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Semi-Retired

Jacque Wedding-Scott, CCCMA President

Hi everyone,

So, you might remember that I've entered what I'm currently calling the "semi-retired" phase of my life(?). What that really means is anybody's guess, but for today it means that I am diligently writing this newsletter from the mineral pools at the Arenal Volcano in Costa Rica. I hear it's going to snow in Denver, so I just wanted to rub it in for those of you worried about snow plows and the public safety. And, if this volcano erupts, I'm really not going to worry about snow in Denver ever again. Sorry, but it's true.

I am still however, drawn to the exciting world of infrastructure. It amazes me that we can get wi-fi in the resorts, but most folks don't have computers or Internet access. Satellite seems to be the way, and that's largely for sports viewing - everything is closed captioned with a split second delay (like 3G technology... Ha Ha). They get enormous rains here (just ended rainy season), so the drainage is conveyed through deep gutter channels along the streets, and because of the frequent tremors and earthquakes, their streets and sidewalks are heaved and severely cracked - providing full time, year long work for their maintenance crews. Not much money flowing to the projects though. But, it is clean - meticulously clean - everywhere.

There is a strange, but great peace here. They are known as the "happiest country anywhere", and trust me they are...to a person. They respect their economies - tourism, electronics, coffee, agriculture, and - believe it or not, decorative grasses and plants (US & Poland are the two largest importers). Their military went away in 1948, when their new national government took over. They have a "woman president", and all is well in the "land of oz".



With all of that as background (I'm not gloating...really), I am still so very glad to be a US citizen, and to call Denver home. There truly is "no place like home"!! I'm wishing each of you and your families a fabulous holiday season, Merry Christmas, and a really cool 2012!

I hope to see you at the Winter Conference, February 9-11 in Glenwood Springs. The Planning & Sponsorship Committees have been working really hard to bring us a great line up, and make this one of the best yet. So, I hope you can make it. It won't be the same without you. Register is online at www.coloradoccm.org

Peace out!!

Jacque

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Building Community

Social, Economic, and Organizational

2012 CCCMA

Winter Conference

February 9-11, 2012

Hotel Colorado, Glenwood Springs



KEYNOTE:
VALUE OF MANAGEMENT

Dave Childs
Assistant County Manager
Washoe County, Nevada

ICMA
Past President

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

Colorado Women Leading Government - Setting the Stage for 2012

Since its inception in February, the Colorado Women Leading Government group is off to a strong start holding two great events and a strong program developed for 2012. CWLG will be holding four events next year that will provide excellent professional development and networking opportunities for members.

CCCMA Annual Conference (February) – The CCCMA Conference will feature a panel session on regional diversity and the challenges and opportunities faced by women in all areas of the state. Come prepared to receive great insight and words of wisdom from a panel of great Colorado female managers (in development).

Spring Webinar Discussion Luncheon (April/May) – CCCMA will be participating in several ICMA webinars in 2012. A discussion event will be scheduled to discuss a specific webinar and how the topic(s) presented impact women in the profession.

CWLG Summer Luncheon (June/July) – Building on the success of our kick-off summer luncheon this past May, CWLG will be hosting another luncheon in early summer. The topic for the summer luncheon this year will be relationship challenges with city council.

Fall Breakfast (October/November) - To close our 2012 CWLG program, we will be planning a breakfast event. Topic will be announced later next year.

We will be enhancing the CWLG webpage on the CCCMA website to feature resources, up-to-date information on upcoming events, and other events that would be of interest to CWLG members. The CCCMA Newsletter will also regularly feature a CWLG article.

CWLG will be forming a steering committee to guide the development and growth of the group. General guidelines will be presented at the CCCMA Annual Conference in Glenwood Springs in February.

If you should have any questions about CWLG, please contact Laura Kane at Laura.Kane@denvergov.org.

MORE ASSOCIATION NEWS
is always available at www.coloradoccma.org

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CML Update

At the ICMA annual meeting I participated as Vice Chair of the Government Affairs and Policy Committee. Fort Collins City Manager Darin Atteberry also serves on the committee. We discussed a white paper by ICMA on the “new normal” of local government management challenges written by a long-time pal of mine, Dr. Carl Stenberg, who directs the MPA program at the University of North Carolina. Carl is one of the best minds in the country around intergovernmental relations and city management. We interacted a lot when he was a senior staffer at the old US ACIR.

