



OCCMA

**Oregon City/County
Management Association**

A State Affiliate of **ICMA**

THIRD QUARTER 2021



DROUGHT in Oregon

INSIDE...

President's Message
OCCMA Summer Conference
Feature Story: Drought in Oregon
City Manager Spotlight - Jeff Towery

University Connection
Committee Reports
Splash Pads: A Guessing Game
CIS Supports Senior Advisors
ICMA Ethics Matter!

Has Your City Considered a Disc Golf Course?
2021 Calendar of Events
Retirements
Senior Advisor Reports

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Steve Powers • City Manager • Salem



2021 was the year we returned to an in-person Summer Conference. And what a conference! The buzz among attendees was electric. Hugs and handshakes, and no notification from the Deschutes County Health Department that the conference was a super-spreader event.

Susie Marston and the Professional Development Committee put together an outstanding program of practical knowledge and aspirational development. I appreciated the mix of learning from my Oregon peers and from the keynote presenters. The round robin was expertly moderated by Eileen Stein, Portland State University's Local Government Advisory Chair. The sponsorship support from the Lane Council of Governments, Local Government Personnel Services, City-county Insurance Services, Merina + Co., and Comcast helped us learn and reconnect. Also assisting our association were Ameresco, Beery Elsner & Hammond, Elaine Howard, Jensen Strategies, Periscope Holdings/Oregon Buys, PGE, Portland State University, and SGR. My thanks to Ameresco for supporting the Oregon Latinos in Local Government.

2021 will also be memorable for OCCMA hosting the International City/County Management Association's 2021 Annual Conference. Joe Gall, Spencer Nebel, and Eileen Stein continue to lead our association's planning and coordinating with ICMA, including

responding to ICMA members' concerns regarding Portland. The sub-committee chairs have been working to ensure the social activities, field trips, and other host responsibilities are memorable. Portland will be the first, and maybe the last, conference to have yoga with goats.

Hosting the conference in Oregon is our once-every-few-decades opportunity to experience a gathering of thousands of local government professionals closer to home. For OCCMA members who aren't ICMA members, ICMA will be providing OCCMA members the same conference registration rate as ICMA members.

An Oregon welcome will be appreciated by our guests, and volunteering is another way to experience the ICMA conference. Volunteers will be able to attend one day of the conference for free. An additional inducement is a volunteer appreciation shindig that is being concocted by OCCMA's best party planners.

I hope your courage, compassion, and competency are strengthened by your colleagues and through your participation in OCCMA.

Best,
Steve



OCCMA Summer Conference Held in Bend

The 2021 OCCMA Summer Conference was held at Mt. Bachelor Village in Bend on July 6-9. Thank you to the Professional Development Committee, along with all conference attendees, speakers and sponsors, for making the conference a big success!



THANK YOU

2021 OCCMA SUMMER CONFERENCE

SPONSORS/VENDORS

RECEPTION SPONSORS



PRESIDENTIAL SPONSOR



NON-PROFIT SPONSOR



PLATINUM SPONSOR



Beery Elsner
& Hammond LLP

GOLD SPONSORS



citycounty insurance services
cisoregon.org



SILVER SPONSORS





Oregon's Drought

By Heidi Bell, City Manager, City of Donald

As we all know, the drought conditions are worrisome throughout our beautiful Pacific Northwest. We are experiencing times of extreme weather and catastrophic wildfires, which compete against our human needs for water. The wildfires are raging on and when combined with the dry weather, it is creating water shortages.

Part of local government's emergency management efforts should also be focused on educating ourselves and our public about being water wise. As I worked through writing this article and researching drought conditions in Oregon, I began to see a string unravel and a whole world open up of different resources. So I thought that I would share a list of ideas and resources to possibly help to make a difference in your community.

How Bad Is It?

It is bad. On August 2, 2021, I snipped the graphic on the next page from drought.gov. You can see that 93.7 percent of the state was in a Severe Drought status, 71.2 percent was in the Extreme Drought category, and, surprisingly, 24.3 percent was in the Exceptional Drought category. We need rain!

Visit from US Ag Secretary

On August 3, 2021, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack came to Oregon's Willamette Valley on a fact-finding trip to learn more about our drought conditions and help to

shape the federal response to our farmers' needs. There are tools that the federal government has to provide, such as financial assistance for farmers that experience loss from events like drought or other climate change issues. According to an OPB article, "Vilsack noted that the USDA recently invested \$41 million in four states, including Oregon, in an effort to identify creative ways for the agricultural industry to respond to climate change, \$7.5 million of which was earmarked for Oregon growers impacted by drought."

The City of Dallas: Phase 1 Curtailment

In mid-July, I met with Dallas City Manager Brian Latta about the restrictions that Dallas has placed on its customer's water usage. Dallas is currently under a "Stage 1 Water Curtailment," which is mostly voluntary compliance. In Dallas, the City Manager has the authority to implement Phase 1, which is when the City has less than a 120-day supply of water. Dallas' water source is a dam fed by Rickreall Creek.

Latta gave a list of ways that the City works to educate the public about the curtailment, including printing online messaging, distributing a mass mailer to all water customers and providing leaflets for restaurants to put on tables explaining why a glass of water is not served when guests are seated. This restaurant leaflet also serves as educational material while guests are waiting for their food. Other Phase 1 regulations include restricting outdoor watering by 50 percent for public lands such as parks and schools. Dallas

goes into Phase 2 of water restrictions when the water supply shortens to 100 days, with one restriction limiting days outdoor watering is allowed. Phase 3 starts when the supply dips to just 80 days, and at this point, one water curtailment measure will be halt construction activities.

Both the city councils of Donald and Dallas are looking into increasing the fees for excessive water consumption. Although this can help to save water, it also can reduce a city’s Water Fund budget. A careful analysis should be done to find the right balance of saving water and collecting enough in water rates to pay for the system.

