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CCCMA President's 2012 Winter Message

Jim White, Town Manager, Town of Minturn and 2012 CCCMA President

Greetings to our extended Colorado City and County Managers Association family! Here we find ourselves on the 2012 calendar already between Thanksgiving and Christmas! I'd ask where the time goes, but everyone I have spoken to this year has expressed how busy they have been. CCCMA has been active too!

One of the most important endeavors that we have completed this year is to have two new Range Riders added in Colorado to fill the vacancies that developed by the resignation of Bob Ledger and the retirement of Al Thelen. We recently received official confirmation from Greg Bielawski, ICMA Senior Advisor from Illinois and Range Rider Program Coordinator, acknowledging ICMA's acceptance of Tom Dority and Craig Kocian as our new Colorado Range Riders. I wanted to express my appreciation to Roy Otto, Greeley city manager, for helping to coordinate our efforts. Welcome to Tom and Craig! My special thanks to Mark Achen who has worked tirelessly in his role as our solo Range Rider for many months. Now he has some help to bolster his efforts!

The CCCMA Board also supported our second year of participation with CAL-ICMA, an excellent learning opportunity for all of our Colorado managers. We are also in our second year of three years of funding support for the Life Well Run campaign, sponsored by ICMA.

The ICMA annual conference held in Phoenix, AZ this fall had its largest attendance in the past four years. Our CCCMA dinner, hosted by CIRSA for Colorado attendees at the conference, also had record attendance. Special thanks to Tim Greer and Courtney Grams (now Fagan) for their hospitality!

ICMA has confirmed that Colorado will be hosting next year's ICMA Mountain Plains Regional meeting next spring. The meeting will be held in Aurora, CO on May 2nd and 3rd. Further details will be provided at the annual conference.

Following her return from the ICMA annual conference, Jane Brautigam, Boulder city manager, expressed her interest to me in being considered as a candidate for the ICMA Regional VP position representing Colorado. I brought her request forward to the CCCMA Board during our October 15, 2012 conference call meeting. At the end of the discussion, we agreed and voted to nominate her for that position. I have volunteered to represent CCCMA at that meeting next spring and to place her name in contention.

The Annual CCCMA conference will be held in Glenwood Springs, February 14-16, 2013.

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The theme was amended from its original title "Organizational Development" to its new title: "No Ordinary Day; No Ordinary Leadership." Remember Valentine's Day is that weekend too!

CCCMA had the benefit of much hard work this year by a group of our members who prepared "Professional Development" measures and learning as well as teaching opportunities. Nathan Cherpeski, Kimberly Bullen, Ben Goldstein, Courtney Grams (Fagan), Denise Henasey, Matt LaCerf, Mike Bestor, Jacque Wedding Scott, and others participated. I will ask for a summary of the progress made and include the results in the next newsletter.

Mary Jacobs, assistant city manager, Sierra Vista, AZ, will be at our annual conference representing ICMA. Her role with the ICMA Executive Board specifically is: one of three Mountain Plains Vice Presidents on the board. She covers Colorado as our liaison. She will be on the ICMA board for two years. She will attend our CO state association conference in February, the regional summit in May, and work closely with Colorado on issues involving ICMA and connections to the CCCMA membership. She serves on the Executive Board's Membership and Outreach subcommittee, and Bonnie Svrcek, ICMA president, has also appointed her to be the liaison to the Task Force on Women in the Profession.

On November 26, 2012, I was scheduled to deliver three ICMA awards to the City of Wheat Ridge, Colorado at the Wheat Ridge City Council meeting. The award went to Heather Geyer, Administrative Services Director/PIO; to Patrick Goff, City Manager; and to the City of Wheat Ridge. All three awards were in recognition of the A.C.T.I.O.N. Mission Rollout Meetings Program. The executive management team (EMT) in Wheat Ridge embarked upon a three year culture development journey. Through the process, the EMT developed the city's mission statement and core values.