I had the honor of meeting with President Obama in October when I was on a lobbying trip back in DC. I was part of a small group who talked about intergovernmental relations. I specifically talked about the importance of tax exempt financing as the best way to jump start infrastructure in our country. It was high honor indeed to meet him and converse for a brief period of time.

Speaking of federal issues, I encourage every municipal and county manager reading this to make it a point to attend the NACO and NLC March meetings in DC. These are high quality conferences, and you need to participate with your elected officials. Go to their websites for more information.

CML Training Opportunities -

For more information or to register for any of these, visit www.cml.org

Wed, Dec. 7th, Strategic Workforce Management Workshop, 9-12: This workshop, designed for HR professionals, managers, clerks, treasurers, will cover strategic planning, trends, creating work plans, dealing with retirements, long term vs. seasonal employees, filling needs with employees to deliver services, and best practices in human resources.

Wed, Dec. 14th, Webinar, City Council Technology, 12-1: This webinar targets information technology professionals, elected officials, managers, and clerks and will provide information to incorporate technology into your council or board meetings to save time, paper and money. Topics include electronic council packets (including how to handle executive sessions), use of IPADs, and training strategies.

Dates to remember in 2012: **Wed, Feb. 22, 2012: Annual Legislative Workshop, Denver** and **June 19-22, 2012, CML's Annual Conference, Breckenridge**

CML Engages Teachers

do not forget “Lessons on Local Government.” It provides teachers in your community with lesson plans on local government. Tell them to visit www.lessonsonlocalgovernment.com.

CML gearing up for 2012 legislative session

Visit www.cml.org to view the 2011-2012 CML Policy Statement, which guides the CML Policy Committee and Executive Board to develop recommendations and formal positions. Additionally, CML recently hosted a webinar on what members need to know about the legislative process, featuring the CML advocacy team. It is posted on our web site.



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Creativity and Cooking: A Recipe for Success

Prepared by Patrick Ibarra, The Mejorando Group

"I paint objects as I think them, not as I see them." Pablo Picasso

"I was 32 when I started cooking; up until then, I just ate." Julia Child

Nowadays, society benefits greatly from the expansion of the microwave oven and movement towards more and more fast food. Nutrition and quality have inadvertently given way to convenience. While this reliance on convenience is necessary in our fast-paced world, the trend has also impacted our desire for immediacy. Especially, where it concerns the solving, or at least effectively, addressing organizational and community challenges. Where cooking has become somewhat of a lost art, so has the emphasis on leveraging creativity as an essential ingredient to powerful and productive problem solving.

Creativity is often viewed as a luxury that we no longer have time to explore, because we want the issue resolved today, if not yesterday, and permanently, too, please! We want our solutions pre-packaged and ready to implement, as though adding water will do it.

With the new normal firmly in place and all its ancillary components – transparency and accountability the focus for local governments nationwide is on demonstrating increased value to its citizens. Using traditional tried-and-true solutions to impact today's biggest challenges, are not as easily accessible for today's government leaders. So, what are the options? Great question.

While growing up in Kansas City, Missouri my parents owned the Red Bull, a Mexican restaurant. As I grew, I observed both of my parents and their intense focus on preparing authentic dishes by blending different ingredients in new and different ways. Besides preparing delicious food, my favorite was and still is, tamales, they were never satisfied with the status quo. Using cooking as a backdrop, I have designed eight steps you can use to participate in status-quo disruptive activities, stretch your mind and cook-up your own creative juices:

1. Cultivate an Appetite – Adopt a mind-set of exploration and discovery. Open yourself to new possibilities by being curious, by playing around, by focusing on what you don't know and by asking questions. Above all, give yourself permission to be creative. Ask lots of questions and see yourself as a creative person. Explore the arts because they are especially wonderful in challenging our assumptions and pushing us out of our comfort zone.
2. Gather - Get the facts, figures and feelings which relate to your topic. Collect many ingredients from many sources – local and foreign, exotic and commonplace. When you shop in the idea supermarket, remember to check for freshness.