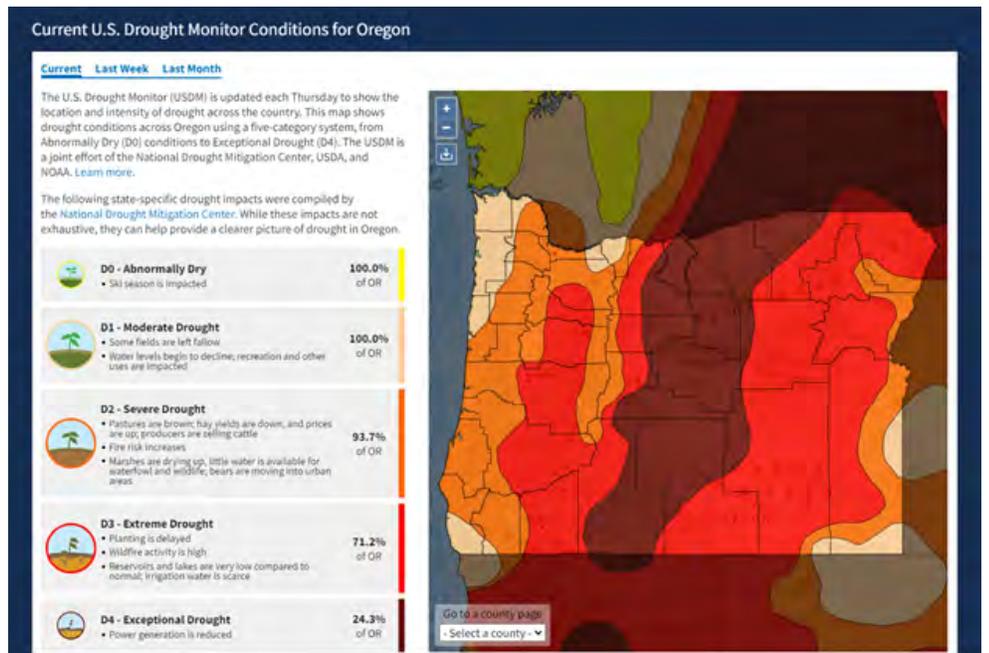
Donald’s Development Code Tools

In Donald, we have adopted several changes to our Development Code to become more water wise. For large industrial sites, the City offers a landscaping credit. This is to reduce the amount of unnecessary planting of vegetation and landscaping in places where there is low visibility of the plants or trees. Requiring landscaping that needs water seemed like a waste of water to the Planning Commission and the Council. Instead, these industrial developers are encouraged to install xeriscaping in areas with high to medium visibility and in the low visibility areas are encouraged to instead do a fee-in-lieu payment to the City. The fee is a landscaping credit, which is credited to the parks department, a much better area to plant trees and plants (that use water) where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a green space.

Another water wise tool in the Donald Development Code is allowing developers to count filter strips, bio-swales, or rain gardens as landscaping in all zones, including residential. This also is helping to recharge the water system with better quality run-off.

Recycling Wastewater?

As we move forward navigating the uncharted territory of water shortages becoming more commonplace, we are going to need to think of long-term solutions. Reuse of wastewater is something that we all need to start thinking about and taking more seriously. People say purple-pipe is too expensive and that it is just unattainable for a developer to do because of too many obstacles, regulations and costs. This line of thinking needs to be squashed. Local governments need to be able to figure out ways to use treated wastewater for irriga-



tion in our parks, flushing toilets or for use in industrial business and manufacturing. Being a “smart city” will need to be more common than just a dream. As your local government tackles master plans for water, stormwater or facilities plans for wastewater, challenge your city’s leadership to think, “Is there is a different approach to treating water and sewer that is more sustainable, eco-friendly or water wise that will work in our city? And should we do it?” We need to foster an environment that empowers our scientists and policy-makers to be creative and innovative. After all, isn’t that what Oregon is known for?

September is National Preparedness Month

If your local government does a proclamation for September as National Preparedness Month, think of ways to incorporate water wise topics and wildfire preparation into the messaging.

My Final Thoughts

Lastly, a few years ago, Donald had to replace a well’s pump and we put customers on a restriction. During this time, the staff and leadership were nervous that customers would act selfishly and not follow the voluntary curtailment to get us through the repair period’s downtime.

One of the most effective tools we did was publish our reservoir’s water level daily on the City’s website. People loved seeing the daily efforts that they were all chipping in to make. It was reposted frequently on various local social media pages and led to a successful project—we never dipped down to a dangerous level in the reservoirs. It goes to show you that we are more successful when we are working together than as individuals.

(continued on page 7)

City Manager Spotlight

Jeff Towery, 2021-2022 ICMA President-Elect

In June, the ICMA Executive Board nominated Jeff Towery, city manager of McMinnville, as 2021-2022 ICMA President-Elect. His Presidential term begins during the 2022 annual conference in Columbus/Franklin County, Ohio. Jeff said, “I am humbled to receive the board’s nomination to serve as president-elect of ICMA. This is an exciting and challenging time for our profession, and I look forward to working on behalf of ICMA and its members for the next three years. I am especially honored to be the first member from Oregon to serve in this role.”



Jeff has a commitment to ICMA. He served on the ICMA Executive Board 2014-2017, as board liaison to the Sustainable Communities Advisory Committee (2015), Governmental Affairs and Policy Committee (2016-17), part of the conference planning committee for the 2020 UNITE Conference, and is a member of the host committee for the 2021 ICMA Annual Conference in Portland.

You wanted to be ICMA President because...?

I spent the first two-thirds of my time in the profession learning how to be a manager/city manager, focused on operations and strategic planning. A series of training experiences through the Pacific Program and Senior Executive Institute led me to broaden my focus to long range vision and its intersection with culture and how we do our work.

When I joined the ICMA Board, the President at the time said to everyone on the board, “you should envision being ICMA President someday.” So that got me thinking about it. And I wanted to be a Regional Vice President and serve on the board to pay back, or pay forward, the profession.

What do you hope that Oregon managers know about ICMA?

ICMA has been particularly focused on some initiatives that are seeing results. When ICMA hired Executive Director Marc Ott, updated the ICMA Strategic Plan, focused on women in the profession, and committed to increasing diversity on the board, the result of that focus is very impactful now. Add to that social justice and addressing systemic bias and racism, and COVID, and it’s more important than ever for cities and managers to be innovative and nimble.