We are looking for candidates for the CCCMA Executive Board. If you are interested, please refer to the announcement in this publication!

That's all for now! Keep up the good work you do for our Colorado cities and towns, and counties!

All my best!

Jim White

CCCMA president



COACHING GENERATION NEXT: Impact and Inspire!

CCCMA is committed to the professional development of the next generation of managers and will be kicking off a coaching program in 2013. The coaching program will allow for aspiring managers to gain encouragement and guidance for their careers, the programming will start with workshops from Frank Benest (CAL-ICMA), and continue with opportunities for resume reviews, speed coaching and networking at the Winter Conference.

Interested in becoming a coach or in receiving mentoring? Mark your calendars now for these 2 events!

Tuesday, Jan 8, 6:30-8pm, location tbd

"Accelerating Your Development" - A Conversation with Emerging Leaders RSVP to Laura Kane Perry at laura.perry@denvergov.org

Wednesday, Jan 9, 8:30am - Noon, CML Conference Room

"Becoming a Great Coach" To participate in the Coaches Training, please contact Stuart McArthur at ssmcarthur@bennett.co.us

NO ORDINARY DAY, NO ORDINARY LEADERSHIP!

Developing the RIGHT organization for every event, every day.

2013 Winter Conference

February 14 - 16

Hotel Colorado, Glenwood Springs

REGISTER ONLINE

www.coloradoccmma.org

Full Conference - \$225 (register by Jan 29)

Full Conference (after Jan 29) - **\$260**

One day registrations
and discounts
for students and
emerging managers

Keynote: "From Heroes to Zeros and Back Again" is a tested workshop focusing on assisting participants to move their local government organizations to higher performance.

Other Sessions include: Building an Ethical Organization, Leading During a Crisis, Personal Career Development and the 2013 Economic Outlook.

The full program will be online in the next few weeks.

2013 Platinum Sponsors



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Thanks for the support from all our 2013 sponsors! Add your name to the list, contact Denise for sponsorship information, denise@coloradoccmma.org

Cal-ICMA Coaching Program is online 24/7 Tap Key Resources to Succeed in Local Government:

Have you missed any of what over 4000 attendees benefited from in 2012?

We're grateful that the Cal-ICMA Coaching Program has had another banner year. The combination of compelling topics, top-notch presenters, engaged audiences, strong partners, and supportive sponsors have grown the program to new heights. Thank you.

Want to learn best practices and gain valuable resources on the following 2012 topics?

- Succeeding as a Supervisor or Manager
- Better Budget Models
- Productive Labor Relations and Negotiations
- New Service Delivery Strategies
- Adapting and Thriving Amidst Change
- Boosting Employee Engagement and Results

You'll find presentation materials, resources, and digital audio recordings for these and dozens of other sessions at the "Live Audio & Archives" tab of www.cal-icma.org/coaching

Don't have time to boost your career performance and satisfaction with a webinar?

You can learn on the go. Download the digital recordings to your MP3 player or signup for the "Cal-ICMA: Streaming Media Podcasts" with iTunes or others.

Looking for some 1-1 coaching or other key resources?

See the "Coaching Corner" at www.cal-icma.org/coaching for a wide range of valuable resources to boost your career, including "Career Compass" columns.

Have a colleague, friend, or employee who would benefit from the Coaching Program?

Forward this notice to them. Invite them to sign up for the complimentary email list to keep informed of future sessions and resources. Click on www.cal-icma.org/coachingList.

Want to help shape the 2013 Coaching Program?

Please send us your ideas of webinar topics, presenters, or services that would knock your socks off. We want to hear from you and make 2013 the best year yet.

As we plan for 2013, we look forward to serving you even better. With support from ICMA, more state associations will be joining with Cal-ICMA, Arizona, and Colorado as partners to broaden the program's reach and share the very best practices in local government. Enjoy the resources and thrive in local government.