Add diversity to your store of ideas by looking outside your sphere of expertise. Go somewhere new and bring something different back to your mental kitchen. You can do this physically, by traveling to an unusual (for you) destination, such as a hardware store or a furniture manufacturer, or by taking a walk in the park. Alternatively, you might choose to make your expedition an intimate understanding of it, through books, articles and reports.

Look for ideas that are inside you, stored in your memory. Think of events and experiences from your past that might have bearing on the project you're working on right now; try to remember the details and apply them to your current situation. Can what you were doing five or ten years ago help you in your work today? Remember conversations with your dad, your sister and your seventh-grade teacher.

Look to nature for ideas. Our planet is endlessly fascinating, and chances are nature has already done something which related to your idea. Search among the animal, vegetable and mineral worlds for concepts that might work for you.

Record your ideas – be they notes, sketches or musical passages. Keep them in an organized fashion. Remember if you don't do anything with your ideas – if you don't shape them into reality – they will have done little to serve you.

3. Cut - Analyze ideas by dividing them into smaller parts. Determine the essence of problems or projects. Figure out qualities and quantities. Divide ideas into new categories. Chop them up so that you understand them in new ways.

Analysis is the act of clarifying information. Solving problems, defining objectives, determining causes, meaning and reasons all depend on crisp analysis. Cutting both simplifies information and adds to your knowledge of the subject.

Break your problem or ideas into its component parts. Study its attributes. If your subject is familiar, find ways of seeing it in a different light.

Examine your idea from several points of view. Ask yourself, how will your customer see it? What will a six-year-old notice? What can a scientist get out of it? New perspectives provide new information and ideas. Avoid hardening of the categories.

Arrange information visually. Use idea maps to keep track of facts, relationships and details – and to keep the information manageable.

4. Mix – Mixing bowls, whisks and blenders are tools that combine raw ingredients. The different tools we use to mix ideas expand our creative abilities by helping us formulate new perspectives. Join, relate and marry ideas. Look for connections, make comparisons, relate your idea to others, invent metaphors and develop analogies. Trust in your capacity to be inspired by creating the conditions in your mind for new connections to take place.

5. Cook - Let your ideas simmer and stew. The doors to deeper creative experiences are persistence, hard work and drive. Focus your concentration by developing an inner rhythm of expression and reflection, and by striving to reach the psychological state of “flow.” Know when to turn up the heat and when to let things cool down and marinate in their own juices.

6. Spice - Add accent and flair to your ideas. Collect interesting ideas, quotes, pictures, games, stories, puzzles and paradoxes. These make life interesting and shift your focus toward the little ingenuities of life. Ask “what if?” questions to help you look beyond conventional boundaries. Change contexts. Express your idea in a different mental language. Tell a story, draw a picture, make a model, formulate an equation or chart a map. Challenge your assumptions, break the rules and encourage that ever-present friend of creativity – luck.

7. Taste - Tasting and judging help you sharpen and define your work. Making creative decisions about what to include and what to leave out, which direction to go and how to develop something, is a never-ending process. These decisions are reached through the dynamic pull and push of creative thinking: we need to be loose so that we don't stop good ideas prematurely, and we need to be critical so we don't serve a meal that's off. Know that ideas should appeal to the eye as well as the palate. When things go wrong, as they sometimes will, figure out what you can learn from the experience.

8. Digest - Take time to assimilate ideas. Are your ideas providing a balanced mental diet, or are you consuming too many mental sweets? Remember that a well-nourished intellect enjoys sustenance from all the mental food groups.

So, don your Chef's hat, put on that apron, get out your spatula, gather up your spices and head to your kitchen because now that you have read the article, I bet you are ravenously hungry, right?

Creativity and cooking have so many similarities and now that you have digested them, go ahead and open up your own restaurant of creative ideas!

Patrick Ibarra is an “entrepreneur of ideas” and architect of innovation who takes the headwinds governments are facing about the current climate of unprecedented changes and translates them into a tailwind with practical, tactical and impactful solutions that can be used immediately. Mr. Ibarra can be reached at 925-518-0187 and/or patrick@gettingbetterallthetime.com and follow the Mejorando Group on Facebook and Twitter.