ICMA’s work on all of this will continue in support of managers. For ICMA, the form of government, ethics,

and being a full-service association for members is all still important.

Also, ICMA makes tools and resources, research and best practices available to managers. ICMA has always made opportunities to make our lives easier. And in a world that is now more complicated – think about issues of homelessness, the opioid crisis, police performance, social justice, pop-up protests. ICMA helps managers so they don’t have to find these tools and resources on their own.

How can ICMA be practical and relevant to city managers?

There is an interesting dialogue happening at the moment with a group of managers in ICMA who question how, and whether, managers should be engaged in the work of ending systemic racism, or social justice in their community. And how ICMA should support this. Something we are learning on the ICMA Board is that we need to do a better job of listening and translating why ICMA’s work matters on the ground with city managers and how it can be relevant to our daily work.

I mentioned that the world is more complicated now. Members have different needs.

Some are well on the way with diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and some are just beginning. And that’s ok. I think ICMA needs to meet these members where they are. And I’m concerned about those managers who might be ahead or behind their elected body on these issues.

How will you move ICMA forward as the next president-elect?

The theme for my year as President will likely be about demonstrating personal, professional, and organizational

resiliency. Now with the disparate impact of climate change and COVID on people of color and other historically marginalized groups, that theme has become even more important. We have to keep finding out what people want and need from ICMA. I may be the first ICMA president from Oregon, but I know there will be more. I'm proud that we have now seen the longest run of managers on the ICMA Board from Oregon (11 years once my term ends) and we now have a long line of former ICMA Board members from Oregon who are still active. Keeping Oregon managers part of the ICMA Board is important.

What else?

More encouragement for Oregon managers to want to serve on the ICMA Board. One of the greatest benefits of serving on the ICMA Board has been to grow and build lasting friendships with people I've served with. Doris has done the same through the Partners Program. Each cohort of people you serve with on the ICMA Board is a three-year relationship, and with 20 people on the board from everywhere – we work through tough issues, but in such a collegial and professional way.

About Jeff



Jeff began his local government career in Coos Bay, Oregon, as assistant to the city manager, city manager pro tem and assistant city manager from February 1986 to May 1990. From there he went on to serve Cottage Grove, Oregon, as city manager from June 1990 to March 1997 and held the same position in Auburn, New York, from April 1997 to November 1998. In August 2001, he joined Lane County, Oregon, as a management analyst II for one year and then served as the land management manager until April 2007. He was hired as assistant city manager for the city of Springfield, Oregon, in April 2007, serving in that position until June 2016. Towery assumed his current position as the city manager of McMinnville, Oregon, in February 2017. He and his wife, Doris, are Rotary members and the proud parents of two children, Jared and Paige.

Oregon's Drought – continued from page 5

As we all battle through the toughness of today's world, it is important that governments share their challenges, projects, success stories and policies with each other, the public and the private sector. City managers are tasked with the leadership duty of creating a positive and trusting atmosphere for people to share ideas. We must inspire our staff, councils and planning commissioners to being open to risks and trying new things, without fear of failure or expense. By collaborating and making a naturing environment, we will beat climate change.

Here are some resources I came across for learning more about water wise ideas and drought conditions in Oregon:

- *Portland Business Journal*: Article “3 questions to ask about water rights as Oregon experiences continued drought” – <https://www.bizjournals.com/portland/news/2021/07/01/3-questions-to-ask-about-water-rights-as-oregon.html>
- Drought.gov: <https://www.drought.gov/>
- Sign up for the ICMA Smart Brief Listserv at www.smartbrief.com
- OPB Article: US agriculture secretary visits Oregon berry farm to talk drought, wildfire – <https://www.opb.org/article/2021/08/03/us-agriculture-secretary-visits-oregon-berry-farm-to-talk-drought-wildfire/>
- USDA.gov: USDA to Invest \$41.8 million in Conservation Assistance for Producers in Drought-Impacted States – <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/or/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1789030>
- Bloomberg CityLab+Green: How to Build a Water-Smart City: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/or/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1789030>
- National Preparedness Month 2021: <https://www.ready.gov/september>

University Connection

Current Research on Three Public Management Issues

Series 3 of 3

Edited by Scott Lazenby, Hatfield School of Government, PSU

Students enrolled in PSU's MPA program have access to an academic research library that has subscription agreements with the majority of scholarly and commercial publishers in North America and Europe. Three students recently mined this huge resource to discover the state of research in three key issues facing public managers. Here's what they found.



Introduction of Automation, AI, and Robotics in Government Agencies

by *Rachelle Yeager*

Artificial intelligence and smart technologies are allowing government to run more efficiently and produce more effective outcomes in serving the

public. As just one example, the federal government has adopted online hiring technology as a more effective and efficient applicant recruitment tool. Through USAJobs, applicants can search for federal employment opportunities, create an account to upload and store their demographic and preferential data and application documents, apply for positions, and attend virtual workshops on navigating the website and other useful job seeking tools. Hiring officials within federal agencies use additional software that communicates with USAJobs to post vacancy announcements, screen and select applicants, perform background and reference checks, and complete new-hire onboarding forms.

Government staff are also using desktop bots called Robotic Process Automation, or RPAs, to complete repetitive manual tasks such as moving information from one database or application to another, invoice processing, and even compliance tasks.

Another example of an RPA is a Chatbot, an autonomous agent which typically interacts through a website and makes use largely of text-based communication to facilitate citizen-government interactions.

These chatbots allow people to conduct transactions online, saving time and increasing the productivity of customer service staff who are freed up for more complex interactions. A more aggressive strategy for automated technology is robots deployed in fulfillment centers in which the bots bring items from the shelves to the workers.

How does the public manager ensure employees stay motivated, productive, and feel secure about their place within their organization? One way is for employers to identify the jobs that are most threatened by automation and help affected employees build new skills. Compliance jobs, for example, tend to be rule-based and data-intensive and lend themselves well to the application of smart technology. Where repetitive tasks are just one element of a job, Robotic Process Automation (RPA) can take over this less-desirable work, which frees employees' time for more interesting tasks.

Another way to ensure employees stay productive is for managers to talk to their employees and identify which parts of their jobs they dislike the most, and target automation to those areas.