CML Update

The Latest News at the Colorado Municipal League

-Sam Mamet and Lisa White, CML

CML Training

Events/Training

Thurs, Dec. 6, 4-6pm: Open House: CML will be hosting its first-ever Holiday Open House! This will be a great opportunity to mingle with fellow municipal government enthusiasts in a festive environment. Appetizers and refreshments will be served. RSVP by Nov. 23 at http://www.cml.org/Public/Core/Events/eventdetails.aspx?iKey=OPEN_HOL12 (be sure to login to the CML website to register!)

Thurs, Dec. 13, 12-1: Webinar: The General Assembly & Municipal Involvement

This webinar will provide valuable insight into the legislative process as we prepare for the start of the 2013 legislative session. In a concise one-hour webinar, CML's policy staff will provide you with an overview of the Colorado General Assembly, the budget process, committees of the general assembly, the path a bill takes in the Colorado Statehouse, tips for effectively communicating with your legislators, and details on CML's advocacy services. (Municipal members can participate in the webinar for free, but registration is required.) For more information or to register, visit http://www.cml.org/Public/Core/Events/eventdetails.aspx?iKey=WEB_LEG12

Jan. 30: Workshop: Embracing Personal & Professional Development

During this day-long workshop, attendees will address four main topics related to personal and professional development: (1) mind-set (2) approach (3) visioning and (4) action. Details and registration information can be found at http://www.cml.org/Public/Core/Events/eventdetails.aspx?iKey=WOR_PDEV13

Feb. 20: CML's Annual Legislative Workshop

Details and registration information available at http://www.cml.org/Public/Core/Events/eventdetails.aspx?iKey=LEG_WORK13

State of our Cities & Towns Report and Video: Coming soon!

89 municipalities completed and returned this fall's *State of Our Cities & Towns* survey. Corona Insights currently is tabulating the survey results and will provide an analysis of the data to CML soon, which then will form the basis of our 2013 *State of Our Cities & Towns* report and video to be released in early January.

Advocacy

The upcoming legislative session will likely prove active on municipal issues, especially with the House and the Senate no longer being divided. There are several issues that the CML advocacy team will be following.

The passage of Amendment 64 created an instant flurry of activity among municipalities looking to assess immediate impacts and the scope of decisions to be made over the long term. CML is actively involved with the discussions on state regulations and implementation legislation. Because the organic language is constitutional, it will be critical to ensure that state laws and rules work harmoniously with local regulations and any decisions to opt out.

We also expect the change in the statehouse to potentially lead to more legislation on labor and environmental issues, some of which may be of direct municipal interest. Legislation dealing with workers compensation eligibility for public safety employees, oil and gas issues, and the use of urban renewal are likely. By late December, the League should have a much better sense of the bills that legislators will introduce.

There is also the opportunity for positive change. Gov. Hickenlooper submitted a budget request on November 1, 2012 to the legislature's Joint Budget Committee calling for some investment of one-time money into local infrastructure, affordable housing, and other local programs. All severance tax and federal mineral lease revenue designated for local governments and state programs will be distributed without any diversions to the state. That revenue is critical for infrastructure development and mitigation of energy industry impacts.

For more information on CML's advocacy efforts, contact Deputy Director Kevin Bommer at kbommer@cml.org.

CCCMA NEWS



MANAGERS IN TRANSITION

Send an email today!

Jim Stevens, pob2066@msn.com

Tom Acre, theacresgreen@yahoo.com

David Varley, davidvarley@yahoo.com

Pam Caskie, pcaskie@comcast.net

John Schneider, john.schneider@yahoo.com

Steve Rabe, sgrabe911@msn.com

Join the CCCMA Board

The Nominating Committee is seeking interested candidates for the positions of President Elect and 2 At Large Board Members. Learn more about the terms and general responsibilities in the Bylaws, Articles 3 & 4 - [click here](#). Please contact [Aden Hogan](#) by December 14 if you would like to be on the 2013 Ballot.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

is always available at www.coloradoccma.org

Colorado Women Leading Government Update

The *Colorado Women Leading Government Noshing & Networking* luncheon was held on November 8th, 2012 at the Colorado Municipal League offices. The event was facilitated by Jan Perkins, Senior Advisor for the ICMA, and Senior Partner for Management Partners - a management consulting firm. A former City Manager herself, Jan has been enormously instrumental in the California Women Leading Government group - the first of its kind in the nation, and she now also serves on the new ICMA Task Force for Women in the Profession.