Career Compass #21 - My Micro-Managing Boss is Driving Me Crazy

In this issue of Career Compass, Dr. Benest offers some approaches to coping with a supervisor who is always looking over your shoulder.

Question:

“I am a park and recreation program coordination with a micro-managing supervisor. I joined my city government because it has a good reputation and offered good opportunities; however, I’m about to look for a new job in another agency. My supervisor is driving me crazy. She is constantly checking on me and how I’m progressing with my project assignments. I am a good performer and have gotten good reviews but her micro-managing style has become debilitating and is sapping my energy and creativity. I have begun to avoid her in between our scheduled once-every-two-week meetings because I’m afraid she will once again inquire about my progress. I’ve become more negative, less engaged and certainly dissatisfied. Help!”

Frank’s Response:

Shoot her! Or perhaps there are other strategies.

As you point out, people join an organization because of its general reputation and positive opportunities to do good work, make a difference, and advance. People leave an organization because of a poor relation with one’s supervisor. Since you are a good performer and are now thinking of leaving your agency, this is an important issue for you. For your own sake (and the sake of the agency), don’t passively drift—take action!

I suggest several approaches to improve your situation. **Blow off steam**

It is alright to complain a bit over beers with your spouse or partner, family members, or some non-government friends. Blowing off some steam is good for the soul as long as you then decide to proactively confront the situation.

Seek to understand

As Eric Fromm indicates, you first need to engage in “positive regard” and try to understand why your supervisor is a micro-manager. Is it because she is receiving unrelenting pressure from her boss; or her previous bosses were all micro-managers and she does not know a different approach; or perhaps she is insecure in her role despite your good performance. To the extent possible, you should try to minimize your supervisor’s anxiety and need for control. If you can discern what is behind the micro-managing behavior, you can then develop an appropriate set of strategies.

Critique Yourself

In addition to understanding your supervisor, you also need to engage in self-reflection and critique your own behavior. What part do you play in this bad situation? Ask yourself:

- Have I lived up to all expectations?
- Have I missed any deadlines?



"Just checking in! Did you remember to put a cover sheet on your latest TPS report?"

Have I always kept my supervisor and others up-to-date on projects?

If you have not always lived up to all commitments, you must figure out how you can now demonstrate higher performance.

Create work plans for key projects

Even if you have always met all expectations and timelines, it is a good idea to create a written work plan for each project assignment of interest to your boss with specific timelines and milestones.

Share work plan and gain agreement

At one of your bi-weekly meetings, you should share your project work plan or plans and ask for feedback on desired outcomes, milestones and timelines along the way. Then you need to specifically ask for approval of the work plan, secure any support that you may need, and commit to review your progress at upcoming bi-weekly meetings. In the case that your supervisor is getting pressure from above, you should encourage her to share the work plan with her manager.

Provide written updates to work plan

After every meeting with your boss, you can provide a quick-and-dirty email summary of your progress and any issues that you are dealing with. Again, if your supervisor is working for a micro-manager, you may suggest that your boss forward the email summary to her manager.

Have a courageous conversation and make a deal

Once you have fully demonstrated that you are committed to results and excellence, you need to have a courageous conversation with your supervisor. I suggest that you schedule the conversation at a different time and in a different environment than your bi-weekly meeting. For instance, you may invite your boss out for coffee to get feedback on how you are doing. In the conversation, you should **focus on yourself**—what you are willing to commit and what you need in order to perform. Do not focus on your boss' behavior. During the conversation, you suggest a deal. Given your high performance and your need to exercise some autonomy, you directly propose an agreement to provide results as specified in your work plan without any of your supervisor's informal check-ins. If something comes up between meetings and you must deviate from the work plan or milestones, you commit to advise your supervisor without being asked.

Get coaching

You should confidentially approach someone you trust in the organization who knows your supervisor and ask for guidance on how to proceed. An outside coach can also serve as a sounding board and advisor. In these conversations with coaches, you can test out your game plan and get feedback.

Rely on supportive colleagues

While your supervisor may be a pain, you should focus on other workplace relationships, especially your immediate team. Just about all important work requires the efforts of a team. If you contribute to a strong and high-performing work group, you will find meaning and support from like-minded peers. Members of a strong and supportive team or various teams in which you participate can demonstrate caring and compassion and minimize the negative impact of a micro-managing supervisor. You support them; they support you. As Rosabeth Moss Kanter says, "The best cure for horrible bosses is wonderful colleagues."