Beyond the potential for making work more enjoyable and fulfilling, automation offers another benefit: many younger workers are attracted to agencies that are on the cutting edge of technology, challenging their view of government as bureaucratic and resistant to change.

OCCMA Statement of Belonging

The DEI Ad Hoc Committee presented three strategies for Board consideration at the January 29, 2021 meeting. Strategy #1 was for the creation of an OCCMA Statement of Belonging, which was approved by the OCCMA Board of Directors on July 9, 2021.

The task of developing the Statement of Belonging was completed by the following leaders:

Sarah Medary – City of Eugene – Chair
Megan George – City of Tualatin
Zoe Monahan-Mombert – City of Wilsonville
Eileen Stein – OCCMA Member
Dan Weinheimer – City of Newberg

The Statement of Belonging was also reviewed and comments incorporated by members of: NW Women’s Leadership Academy; Veterans in the Profession; and the Local Government Hispanic Network.

OCCMA STATEMENT OF BELONGING

Our statement of belonging is intended to elevate and highlight our commitment, responsibility and shared passion for advancing equity and inclusion in our association, profession and communities. At the core of our work is growing trust and confidence and we know that is built as we “work to achieve equity and social justice, to affirm human dignity, and to improve the quality of life for the individual and the community.”¹ Our values and goals are strongly aligned with ICMA and is built on the foundation of the Code of Ethics, Declaration of Ideals and their Approach to Equity and Inclusion.

Oregon has an undisputed history of racism that dates back to 1857 and a vote of the people against slavery, but in favor of excluding “free negroes” from living in the state. That was over 150 years ago and only one example of the marginalization and exclusion faced

by Oregonians. We acknowledge that in 2021, our individual and collective systems need continuous work to heal the wounds of historic and ongoing inequalities and to achieve equity in our systems and communities. Social inequalities in Oregon, and around the country, continue to be most predictable by race. Our work impacts and influences the structures and policies that can benefit the most disproportionately impacted in our communities. We are inspired and called to do this work and we are ready to listen, learn and act.

Cultivating true belonging takes courage and a commitment to:

Reflect on ourselves as individuals and as a group to understand our strengths and biases and the role we must play in advancing equity and dismantling inequity.

Listen to the voices and experiences of all, and especially those who have been marginalized or excluded in our association, organizations and communities.

Learn and stay open to new ideas and better practices of advancing and operationalizing diversity, equity and inclusion.

Act on what we learn and be accountable to ourselves and each other.

Sustain our energy and focus; equity is not an initiative or a program.

Together, we have the opportunity and responsibility to cultivate belonging in our individual organizations and communities and we understand the power we have to significantly impact people’s lives. With humility, we embrace the power we have to make change and step willingly and courageously forward for the best of Oregon.

¹ [ICMA Declaration of Ideals](#)

Splash Pads: A Guessing Game

Splash pads are becoming a popular feature in parks around Oregon. They offer a fun way for residents to cool down on hot summer days and do not take lifeguards to operate. While the state is dealing with extreme drought conditions, they also offer environmental benefits, such as timers and push buttons so there is no wasted water when the splash pads are not in use. See if you can figure out where these splash pads are located.



Answers on back page



citycounty insurance services
cisoregon.org

CIS Partners With OCCMA to Support Senior Advisors

Citycounty Insurance Services (CIS) has again contributed \$2,500 to OCCMA in support of the Senior Advisor program. The funds will be used for out-of-pocket expenses such as mileage, meals and lodging for the Senior Advisors as they travel across Oregon helping city and county leaders.

Many of you know that CIS is a government agency. Their staff got involved in public service to serve, and they are celebrating 40 years of exclusively serving Oregon's cities and counties.

CIS was created in 1981 out of necessity because large commercial insurers stopped offering affordable insurance to Oregon's cities and counties. It was happening nationwide. One small city, Juntura in Malheur County, disincorporated because their insurance costs were higher than their tax revenue. That's when leaders from League of Cities and the Association of Oregon Counties stepped in — creating CIS.

CIS works with communities when there are internal struggles that prevent the city from doing the right things for their citizens. In one such instance conflict arose in a small city between some of the employees and a new city administrator, and City Councilors started to intervene in the dispute. The CIS risk management consultant identified the potential for costly employment and public official liability claims. She brought in the CIS "Hire To Retire" HR consultants and pre-loss employment attorneys to advise the city leadership. CIS also partnered with LOC to work with the elected officials on good governance principles. In the end, the city administrator got a handle on the situation, and costly claims were averted.

Today, CIS supports 98 percent of cities and over 78 percent of counties in Oregon with at least one type of coverage.

CIS continues to believe in service and affordable coverage. That's why they partnered with SAIF this year to bring more affordable workers' compensation coverage through a new CIS Servicing Group. They have combined SAIF's pricing advantages, with their skilled risk management, public safety, and return-to-work staff to offer holistic, focused coverage.

To encourage participation in the new CIS workers' comp servicing group at SAIF, CIS is providing a five per cent discount on property and liability contributions. This is in addition to an exclusive discount for CIS Servicing Group members, who can qualify for an additional nine per cent discount on workers' compensation premiums, depending upon your experience rating.



The city of Ashland's new Interim City Manager and Senior Advisor Gary Milliman accepts a \$2,500 grant from CIS Executive Director Patrick Priest. The funds help support OCCMA's innovative Senior Advisor Program. Milliman recently celebrated an impressive milestone. He's worked in local government for 50 years. He is also very knowledgeable about the benefits of insurance risk pools, having helped establish one of the nation's first back in the 1970s.

The CIS goal is to be a one stop shop for coverages — whether it's property, casualty, or employee benefit solutions. And CIS does not just sell insurance and walk away. They are proactive in offering a full range of risk management services and training.

The CIS team, includes employment attorneys, risk managers, law enforcement consultants and benefits representatives, are knowledgeable experts eager to help.

It is that emphasis on expert and personalized assistance that draws CIS to the Senior Advisor program. The Senior Advisors provide the real world, practical advice from someone who has been there and knows the difficulties of city/county management. They mentor on a personal and professional level and develop strong relationships.