The agenda covered the many challenges and endless possibilities for women in local government management as a career, and included small group discussions about commitment and support to one another in the profession.



There were around 20 attendees from across the front range, and Kimberly Bullen, County Manager for Rio Blanco County travelled the farthest to join in on the conversation. We were so glad to have her in attendance and representing our western slope partners.

The event was organized by Laura Kane Perry (Emerging Manager's), Heather Geyer, and Jacque Wedding-Scott (CCCMA Immediate Past President).

There will be more opportunities to participate in the coming months, we look forward to seeing more of you involved. If you have any questions about CWLG, please feel free to call Laura, Heather or Jacque.



Revolutionary Ideas: 2013 ICMA Annual Conference Planning Update

By: Laura Kane Perry

The 2013 ICMA Conference Planning Committee met to plan the **2013 ICMA Annual Conference to be held in Boston, MA from September 22-25, 2013 at the Hynes Convention Center**. Based upon the spirited discussions in the work sessions, there was ample enthusiasm and excitement about next year's annual conference. As a result of the committee's hard work, the **professional development program will likely see some changes in style and format** at the 2013 conference. A few session ideas which emerged from our discussions were as follows: Shifting cultural norms, effective use of technology, emergency management, development of the next generation, effective citizen engagement, building sustainability communities, and leadership and courage in turbulent times.

In addition to likely changes in the professional development program style and format, other new ideas emerged including a **"genius bar"** to receive tutorials on the latest technology, **"resume review bars"**, and presentation style changes.

The ICMA Conference Host Committee has established a **liaison program** to assist members in planning for the 2013 conference. For more details [click here](#).

2012 ICMA Conference Scholarship Winners

Thanks to CCCMA, my first ICMA Annual Conference in Phoenix was a tremendous experience and a great enhancement to my development as an emerging manager. Between the numerous sessions, key note speakers and the networking opportunities, there was never a period during the conference when I wasn't learning something new. The highlight of the conference was the ICMA University Workshop on Priority Based Budgeting and Fiscal Health and Wellness. I'm excited about the capacity of the new budgeting process and tools to make fiscal sustainability a reality for small and mid-sized local governments.

A key take away from my sessions was recognizing the nexus between budgeting, strategic planning and resulting impact on service delivery and outcomes. The networking was the icing on the cake. To be able to converse with so many seasoned managers in one setting is perhaps the greatest benefit to an emerging manager and this conference did not disappoint. Many thanks for the generosity and support of CCCMA.

- Lance Benninghoff

Thank you, CCCMA, for the scholarship that allowed me to attend the ICMA national conference in Phoenix. It was an amazing experience at this stage of my career. I went to panel discussions on the profession, met managers from all over the United States – who seem to all be connected to Colorado in one way or another – met with Colorado managers I knew and others I enjoyed meeting, and left with a sense of renewed energy and commitment to this field.

As Jim Collins said in his keynote, the best kind of luck you can hope for is *who* luck (people), not *what* luck (events). I'm grateful that I've had such great *who* luck of the support and encouragement of CCCMA members, and I look forward to continuing to connect and contributing toward the next generation of Colorado managers in the future.

- Victoria Brazitis

Career Compass #27 —“Creating a Safe Environment for a Courageous Conversation”

Question:

I am a hard-working and newly promoted project manager in the Public Works Department of a mid-sized city. Things are pretty dreary in the organization—we’ve experienced budget cuts even lay-offs and everybody feels overwhelmed. Like others, I am dealing with quite a number of projects.

