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LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

1675 Green Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Phone 734/662-3246 • Fax 734/662-8083

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Note from the President

Michael F. Young, City Manager, Rockford

It was my distinct pleasure to award retired City Manager Alex Allie the John M. Patriarche Distinguished Service Award at the recent Michigan Municipal League Convention. Alex spent more than 40 years in local government management, including over two decades as city manager of Huntington Woods, retiring in 2014. He also served as city manager of Owosso, assistant city manager of Novi, and as the administrative assistant to the city manager in Berkley.

During his career, in addition to his many professional responsibilities, Alex served on the Michigan Municipal League Board of Trustees, the League's Finance and Taxation Committee, and the MLGMA Board of Directors and as a member of its many committees. In 2012, Alex was recognized for his exemplary service to local government with an International City/County Management Association 40-year Local Government Service Award. In 2013, he received a MLGMA Excellence in Local Government Award.



Alex is an icon and someone we look up to in the municipal manager profession. Equally as impressive is what he has been able to accomplish in the communities with which he has been involved. Longevity and consistency is critical to the health of a community and Alex is a great example of that.

I had a chance to talk with Alex before the award ceremony and he was truly humbled by this great honor. Alex said this meant

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Note from the President Continued

so much as he gave thanks to the many individuals who guided him over the years, including the award's namesake, John M. Patriarche. Congratulations to Alex and all of the past recipients of the John M. Patriarche Service Award.



In other news, our branding efforts moved forward at MLGMA's October board meeting. Phire Group presented the results of the membership survey, as well as three options for shifting MLGMA's brand into one more reflective of the profession. The Board will meet in November to refine the brand direction, with an anticipated unveiling at our Winter Institute. This is a very exciting project that has a lot of traction at the board level and we are looking forward to getting your feedback.

Sincerely,
Michael F. Young, City Manager, Rockford



Michael Young and Curtis Holt, Wyoming city manager, enjoying the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle

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The Next Big Thing in Local Government

Many challenges lie ahead. Cities and counties will need to collaborate and innovate as never before.

By **Robert J. O'Neill, Jr.**, Executive Director
International City/County Management Assoc.

Reprinted from Governing.com, Sept. 25, 2015

Where is local government going? In an era of tumultuous change and declining trust in government, cities and counties face major attitudinal and demographic forces, including competition for resources devoted to the “graying” and the “browning” of America and population and generational changes in government workforces. And there’s another, perhaps overarching, challenge: the difficulty taxpayers have in thinking about government as experimental when experimental thinking will be exactly what will be needed in the coming decades.

Certainly challenges like those—not to mention those as yet unforeseen—are going to do much to shape the future direction of local government. They were among the forces identified by a panel of experts in a recent live-streamed discussion I moderated. Co-sponsored by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Alliance for Innovation (AFI), the webcast was part of a larger “Next Big Thing” project sponsored by AFI.



So what will be the next big thing? There were plenty of ideas among the panelists: Arlington County, Va., Assistant County Manager Shannon Flanagan-Watson; John Nalbandian, a professor emeritus at the University of Kansas; Austin, Texas, City Manager Marc Ott; and Rebecca Ryan, a futurist and founder of Next Generation Consulting. Here are some of their thoughts:

Collaboration: We will see a merging of the public, nonprofit and private sectors, blending public purpose with private capital to address a number of public-service-provision challenges. We also will use innovative financing and public-private partnerships to help public agencies amortize the cost of infrastructure operations and management. When Denver looked for ways to fund the last bit of its high-speed rail system, for example, the city involved investors from Spain in a nuanced and complex financing deal. Agreements such as these will require local governments to develop a new set of navigational management skills.

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Next Big Thing in Local Government Continued

Technology and citizens: Much will turn on whether and how cities and counties and the people they serve use sensors, data, networking and other technological infrastructure to become “smart” jurisdictions, and how they leverage that technology to better engage their residents. In Sweden and some parts of the United States, for example, local governments have successfully combined technology and resident engagement to forge a framework for change driven far more than ever before by citizen input.