"City and county managers are making critical decisions that can have huge impacts on claims," said CIS Executive Director Patrick Priest. "Senior Advisor relationships can be considered akin to risk management as they guide city/county managers through tough times. Even in good times, their expert advice helps avoid pitfalls that could result in costly liability claims. We are proud to partner with OCCMA in supporting this important program."

The graphic features the text "ICMA ETHICS Matter!" in large, white, serif font against a dark blue background. Below the text is a close-up image of a compass rose, showing the numbers 260, 280, 300, 320, and 340, with the letters "NW" visible. The compass is resting on a textured surface, possibly a map or a piece of fabric.

ICMA ETHICS Matter!

Showing Professional Courtesy and Respect When You're No Longer in Charge

By Martha Perego, ICMA-CM

Whether by choice or force, we all share the experience and journey of advancing to what's next in our professional lives. What we are moving on to—and why—no doubt affects how receptive and adaptive we will be to the change.

The sheer exhilaration of landing your dream job in a new organization makes it very easy to see your old position entirely through the rearview mirror. Friends and colleagues remain, but making a clean break is easy.

But for others, leaving an organization for which you have expended great energy, passion, and commitment is tough to do even if you are leaving of your own volition. The evidence of your contribution, after all, is everywhere. Whether it is a department you rebuilt with talented staff, a new neighborhood park, a renovated town hall, or an economic strategy that revitalized main street, your contributions are tangible and physically evident. Let's face it: It's hard to just close the door and walk away from the community you create through that work.

Adding to the complexity of the transition, imagine if you plan to live in the community you once managed. How do you balance your reputation and status as a "former" with the new role of being just a "resident"? How do you exercise your civic duties and rights as a resident in a way that does not undermine the colleague who now holds your former position? If you think the current manager is not making good decisions, based on your professional expertise and knowledge of the operations, what should you do?

To be clear, there are no hard and fast rules of engagement here for a member who wants to participate in their former community, whether they reside there or not. Members who no longer work for a local government must follow these two tenets from the [ICMA Code of Ethics](#):

Tenet 1. We believe professional management is essential to efficient and democratic local government by elected officials.

Tenet 3. Demonstrate by word and action the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in all public, professional, and personal relationships in order that the member may merit the trust and respect of the elected and appointed officials, employees, and the public.

Of the many guidelines under Tenet 3, the one on public confidence is most relevant to this discussion: Members should conduct themselves so as to maintain public confidence in their position and profession, the integrity of their local government, and in their responsibility to uphold the public trust.

And then consider that long-held rule of engagement that seems most on point here: If you have a discussion with a colleague's elected officials, that colleague needs to hear about it. And the preferred method of interaction is peer to peer. Don't go around your colleague to talk with their elected officials.

Here are two real scenarios that serve to highlight why this is a very gray ethical issue.

Giving Back to the Community

A former city manager, who served the city in that role for over a decade, applied to serve on the citizens commission that provides advice on housing policy issues and funding allocations. Affordable housing has always been a challenge in the city and the now-retired manager felt that she has the time and expertise to devote to the issue.

As a courtesy, she stopped by city hall to give the current manager a head's up. The news was received with great unease by the current manager. At first, he thought this might violate ICMA's Code of Ethics. It does not. A member,

especially one who is no longer working for a local government, can serve on an appointed board or commission even for their former employer.

He remained concerned that her involvement might impede efforts to shift the city's approach to solving this intractable issue. Not to lay blame, but the strategies used under her watch didn't seem to make much progress.

This seems like two sides of the same coin. Some local government organizations benefit from having former practitioners on their committees as they bring a level of knowledge that others may not have. On the flipside, it can create a situation of competing perspectives. Whose perspective and advice do you follow? The current city manager (and his or her staff) or the former, who (depending on their tenure) may carry a lot of influence in the community.

Assuming positive intent, the manager opted for a follow-up conversation where he successfully persuaded the former manager not to advance her interest in this cause from a city-related perch.

Running for Office

After serving the community for 15 years, a city manager announced his retirement, and the city commenced the search for a suitable replacement. The new city manager was approved by a unanimous vote. A month later, the former city manager entered the campaign to fill an unexpected open seat on city council.

Though rare, this is not the first time a former city or county manager sought elected public office. When it happens, generally it is not in the community they once managed, but if so, certainly not on the heels of their retirement. The ICMA Code of Ethics doesn't require a retired member to adhere to the principle of political neutrality and is silent on the issue of what would be a suitable waiting period, if any.

The desire to continue public service in a beloved community doesn't outweigh the impact of that decision on the organization, profession, and the new city manager. Whether good or not so, the reputation and perceived influence of anyone who holds the title of manager doesn't evaporate when they walk out the door. Regardless of whether they leverage their former position in the campaign, will that former title garner campaign support from donors who presume an inside advantage should this candidate prevail? And if they win, what will be the impact on staff who may be

challenged to support the candidate's donors as they officially engage with the city?

After years of serving as a nonpartisan, politically neutral professional, what impact does the campaign have on the image of the profession? Imagine being the new city manager only to have the former occupant now be one of your supervisors.

Things to Consider

As noted, the rules of engagement for the former manager in their former community are not etched in stone. There is similar ambiguity when a former manager engages in their new hometown. If you find yourself in that role or dealing with someone in that role, here are some considerations:

1. **Before volunteering to serve in an official capacity in the community where you live or worked, check in with the current manager.** Listen to discern whether your participation will be helpful and not an impediment.
2. **No two will lead and manage an organization the same way, yet both may be successful in the end.** Consider that if former staff reach out to talk about the new leadership. Keep your conversations focused on personal, not professional, topics.
3. **Keep your counsel private.** If you think your colleague is making poor decisions or seems off track, offer your professional expertise in private. Once offered, step back. Even as a former practitioner and resident, you may not have the insider perspective and all the facts. Also, differences of opinion or approach are not cause for going around your colleague. Standing at the dais at a public meeting or talking with the elected officials should be the very last resort held for ethical or legal matters.
4. **The right to do something doesn't mean it is the right thing to do.** Think about that as you weigh your engagement in your former or current community.