I would like to enroll in a well-regarded certificate program for project management but of course our Director has gutted the training budget in the department. I’m afraid that my manager would not be sympathetic to my request that she find the training dollars and the time off. However, I think the certificate program would strengthen my project management skills and energize me.

I do not have much of a relationship yet with my manager and she seems a bit gruff. How do I create a safe environment so I can propose the certificate program without being thrown out of her office?

Frank’s Response:

To be successful over time, we often must conduct difficult and even courageous conversations with supervisors or peers. Such a difficult conversation may be about a colleague not carrying one’s weight, or a conflict with a peer, or the desire to be given more room to operate by your supervisor. In any case, you need to create some “safety” so you can confront the situation. To have a productive exchange, it needs to be safe for you and for the other person.



To create a safe environment for a difficult conversation, I would suggest a number of related approaches:

Demonstrate value

First and foremost, you must demonstrate that you are a reliable and productive team member. As staffing has been reduced, those who perform well and can be counted on to produce become very valuable commodities. Since you are newly promoted, you need to spend the next 4-6 months showing everyone, especially your manager, that you are a key and valuable staff member who produces tangible results. Of course, as you perform in your assignments and volunteer for new projects, you must ensure that your manager is aware of your efforts and the results produced. (See Career Compass #17 --“The Subtle Art of Promoting Your Value.”)

Over time, you should go out of your way to help the manager with her priorities and projects and take problems off her plate. She will be more open to assisting you as you become helpful to her and more indispensable.

Create rapport

As you interact with your new manager, you can work to slowly create rapport. To do that, take some time to get to know who she is and what is important to her. Ask questions and listen intently.

To find out something about your manager’s family and non-work-related interests, you can disclose a little bit about your family and/or leisure pursuits and see if that encourages your manager to disclose any of her interests. Don’t give the third degree. Take cues from her about what she is comfortable in discussing.

Over time, you can have conversations not just about work but about some non-work topics which help build rapport and connections.

Understand the concerns of your manager

As you develop “positive regard” for your manager, you will identify her concerns. Even if you do not agree with her concerns and issues, you must acknowledge them because they are “real” to your manager. For instance, your manager may feel that a certificate program may cost too much given that training monies have been stripped from the budget; the training program will take you away from work and there is not coverage; and/or there is simply too much work.

Before you can develop responses to the concerns, you must identify and acknowledge them. As Steven Covey says, “seek to understand before being understood.”

Confront your fears about the conversation

Many of us do not like confrontations and certainly do not like the feeling of being turned down. So we avoid the conversation.

To minimize the fear, acknowledge it. Your manager may say “no.” The manager may say that you must be aware of the reduced training budget. She may say that you would be further burdening others. She may outright reject your request. Are these the worst consequences that can happen? How likely are the feared consequences? Can you live with any and all of these possibilities? If so, you can proceed.

Everyone is fearful of something. Courageous people confront their fears but still take action.

Prepare for the conversation

Preparing for the conversation makes it easier. In your mind, or on paper, you may wish to:

- Identify your goals, which are hopefully aligned with those of your manager (for example, becoming a more productive and effective project manager)

- Acknowledge possible concerns of the manager

- State the “facts” (see below)

- Propose specifically what you want

- Be prepared to respond to the concerns raised

- Develop a back-up or Plan B proposal



You may wish to practice the conversation with a trusted colleague or coach or friend, especially in respect to keeping the conversation even-toned and responding to any objections.

Select a good time and a safe or neutral location

Depending on your manager, it may be helpful to hold a difficult conversation at the beginning of the day (if your manager arrives early) or end of the day (if she stays late). To avoid distractions and create some privacy, it may also be a good idea to invite your manager for a cup of coffee at a nearby café.