None of these efforts can succeed without the appropriate balance of high tech and high touch. Arlington County, for example, tries to equalize the two by leveraging crowdsourcing and other tools to engage residents and the business community in an ongoing conversation with their local government. And while local governments are improving opportunities to inform people and solicit opinions, there are few forums in which a resident, business leader or elected official praises someone else’s good idea. We do a great job of soliciting various viewpoints, but we need to focus on elevating the dialogue.

Closing the gaps: The gap between the haves and the have-nots—and whether that gap becomes a structural impediment to participation in the 21st-century economy for large segments of the population—will continue to be a major driver of local government. An unforeseen consequence of community growth and development is the broadening of the divide to the point at which “affordability” has become a major campaign issue for elected officials in cities such as Austin.

A different but equally important gap is the space between what is politically acceptable and administratively sustainable—that space dividing what local governments wish to accomplish from what will work and what is politically possible. As that gap continues to grow, it becomes more difficult to achieve results that matter.

Resiliency: This concept, a fairly new public-sector mindset that is essential to our continued success and future partnerships, is seldom taught in public-administration classes. Resiliency is not only about the ability to bounce back from disasters, whether natural or human-caused, but to be proactive about analyzing risk before bad things happen so that we can bounce back better than before. While social cohesion is a critical factor for resilient communities, identity politics and the wavering of trust in the public sector are major impediments to achieving this important goal.

All of these have one thing in common: the continuing need for government to be innovative. Today’s rigid structures and jurisdictional branding—which reward distinction and, consequently, competition rather than collaboration—make it difficult to leap beyond our current boundaries to achieve successful regional and multi-sector innovation. Overcoming that difficulty may be the toughest challenge of all.

“

The ingredients of innovation are
bold-thinking and cross-pollination.

”

– Bernard Munos, *FasterCures* Senior Fellow



RECAP: 2015 ICMA Annual Conference

By **Patricia Rayl**
City Manager, Auburn

I'm very grateful to MLGMA's Scholarship Committee for allowing me the opportunity to attend the 101st Annual ICMA Conference in Seattle. It was a worthwhile and productive experience. Not only did I gain a valuable network of other new city managers from across the country, I also made great connections with local managers in Michigan at the special MLGMA reception.



And I learned a ton! The sessions were plentiful and covered almost every conceivable topic important to city managers.

I especially liked the Leadership Institute on Sunday morning entitled "Bridging the Gap between Politics and Administration." That was a valuable way to launch the conference. Barry Quirk from Lewisham, London was a big hit. He introduced

many of us to a new word: captious. It means "apt to notice and make much of trivial faults or defects; faultfinding; difficult to please." He reminds his council of 34 (!) board members to not be captious when doing their planning and budgeting.

The keynote speakers were funny and kept everyone awake at 8:30 am every day. They provided useful tips that could be carried over into our work day and personal lives. The sessions I attended were helpful. I was particularly grateful for the sessions that focused on topics for small communities.

The vendors filled the exhibit hall, and represented a variety of services. There was a vendor showing off police trucks, several showing off mobile apps, one giving away professional headshots if you watched a video about their services, and a handful offering paperless council packet services.

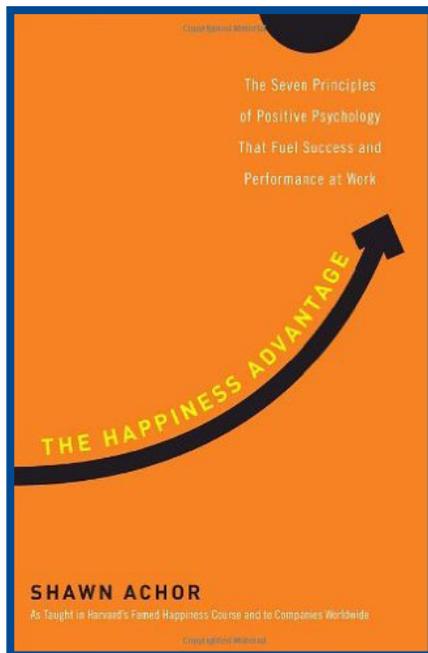
I attended only one special event—the Women in Professional Local Government Management luncheon. There were many activities to choose from, and you could be as busy as you wanted. A fellow manager at the luncheon had just come from an ICMA soccer game, apparently an annual tradition.

The most important lesson is that you need to book your hotel room as soon as registration opens. I'm looking forward to next year's ICMA Annual Conference in Kansas City on September 25-28, 2016.