Returning to Tenet 1, if we believe that professional management is essential to efficient and democratic local government, then it is incumbent on all of us to do our best to respect and, in a constructive way, support our colleagues.

Martha Perego, ICMA-CM, is director of member services and ethics director, ICMA, Washington, D.C. (mperego@icma.org).

Has Your City Considered a Disc Golf Course?

By Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator, Rainier

Disc golf has become an increasingly popular sport all throughout Oregon over the past several years. Many cities have either built courses from scratch on underutilized properties or added this amenity to their existing parks.

Building a disc golf course can be a fairly simple process for even the smallest of cities. The upfront costs can be kept low and the ongoing maintenance costs are also minimal.

I was fortunate enough to be able to help spearhead the effort to bring a disc golf course to the City of Aurora while serving as that town's city recorder. Now, almost a year after its completion, the course is widely used by Aurora residents and visitors to the community.

It all started with the reformation of the city's Parks Committee. A half dozen citizen volunteers met monthly in the council chambers and looked at all of the city owned properties to see what could be done with them.

Naturally, some city properties were simply inappropriate for park use. But the committee focused on a nine-acre parcel located in a flood zone. There were challenges associated with this piece of property, mostly, the presence of invasive species like Japanese knotweed.

The City had received some funding to do a mitigation project and spent it hiring a crew to clear some of the invasive species from the property. This made it much more accessible and easier to determine what could be done with it.

Staff and committee members soon realized that the property would require additional work before it would be feasible to make it a park. Japanese knotweed is very difficult to get rid of, and the process of eliminating it can sometimes take years.

Consequentially, the committee turned to making improvements at the current city park. It was suggested that a disc golf course could be built there, instead of the nine-acre property.

I toured the park with members of the committee to determine if it would be possible. The park has a tree grove area that turned out to be ideal for disc golf holes. I used my experience as an avid disc golfer to design a nine-hole course that wraps around the park's perimeter. That design was submitted to the city council along with the committee's recommendation.

Council had already set aside some funds in the city budget for park improvements. A set of nine disc golf baskets came



in at just a few thousand dollars, making it well within budget. The only other thing that was needed was some signage, which did not add much to the overall cost.

Once the baskets were delivered to city hall, it didn't take long for the public works department to go and put them in place. We did a grand opening, with business owners and community members coming out to try the course. It was a smashing success.

The committee is now considering adding nine holes to the nine-acre city property, now that it's being cleaned up. I've since moved on to be the City Administrator in Rainier, but still stop by Aurora to play the course and beam with pride as I see others enjoying it.

Even though Rainier already has a disc golf course at its main park, a committee has been formed and is already discussing adding nine holes to another city-owned property. Given my past experience, I'm up to the challenge of designing another course in Rainier, if the committee and council agree that it's something they want.



After much discussion and debate, the leadership of the LOC has made the difficult decision to cancel the 96th Annual Conference, scheduled for October 21-23 in Bend.

We did not arrive at this decision easily. Recognizing the importance of this event to our members statewide, we met with many of our key stakeholders to elicit feedback and opinions. We weighed the addition of more restrictive safety measures and information we received from the Oregon Health Authority. Perhaps most critically though, we worked together with leadership from our host city and their mayor, Sally Russell, to determine what would be in the best interest for all involved. [Read the full statement on the LOC website](#)



Still Time to Register!

2021 ICMA Annual Conference
October 3 – 6, 2021
Oregon Convention Center, Portland

Join your local government management peers from around the world for professional development, connection, growing in the profession, and enjoying each other’s company again. With more than 150 educational sessions, keynotes, trailblazer speakers, roundtables, workshops, mobile workshops, and solution stage sessions, there will be plenty of opportunities to learn from and with your peers and industry professions.

Registration for the 2021 ICMA Annual Conference is open, visit conference.icma.org for more information.

2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 3-6
ICMA Conference
Oregon Convention Center, Portland

TBD
OCCMA Board of Directors Meeting & Annual Membership Meeting
Date to be set after Special OCCMA Board Meeting on September 21

November 18 – 19
OCCMA Board of Directors Retreat
Oregon Garden, Silverton

RETIREMENTS



Dale Shafer Retires

By Dan Bartlett, Senior Advisor

On June 15, the Oregon North Coast Managers group held its first in-person meeting since we started Zooming because of Covid. The meeting was to honor Dale Shafer's years of service to the City of

Nehalem, first as City Recorder then as City Manager. Shafer retired in June and mentored Melissa Thompson-Kiefer, who has been promoted to City Manager/Recorder.

At the July 9 OCCMA Board of Directors meeting, Shafer was nominated for lifetime membership in the organization by President Steve Powers, President-Elect Susie Marston and LOC Operations and Member Engagement Director Christy Wurster. The Board voted to confer this honor on Shafer. OCCMA bylaws state that "lifetime membership represents the highest honor afforded to retired members. Lifetime members shall be chosen because of distinguished service in the field of city or county management during his or her management career and lasting and meaningful contributions to the OCCMA and the profession of local government."

The nomination memo noted that "Dale enjoyed a successful career in municipal government for over 30 years. She began working in local government in 1979 as the City Clerk for the City of Athena. In 1987, she became the City Administrator, City Recorder, Treasurer, City Planner and Municipal Judge."

The nomination recognized Shafer's service to the profession. She served on the OCCMA Board of Directors and several committees, including the Host Committee for the Portland ICMA Conference. She was a member of the Oregon Association of Municipal Recorders (OAMR). She served on its board, as president and on several committees. OAMR awarded her its President's Award of Distinction in 2020.