Use “I” language

To minimize defensiveness from the other party, you should use “I” language:

- “I believe. . .”

- “I feel. . .”

- “I hope. . .”

- “I am concerned that. . .”

Focus on the “facts”

To help create a safe environment for any difficult conversation, you should start the conversation by identifying some facts or making statements that the other party will not generally dispute. For instance, using “I” language, you could state the following:

“I am a new project manager trying to become a better project manager.”

“I know that we have less staffing and demands have not diminished.”

“I am committed to the team and to helping produce tangible team results even with reduced resources.”

“I would like to improve my project management skills in order to enhance my value to the department.”

“I believe that the training program would be of value to me and the organization.”

“I know that it is difficult for you to manage our constrained resources.”

“I believe that you can count on me to maintain my performance even if I were engaged in the training program.”

“I have developed an approach so that we can maintain coverage while I am gone to the training classes.”

These “fact” statements help set the stage for the rest of the conversation.

State directly what you want

You need to put your proposal on the table and directly and non-defensively ask for approval and support. In this case, you may state that you want to free up some monies so that the city pays for the certificate program and that you want work time off so you can participate.

Sell the benefits

After stating your proposal, you should quickly identify the benefits from the manager’s point of view. For example, participation in the training program would:

Make you more productive and valuable to the department

Keep you energized and excited about your project management role

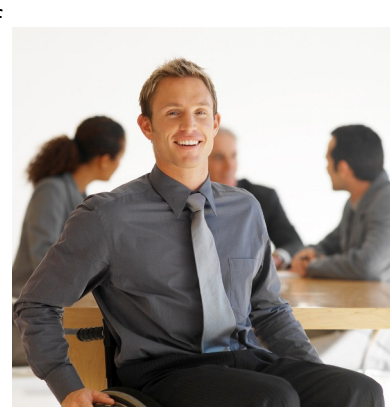
Allow you to share what you learn with other project managers and team members so everyone can benefit

Inquire about any issues and respond

At this point, you may indicate that you know that the manager may have some concerns and **inquire** what some of the issues may be. Be open and acknowledge whatever issues are stated. By asking questions, you can demonstrate **openness** to any perceived issues, again even if you do not agree that the concern is legitimate.

As you propose what you want, you can explain how you may deal with some of the possible concerns, responding to such possible questions as: From which accounts do you propose to transfer the monies to pay for the training program? Who has agreed to provide more office coverage while you participate in the program? How will you follow up to ensure that you get any information from the meetings missed in your absence?

If you feel that any of these issues cannot be overcome in the mind of the manager, you may wish to provide a Plan B. For example, as an alternative proposal, you may agree to pay half the tuition, or you propose to take the courses on your own time but the city pays the tuition.



Show a little vulnerability

In the hope of promoting some openness, you may wish to demonstrate some vulnerability. For example, even though your request may get rejected, you could say: "I am a new project manager and would like to enhance my skills. I need your support."

Don't force a decision or resolution

If you sense that the manager is not ready to say "yes," ask her to think about your proposal and suggest that you two can discuss it at a follow-up meeting next week.

Regardless of the difficult topic and the outcome, you should express appreciation that the other person considered what you have said and your interests and concerns. In this case, whatever the manager decides about the certificate program, you should thank her for the consideration and commit in your mind and heart to maintain your sense of excellence. You will have other difficult conversations in the future and you want your manager to remain open and positive whatever you bring to her and about you as a professional and a person.

To be effective, you must confront situations and engage in difficult if not courageous conversations. The question is how do we create safety for ourselves and others so we can have the conversation.

Resources

A good resource is the book by Kerry Patterson et al, *Crucial Conversations—Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*.

Career Compass is a bi-monthly column from ICMA focused on career issues for local government professional staff, and appears in ICMA's JOB newsletter and online. 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.



If you have stories or articles you would like to share with CCCMA, please send to denise@coloradocccma.org. The next newsletter will be published April 15, 2013.