If all else fails. . .

So, there is a lot you can do. However, if nothing works, by all means seek another position inside or outside the organization. You have talent and deserve better.

Career Compass is a bi-monthly column from ICMA focused on career issues for local government professional staff. Dr. Frank Benest is ICMA's senior advisor for Next Generation Initiatives and resides in Palo Alto, California. If you have a career question you would like addressed in a future *Career Compass*, e-mail careers@icma.org or contact Frank directly at frank@frankbenest.com.



PAY IT FORWARD

Colorado's Commitment to Successful Succession

Are you mentoring someone from within your organization or simply know of someone who you think will make a great City or County Manager some day? Are you willing to invest in their future to help them achieve their goals and sustain the foundation for professional management in local government?

Why not make an **ICMA Life, Well Run** contribution in the name of someone you know who has a commitment to the profession and let them "pay it forward" for years to come?

This is how it works: Fill out the form below. Identify the individual that you would like to sponsor in the **CCCMA Pay it Forward Initiative**, give us their background and contact information, identify the amount of contribution you are willing to make to the Campaign, cut a check payable to ICMA Life, Well Run Campaign, note in the description line that it's for the CCCMA Pay it Forward Campaign, and send it to the address listed on the reverse side of the form. CCCMA will forward your contribution to the Campaign and send a CCCMA Pay it Forward acknowledgement to the sponsored individual of your contribution to their growth & development as a City or County Manager.

You also have the opportunity to make a personal contribution to the Life, Well Run campaign – *it's never too late to make a difference and support the profession!*

To learn more about the campaign: www.icma.org/lifewellrun

CCCMA'S "PAY IT FORWARD" INITIATIVE *Supporting ICMA's Life, Well Run Campaign*

Sponsoring Member Name: _____
 Organization: _____ Title: _____
 Email Address: _____ Contact Phone: _____

Name of Individual to be Sponsored: _____
 Organization: _____ Title: _____
 Email Address: _____ Contact Phone: _____
 Pay it Forward Sponsorship: \$ _____ Other Personal Contribution: \$ _____

*Make Checks Payable to ICMA Life, Well Run OR Pay online at ColoradoCCMA.org link
 Return this form & check to: CCCMA, PO Box 1436, Golden CO 80402*

Save the Date: 2012 ICMA Conference in Phoenix!

As 2011 comes to a close, ICMA is busy planning for the 2012 ICMA Conference to be held October 7-10, 2012 in Phoenix, Arizona. The 2012 ICMA Conference Planning Committee recently met for a long weekend in Phoenix to plan educational sessions, general sessions, and tracks. The Committee is comprised of dedicated and creative representatives from all over the nation. The following are some highlights from the ICMA Conference Planning Committee meeting and a sneak peek into what is in store for the 2012 Conference!

Educational sessions, general sessions, registration, and exhibits will be at the beautiful Phoenix Convention Center. Busing for tours and field demos will also originate at the convention center. The base educational session themes which were developed at the Conference Planning Committee are as follows:

- Polarization of Council & Community
- Creating New Models for Business (Shared Services/Regionalization)
- Employee Benefits
- Creating Community in Cyberspace
- Family Stresses of Local Government Management

ICMA will be working to further develop and refine these educational sessions.

2012 will feature three education/career tracks: senior credentialed managers, assistants, and small communities. As the majority of ICMA conference attendees are from small communities, there will be special attention paid this year to sessions geared toward small communities. The assistants track is expanding to integrate early professionals (e.g., management analysts, management interns, etc.) with a focus on growth and progression in the profession.

As a result of the development of women leading government groups in states such as Illinois, California, and Colorado, ICMA will be offering at least one new session dedicated to advancing women in the profession (in addition to the annual professional women's luncheon).

The Phoenix Convention Center is conveniently very close to all conference hotels which include the Hyatt Regency Phoenix, Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel, the Westin Phoenix Downtown Hotel, and the Wyndham Phoenix (in the process of transitioning to a Renaissance). ICMA is currently in negotiations with hotels regarding room blocks and rates. Housing is anticipated to open in early June.