Thompson-Kiefer wrote the nomination for Shafer's OAMR President's Award of Distinction in 2020. In it she wrote:

"Dale exemplifies how to get the job done with calm and confident efficiency. She is skilled at guiding the City Council through quick but productive meetings and their brevity is envied throughout the region. Throughout her

career, Dale has been dedicated to service to the profession and her contributions to OAMR are numerous. She has always shown a willingness to share her financial skills and administrative talent and experience. Dale served on the Audit Committee for

seven consecutive years and the Bylaws Committee for five consecutive years. She has also lent her talents to the Scholarship Committee, Mentoring Committee, Conference Committee, Special Projects Fundraising Committee and Ad Hoc Treasurer Committee. Dale served as a leader on the Board as Region I Director from 2013 to 2015, as Second Vice-President in 2014 to 2015, First Vice-President in 2015 to 2016 and President in 2016 to 2017. One of Dale's great leadership qualities is her commitment to professional development. She likes to say, 'The more you know, the better you are.' Dale consistently demonstrates this by supporting her staff and colleagues to help them reach their full potential. When she hired me as her Assistant, one of the very first things she directed me to do was to join OAMR. Dale provides strong support and mentorship and is a trusted colleague for many fellow Recorders and Managers."

Shafer served on several professional committees during her service. This included the Local Government Personnel Institute Advisory Committee/Small Cities Representative, PERS Advisory Committee, the Energy Deregulation Committee and the Small Cities Planning Commission.

She became an ICMA Member in 2013 and was recognized for 30 Years of Service by ICMA in 2020.



Dale and her son John Shafer (Umatilla County Commissioner), along with her grandson, Michael.



Warrenton City Manager to Retire

By Nicole Bales

Published in *The Astorian*, Jun 22, 2021

City Manager Linda Engbretson announced her retirement Tuesday night after more than 25 years with the city.

Engbretson, the former city recorder, was hired as the interim city manager in 2016 following the resignation

of former City Manager Kurt Fritsch.

Fritsch left amid a controversy over the Eighth Street Dam, and Engbretson was offered the position permanently later that year.

Her retirement is effective Sept. 30.

Engbretson said her retirement was planned. She said she is willing to continue on an interim basis until a new city manager is hired to ensure a smooth transition.

“I have spent the last 26 years as an employee of the city of Warrenton, the last five as the city manager,” Engbretson said during a City Commission meeting. “It has been one of the greatest honors of my life to serve the public in this community. I was born in Astoria, but Warrenton has been my community. I am truly grateful to the citizens, the commission and the incredible staff for their support over the years.”

Mayor Henry Balensifer recognized Engbretson for taking the helm during a hectic and transitional time for the city.

“It’s a sad day for Warrenton,” Balensifer said. “And we thank you for what you’ve done.”

2021 OCCMA Board of Directors

PRESIDENT:

Steve Powers, City Manager, Salem

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Susie Marston, City Manager, Gervais

SECRETARY-TREASURER:

Mike Cully, Executive Director, LOC

PAST PRESIDENT:

Spencer Nebel, City Manager, Newport

DIRECTORS

Zoe Monahan Mombert, Assist to CM, Wilsonville

Rachael Fuller, In Transition

Adam Brown, City Manager, Ontario

Heidi Bell, City Manager, Donald

Dan Huff, City Manager, Molalla

Aaron Palmquist, City Manager, Irrigon

Brian Sjothun, City Manager, Medford

John Walsh, City Administrator, St. Helens



SAVE THE DATE

March 15-18, 2022

Northwest Regional Management Conference

Skamania Lodge,
Stevenson, Washington

Oregon Senior Advisors



From
**Sheila
Ritz**

Jeff Hecksel, Hood River County Administrator

Did you know that over 70 percent of the land in Hood River County is publicly owned? That's a fact.

In May 2020, the county's public safety five-year local option levy passed, which addressed its funding problems. Also, the price of logs now is very high, so its forest operations are doing very well. The county has 3-4,000 acres of forest land. Federal funds have also helped, so the county is no longer in a bleak financial condition. County leaders will be addressing funding resiliency going forward.

In recent strategic planning sessions, staff received guidance from the Board of Commissioners for their work efforts going forward. The primary guidance from the Board involves increasing housing diversity and affordability and fostering financial strength and stability.

Hecksel said that an impact on the area from the pandemic has been that the housing market demand has increased dramatically. Once people found that working from home was very effective, more people started moving to an environment they prefer.

The City of Hood River and the county are working together on affordable housing projects. The city and county have each purchased some property for such a project, but the parcels are not contiguous. A consultant for the city has developed some possibilities of what affordable housing projects could look like at these locations. The city and county are partners in the solicitation process to obtain proposals. The county's construction excise tax funds could possibly be used to assist the city in this effort.

The county's campgrounds are open again. There are several very popular forest trails, some for motorized vehicles, some for horses, and some for mountain bikes or pedestrians. There are volunteer organizations

that help maintain these trails. The county is also considering requiring a parking permit to help fund the trail program.



Ann Ober, Milwaukie City Manager

Ober said city employees are all back working in the office again.

The city held a party on Main Street in June for a Juneteenth celebration. Another party is being planned on Main Street the last week of August to encourage people to shop local.

The city is planning for a new city hall with expected move-in date in two years. An existing building was purchased one block away from the current city hall. The building needs to be remodeled, but it is a much larger building and will accommodate all city hall staff and the Development Services staff, which has been at a separate location.

The city library opened for browsing the later part of June.



Anthony Hooper, Lake Oswego Deputy City Manager

As of July 1, Hooper is now full-time Deputy City Manager rather than splitting his time between that and the Public Works Director role. His primary responsibility

is the overall supervision of the large wastewater treatment plant project that is underway. He has been very involved with the city budget development and supervises its communications and outreach function. Madison Thesing is the primary staff person for communications and outreach and she was promoted to Assistant to the City Manager at the beginning of the year.

The wastewater treatment plant project is a progressive design/build project. It is being accomplished through a public/private partnership between the cities of Lake Oswego and Portland, and EPCOR, who

will operate and maintain the plant upon completion. The existing plant was built in 1965 on 13 acres by the Willamette River and is owned by the city of Portland. DEQ requires substantial upgrades to this plant in order to certify its continued use. A study was completed, which resulted in determining it would be most cost effective to build a new plant with current technology. The new plant will be owned by the city of Lake Oswego and only requires six acres. Lake Oswego is currently working on property acquisition located adjacent to the existing plant but back away from the river. Lake Oswego will use approximately 65 percent of the new plant capacity and Portland using the other 35 percent capacity. Eventually, the 13-acre site of the existing Portland-owned plant on the river will be available for redevelopment.