An ICMA Conference Experience

By **Rebecca Fleury**
City Manager, Battle Creek

I had the pleasure of attending the ICMA 2015 Annual Conference along with several of my colleagues. To say it was inspirational would be an understatement. It certainly recharged my local government management battery and sent me home with several things to think about and possibly implement. The most notable was listening to Shawn Achor, one of the world's leading experts on the science of positive psychology and the connection between happiness and success.



Lastly, I was honored to speak at the Donor Recognition and Appreciation Breakfast. This was an opportunity to share my story as a contributor to the Life Well Run campaign and highlight how our state association utilizes the Life Well Run materials to advance the profession. I shared that several members of MLGMA have taken the Life Well Run show on the road, speaking to undergraduate and graduate students on the viability of our profession and the many rewards it provides those of us actively working in our communities. To close, I reminded those in attendance of a startling revelation from one of our keynote sessions. The speaker asked all of those in attendance to stand if they were over the age of 45. Ninety percent of the room stood up! If this isn't a wake-up call to all of us that we need to spread the word on the rewards of this career, I don't know what is. The Life Well Run campaign is a wonderful tool to make this happen. Consider being a donor, if you haven't already.

I also enjoyed the many sessions on advancing women in the profession. At present, out of all the professional local government manager positions in the United States, only 13 percent are held by women. This is an alarming statistic for the year 2015, and ICMA has utilized a Women's Task Force to examine the issue and make recommendations to the Board. The ICMA Board approved an implementation plan that includes 14 items from the task force to try and improve this number.



ICMA Coaching Program Set to Launch in 2016!

By **Christian Wuerth**
Village Manager, Milford



For several years, MLGMA has been one of the State Association Partners for the [Cal-ICMA coaching program](#). This program is an excellent resource, allowing MLGMA members access to Cal-ICMA Coaching Webinars (archives may be found [here](#)) and other programs. The Professional Development Committee continues to receive positive feedback on the webinars from participants.

It was announced at the ICMA Conference that the coaching program will transition to an ICMA program in Jan. 2016, thanks to continued support and positive feedback from MLGMA and other partners. The growth is being funded by a three-year commitment from ICMA-RC (\$100,000 annually), ICMA (\$20,000 annually), and Cal-ICMA (\$20,000).

What does this mean for MLGMA? The annual cost of being a program partner is going down from \$5,000 to \$1,000. Also, it opens up a soon-to-launch national coach-match program to local government employees in member states. More details are on the [ICMA site](#), including a presentation from the ICMA Conference, which will be updated throughout the launch. The MLGMA Professional Development Committee will also send out details via the listserv.

MLGMA Website Brings You the Latest Association News

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

Boyne Workshop Moves MLGMA in the Right Direction

It's nap time in the Geinzer household and I have the opportunity to reflect back on a great week in Boyne. Professional and personal development is critical in most lines of work, but often times I think even more so for those of us delivering great services to our constituents and building strong communities. In my book, Boyne was a home run! It showed me that our organization responds to its members.



A couple years ago, you told the Professional Development Committee that you wanted a stronger Summer Workshop without sacrificing the opportunities for personal growth. To the Summer Workshop Committee I say, "This was a huge step in the right direction." ...

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

MLGMA Blog

Recruiting for the Future: Finding (and Keeping) Talent



As the CEO and leader of your organization, one of your largest responsibilities is building and developing your staff. The needs and desires of the workforce are constantly changing, and local governments across the state have been struggling to fill positions at every level.

The Recruiting for the Future session at the 2015 MLGMA Summer Workshop was an opportunity to share ideas from a manager, state administrator, private sector professional, university, and student perspective on what managers can do differently to recruit talent. The panel was comprised of April Lynch, Ferndale city manager; Heather Seyfarth, senior advisor OHM; Brittney Hoszkiw, Michigan Main Street Center organization specialist; Dr. Jennifer James-Mesloh, MPA program director, Northern Michigan University; and MPA student representatives: Chloe MacBeth, Cindy Paparelli, and Ryan Poupore ...

Contributed by:

Jessica Reed, Program Coordinator, Michigan Municipal League

Christian Wuerth, Village Manager, Milford

What I Learned at Harvard

By **James Wickman**
Township Manager, Hartland



When the manager goes to a three-day conference, the office buzzes with sighs and eye-rolling over the anticipation of newfangled fiats to follow. Now, imagine that the manager leaves for three weeks, to go to Harvard! Staff's collective imagination and fretting could very well cause spontaneous combustion.

I was recently blessed with the opportunity to attend the Senior Executives in State & Local Government Program at Harvard University. Studying at the prestigious John F. Kennedy School of Government proved to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. For this, I owe many thanks to the Taubman Company Fellowship for Executive Excellence through the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

I have been asked many times what I learned and have found my words lacking. It is difficult to distill three weeks of intense education into a coherent response. In the end, there are no wholesale changes. Just simple, incremental improvements to what we already do well.

Don't get me wrong—I had plenty of "Aha!" moments. I was duly reminded of common sense and gained new tools. I also learned logical frameworks for those principles that you sort of already know, and just did not realize there was an entire school of thought from which to further benefit. String all of that together for three full weeks, within a well-designed "ecosystem" of people and learning, and I find myself thoroughly reinvigorated for professional focus.

My list of major takeaways are simultaneously simple and profound to me:

1. **Be a student of our founding fathers.** There is much to learn about the thoughts behind their words. It applies to all levels of government, big and small.
2. **Relationships matter.** Invest yourself in others—sincerely.
3. **There are no leaders, just exercises in leadership.** It's about choosing effective behaviors.
4. **Listen.** Covey nailed it: "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." The best decisions and solutions are born from this.
5. **Elicit multiple perspectives.** Don't get stuck on one idea.
6. **Be positive.** Focus encouraging energy in your interactions and messaging to both staff and residents. There is a world of difference in the response.
7. **Focus.** Try to have no more than two major priorities in front of you at any one time.
8. **Be prepared for windows of opportunity.** Many brilliant ideas are wasted or lost for lack of preparation and discernment for the right time to take action.
9. **Are you offering value to the public in return for their tax and trust?** Ask this for all you do.

I can't possibly do justice to these topics in such a summary. In fact, each word evokes deep and rich reflections for me that the reader could not possibly know or understand. In that regard, this list is of more value to me than it is to others. I look forward to fruitful conversations with you in the future, on any or all of these thoughts. It would truly be an honor.

Local Politics and the Malaise of the Millennials

The statistics on their participation in community life and elections are dismal. There's no one-size-fits-all fix.

By **Kyle Bozentko**, Executive Director
Jefferson Center

Reprinted from Governing.com, Oct. 12, 2015

Researchers at Oregon's Portland State University released a report this summer outlining patterns among voters in local elections utilizing voting data from four cities: Charlotte, Detroit, Portland and Saint Paul. Unsurprisingly, they found that most people are not voting in local elections. Only about 30 percent of registered voters cast their ballots for mayor in the course of the study.

The most striking conclusions from the report, however, highlight the huge gap in voter-participation rates between younger and older voters. The odds of a voter aged 65 or older casting a ballot in a mayoral election compared to a voter aged 18-34 were as high as 19 to 1 in the primary and 13.8 to 1 in the general election. Even more distressing is that these voting-odds ratios were commonly as high as 20 to 50 to 1 in some of the four cities' census tracts.

What accounts for these dismal statistics, and what can be done to address it?

A number of articles in *Governing* and elsewhere have explored the shifting expectations about civic participation and civic engagement among millennials, including the ways that millennials' attitudes will bear on public leadership and cities' efforts to attract millennials as residents. But these pieces don't explore the relationship between dismal youth turnout in local elections and efforts to engage younger residents in the civic, political and economic life of their communities.

Understanding the complexities shaping voting and civic participation patterns among young residents is daunting. Identifying the problem presents the first challenge: Are people not getting involved because they don't recognize an entry point? Do



People who are 65 years or older are 19 times more likely to vote in local elections than 18 to 34 year olds. (AP/Cathleen Allison)

they distrust local government and resist involvement? Or do they feel disconnected from the community, as a college student or transplant might, and choose to forego the investment that civic participation often entails.

Furthermore, while the term "millennial" is applied as a sweeping generalization, the fact is that millennials are the most diverse generational cohort in the United States. Developing a realistic or coherent millennial archetype defies convention, even within a single city or region. Trying to find the single perfect remedy for millennials' political malaise is similarly unrealistic.

There are some promising efforts underway to try to tease out answers to some of these questions. At the Jefferson Center, our "Up for Debate Akron" initiative (supported by the Knight News Challenge on Elections) seeks to determine what young residents of that Ohio city know about local government, what they want to hear from candidates for local office, where they want to find information, and how to present that information so that young residents can see their ideas and priorities reflected in mayoral candidates' campaign messages and policy proposals. Another effort, "Text, Talk, Vote" from the National Institute for Civic Discourse, aims to engage young voters by providing tools to discuss local politics and voting through a localized mobile platform. Elsewhere, the Young Voters Initiative aims to foster stronger relationships between young voters and elected officials.

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Local Politics and Millennials Continued

These efforts—each of which utilizes a unique platform, technology or process—constitute a thin slice of the programming dedicated to developing meaningful avenues for engaging young residents in civic and political life. All of them have the same goal, however: to better understand how governments can share information so that young residents see themselves as a part of their communities and want to get involved.

But that's just one approach, and that is precisely the point: A one-size-fits-all approach to building millennial engagement simply won't work. Millennials are too diverse. Rather than searching for the silver-bullet app or perfect platform that will attract millennials to civic life en masse, the key to developing millennial engagement stems from the axiom that all politics is local. Getting millennials involved—and keeping them involved—requires new engagement strategies that are tailored both to specific local concerns and to the millennial population in all of its diversity.

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.

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 three applications are due Oct. 30.

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.

NextGen Fall Training

The MLGMA NextGen Committee will be hosting its annual Fall Training on November 6, 2015 at MML offices in Lansing. Topics covered at the training will include an overview of the building department, the fire code and zoning administration. If you have not already registered and are interested in attending, please email Derrick Kozicki at dkozicki@grossepointefarms.org. The event begins at 10 a.m. and breakfast will be served.

If you are interested in learning more about the activities of the NextGen Committee, please visit mlgma.org/nextgen. The webpage features the quarterly meeting packets, mission statement and list of committee members.

2016 LEAGUE CAPITAL CONFERENCE

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. The 2016 Capital Conference will be held in Lansing, March 22-23.

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 members and state officers in the Midwest. 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.



Join Michigan Recreation and Park Association and Identity for a half-day social media training event designed specifically with local government and parks and recreation professionals in mind. The event will take place at Waterford Oaks County Park Activity Center, 8 am—12 pm, Nov. 5.

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. See [ICMA Legacy Leaders](#) page for more details.

ICMA’s Voluntary Credentialing Program

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

State of Lake Michigan/Great Lakes Beach Joint Conference

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality invites you to the [2015 Joint Conference](#) at Grand Traverse Resort near Traverse City, Oct. 28-30, to hear from top experts in their fields about the current status and science behind Lake Michigan and beach restoration and management.

MEDA’s Upcoming Events

The Michigan Economic Developers Association hosts events of interest to local government professionals. Their next major event is the [Fall Economic Toolbox](#) in Lansing Nov. 19.

Jane Bais-Disessa made a career change from Berkley city manager to deputy mayor of Pontiac. Congratulations on your new position, Jane!

Dana Foster is hanging up his hat after 24 years as Brighton city manager. He's leaving for a job in private business. Congratulations, Dana!

Steve Powers, who has been Ann Arbor's city administrator since 2011, will be leaving for the city manager position in Salem, OR. Cheers, Steve!

Patricia Rayl has transferred her energies from Blissfield DDA director to city administrator of Auburn. Good luck in your new role, Patricia!

Brian Chapman is the city manager of Vassar, after serving as organization development specialist in Oshkosh, WI. Congratulations, Brian!

Blaine Wing, a Sterling Heights native, has moved from Des Plaines, IL to become Rochester's city manager. Welcome home, Blaine!

Ronald Leslie retired in July after 23 years as city manager of East Tawas. City Clerk/Treasurer **Blinda Baker** was chosen to replace him. Congratulations, Ronald and Blinda!

Mike Selden is leaving his position as Wayland city manager for a new role at the Michigan Townships Association. Good luck, Mike!

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

or email membership@mlgma.org



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.