The social program developed by the Conference Host Committee will offer attendees and guests a sense of Arizona's culture and history. Social program events include a reception at the gorgeous Heard Museum which showcases 10 exhibit galleries and explores American Indian history through the voices of Native people and Native art, a visit to Corona Ranch for a Western Rodeo Show and a Mexican Charreada, as well as full and half day tours to the Grand Canyon and other distinct Arizona destinations. Proposed athletic events will include golf at the Scottsdale TPC, tennis, hiking, yoga, and the annual 5K run.

ICMA will be finalizing sessions and tracks over the next couple of months. Stay tuned for more information for what will be a fulfilling, vibrant, and educational 2012 ICMA Conference in sunny Phoenix!

COLORADO PUBLIC EMERGING MANAGERS: GETTING YOUR FIRST POSITION WITH A RURAL EMPHASIS, *Series 3 of 3*

By Brad Hanson, City Administrator, City of Bridgeport, Nebraska

To begin, I wanted to apologize for my last article that somehow I forgot to include the definition of a CEP, which is “Chief Executive Position”. But, as we all learn from our mistakes, we also know we learn from them and then we move on. At this time, in order to be more fluid with the International City/County Managers Association (ICMA) I will change use from CEP to ICMA’s accepted acronym of CAO; “Chief Administrative Officer”. Now, with the logistical item remedied it is time to move on to the heart of this report.

It was my intention to continue on with Succession Management and how to promote a CAO career to upcoming PEMs (Public Emerging Managers). However, the recent change in circumstances and discussion with some representatives of CCCMA, I decided to share my Succession Success with current PEM members.

Recall from article one of three, the recommended skills needed to gain a CAO position and be successful in that position is (as summarized): 1) a skills assessment; 2) a desire to learn new skills and to be challenged; 3) interested and committed to the program; 4) open to all sides of feedback; 5) continuing education, training, coaching and networking; 6) routine meetings with mentor; 7) leadership and delegation ability; 8) remember who you are working for (the Board), 9) communication; 10) financial management; and 11) network ability and use. Further, recall from article two of three, which enhance article one skills are: 1) education; 2) finance experience; 3) be a generalist; 4) remain focused in your current position; 5) be willing to move; 6) gain some experience; 7) expect a possible pay cut.

In using these recommended skills from literature and from mentors, advisors and now fellow CAOs, I can safely say that being open and inquisitive of their success can be rewarding. In reviewing my recommendations for rural communities from the second article, recall my experience in a Kansas Community, the starting salary was \$55,000 annually. Unfortunately, that was just under my minimum required salary needed. That was my first job interview for the CAO position for a small rural community. Also, recall that every municipality that I applied for a CAO position in Colorado had over 60 applicants. Some of those communities I received an interview, but most did not even offer me an interview prior to my rejection letter.

I know I only touched on a few of the communities that I received an interview, and even a job offer. I wanted to talk about the CAO possibilities in Colorado and outside of Colorado. To begin with the Colorado communities that I applied for a position was with the Town of Elizabeth, City of Rocky Ford, City of Center, City of Lamar, City of Blackhawk, City of Bennett, and the Town of Timnath. Most, if not all, of these communities received around 60 applicants for the CAO position. I had the luxury of receiving an interview for the CAO positions for only two of these communities. I didn’t receive a job offer from either of them, but the experience was more than worth the time invested. Any of these communities would have been a great first community and an excellent learning opportunity for the community and me.

Learning from the applications and interviews that I did not successfully achieve the CAO position, I continued my search for that ever elusive first CAO position. I applied for the City Administrator position with the City of Bridgeport, Nebraska. Much like the municipality in Kansas, they only had 26 applicants, not as many applicants for this community’s position as the municipalities in Colorado. I sent in my application by the due date and had not heard anything for a few weeks. Prior to going for a retreat during Labor Day weekend, I contact the City to see if it was still open. The Mayor contacted me that day and set up an in-

interview on Labor Day. My family and I visited the community and I was interviewed on Labor Day. They asked if I could come back on Thursday for a second interview, they also told me that I was one of four candidates for the position. After the interview on Thursday, I was one of two and that following Monday they offered me the position and, as they say, the rest is history.

To capitalize on my *Succession Success* I wanted to share what I have learned and what I have experienced, in hopes that this will also help others who want to break into public management or “Breaking Into Local Government”; which is a new ICMA Task Force of which I am a member. To begin with I will reiterate what I found from the internship interview, researching the topic of Succession Management and during my experience through gaining my first CAO position.

From the previous two articles and what I have just demonstrated by following that wisdom, I have completed the following check list for any other PEM who it may help to succeed with their career goals:

Know your skills, promote and enhance them further when possible, this includes education and training, and be a generalist, continue learning; I believe this speaks for itself.

Be constantly challenged; if you’re not continually doing this, then in the wise word of Yoda, “You will be!” So, start practicing on being challenged!

Be interested in the position you are in currently and where you want to be, that means you need to remain focused on your current position and your career goals.

Continually accept feedback from everyone you know.

Leadership and delegation, not only understanding it, but also accepting that you are not always right, and when you are not right, be open and honest about it.

Remember, in one way or another, we all answer to a board.

Communicate open, honestly and frequently with your board and fellow employees.

Don’t forget about your mentors and networking; I am still communicating and asking questions of all of my mentors.

Get as much experience and training in municipal finances and budgeting as possible. I wish I had more, I believe there is never enough in budget training!

Moving, or getting outside your comfort zone, may help you get your career started or even enhance your career future. I know this has definitely worked for my goals today and my future career goals.

These may just be a starting point, but with all that I have learned, I believe it is the most complete recommendation list currently available to PEMs. Using this list as a beginning I can add on my personal experiences.

I have talked with a few fellow students at the University Of Colorado Denver School Of Public Affairs. The conversations have focused on the importance of experience and internships that help enhance each individual’s public experience. As for the State of Colorado’s Department of Local Affairs’ Best and Brightest Internship, this is the best opportunity for students to get experience that can lead to a career in public management. This list can be used for internships as well as that ever elusive first CAO position. What I learned that successfully got me my internship with the Town of Limon, Colorado and my first CAO position with the City of Bridgeport, Nebraska are these:

Don’t limit yourself to a certain region.

Know your minimum salary requirement.

Investigate the community.

Visit it if possible and interview community members.
Check out the schools; especially if you have children.
Check out the availability of job opportunities for your spouse.
If possible, go look at some available housing and costs.

If you are not willing to move or live within a community that you are applying for, don't apply or reject the interview.

Know your community you are applying to. Check on the web, tourism organization, talking with employees, a state Municipal League, and the state's City County Managers Association. Find out the inside details from the previous manager and surrounding managers. Let as many staff and residents realize what you know about their community; if possible before the interview.

After the application date has expired, wait between two to three weeks, and then call the community you applied with. Tell them you are checking on the status and that you are still interested in the position. Call them again after another three to four weeks if you still haven't heard anything. They will either be impressed and offer you an interview or they won't. Here is one thing, if you were not an interview candidate, by contacting them this may make you a candidate and get you an interview. This is exactly what occurred with the City of Bridgeport, I was not a candidate until I called them to let them know that I was still interested.

When you are interviewing for more than one position, rank them in a priority order of where you want to go, but be willing to take any opportunity that comes your way, especially if it is your first. Once you have the first experience, other positions will be easier to obtain. Remember, once you accept a position you need to stay there for at least two years according to ICMA.

Once you get your first CAO position be excited and enjoy. You may experience some fear of the unknown, but remember, those that hired you saw your resume and understand that this is your first position. So, have some fear and anxiety, but realize they understand you will make some mistakes. Also, don't try and change the world, unless there is an emergency that could save your employer thousands of dollars. Then do your best to learn the position and get that done on top of everything else that is going to overwhelm you. Also, don't "burn yourself out" and take two to three months to learn the job, don't try and do it in one, believe me I tried. Finally, to reiterate to all PEMs, as I said in my last article, "Give small community public management a closer look, it may jump start your public management career," I know it did mine!



Congrats to Brad Hanson!

Other managers on the move:

Devin Granberry goes to the Town of Sheridan

Wendy DuBord has retired from Steamboat Springs

Notice any changes to the front page letterhead!?

Congrats to our Board Members with their new positions, too!