An innovative method will be used in the new wastewater treatment plant: Aqua-Nerda technology. This will provide enhanced efficiency, less use of chemicals and promote environmental stewardship. The energy consumption for operations is expected to be 40-50 percent less. The City has applied for funding from the Water Infrastructure Finance Innovation Act (an EPA loan). There will be three fully-enclosed buildings on the site that will look like office buildings, meaning no more unsightly view and any smell will be contained. One of the best things about the project for the community is that it will be accomplished without any increase in utility rates, as compared to upgrading the existing plant. Sounds like a WIN/WIN for everyone!



Jacquie Betz, Gladstone City Administrator

Betz has been with Gladstone for five years now. City employees moved into their new City Hall/Civic Center in April 2020. She has continued to work in City Hall every day since the Covid-19 shutdown. The city's biggest accomplishment in 2020 was the completion of the new \$13.5 million Gladstone Civic Center, on-time and within budget! The City also completed the Trolley Trail Bridge Feasibility Study for a replacement bridge at the Clackamas River in the same location and developed a new Gladstone Brand & Tourism Strategy.

Under the library settlement agreement, Clackamas County took over the operations of the city's library last year. The county will have a design decision in the

next few months for the new library. The city is providing the property for the new library (the old City Hall site). In November this year, the property will be turned over to Clackamas County and then the old city hall will be demolished to make way for the new construction. There are a number of structural problems with the old city hall building, so the city hasn't been able to rent it out for another use.

The Council's goals are to focus on affordable housing and redevelopment, parks and facilities. Council and staff are working on implementing the City's Downtown Revitalization Plan that was adopted in 2017. They also need to complete the Housing Needs Analysis and the Community Engagement Strategy. They have received proposals for a consultant to prepare a site plan for improvements at Meldrum Bar Park (87 acres) at the confluence of the Willamette and Clackamas rivers. Parking fee stations have been implemented at the park. As for facilities, staff will be conducting planning, design, financing and construction of a Public Works Facility upgrade to meet critical facility requirements and support increased demands and staff needs. Another project is the Charter Review Process.



Nina Vetter, Gresham City Manager

Vetter started work as the new Gresham City Manager on June 28. She is originally from Connecticut. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from

George Washington University and her MPA from Northern Illinois University.

Her previous position was CAO/District Manager of Pueblo West Metropolitan District, Colorado since 2019. From 2013 to 2018, she worked for the City of Colorado Springs, first as a senior budget management analyst and then as a contract compliance specialist. Vetter has worked in local and federal government positions since 2009.

I talked with Vetter when she had only been on the job for two weeks. She's mostly been spending her time meeting and listening to people. She did tell me that the Council's primary priorities are financial stability and DEI. The city had hired Dr. Mason to conduct a DEI analysis on the entire city organization and that work is in progress.

Welcome to Oregon, Nina!



From
**Dan
Bartlett**

North Coast Managers

The best part of preparing for this submission was the traveling to city halls and meeting face to face with managers and staff.



Elsewhere in this Newsletter is an article on **Dale Schafer's** retirement from **Nehalem**. My last visit for preparing this article was with **Melissa Thompson-Kiefer**, **Nehalem** city manager/recorder. Melissa provided me with photos of

Dale and the nomination that she prepared for Dale's OAMR President's Award of Distinction in 2020. Nehalem is working on the scope of a construction project to replace their Public Works Building. The trusses are failing. They have rough design concepts and will be getting preliminary cost estimates developed. They have an agreement with Manzanita to use raw water from Anderson Creek. They are looking at using that water and are doing a water rate study. They have received some funding from the state for the water infrastructure improvements. In 2019 they updated their Comprehensive Plan and are working on an update to their development code.

Tim Grossnickle, Interim **Wheeler** City Manager/ Public Works Director invited me to a staff meeting with their mayor, Doug Honeycutt, new clerical assistant, Mary Johnson, and Liqaa Ransier, their finance person with title of Office Manager who is from Iraq. His email inviting me noted that "Mary campaigned for and won a position on the Tillamook County Transportation board before applying with us." Tim is planning an orderly transition of staffing for Wheeler as he plans for his retirement. I have had Mary added to our North Coast Managers group to receive notification of future Zoom and in person meetings. Part of our meeting was looking at the city's boundaries and areas for potential development and conversion of derelict properties.



Seaside's City Hall is across Highway 101 from Seaside Brewery. I scheduled my visit with City Manager **Mark Winstanley** at 11 a.m. Any guess where I went for lunch? Mark has set his retirement date for next year. He began work in Seaside as Finance Director in

September 1985. Their City Manager was Larry Lehman (now Senior Advisor). Mark will retire after 20 years as City Manager. They have been setting records for room tax collections for 4 quarters in a row. The increase has been between 7-8% per quarter. They are stunned by the number of folks coming to the beach. Bids have been high for projects. The city has chosen not to award at this time and wait for later. Seaside offices never closed. They were locked up for a week and saw folks by appointment. Their City Hall is designed so that they later allowed a set number of people in the lobby at one time. They would tell the receptionist who they needed to see. Mark said that he was proud of how all the city employees handled the situation. The library met the needs of citizens and had a drive-up window. People now want this feature kept into the future.

The highlight of this period was the 2021 OCCMA Summer Conference July 6-9. There was a great turnout. I made a list of 24 folks that I talked with during breaks and meals. Some were members and others were vendors. It was great to catch up on what was happening with everyone. We had a special visit from Roger Jordan, Senior Advisor Emeritus. And it was great to have 2021-2022 ICMA President-Elect, Jeff Towery, city manager of McMinnville, at the session along with Peter Troedsson, City Manager, Albany, Oregon (Vice President, West Coast region).

More personal pleasure was to have my oldest son and his family come to the Resort on Friday. It was like our early years at Summer Conference at the Inn of the 7th Mountain. Several of us had our families along and our kids would use the pool, the snack bar and many of the organized activities provided by the Resort. They learned early on how to "charge it to our parents' room."



From
**Gary
Milliman**



Jessica Ginsburg is the new City Administrator for **Port Orford**, effective June 7. She is a resident of Port Orford and previously worked for the Coos Forest Protective Association as an Accounting Manager. