits of membership in Michigan's premier association of local management professionals.

[www.mlgma.org/membership.html](http://www.mlgma.org/membership.html)

or email [membership@mlgma.org](mailto:membership@mlgma.org)

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**Michigan Local Government Management Association**

A State Affiliate of **ICMA**

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 nonprofit 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 and is in partnership with Alliance for Innovation.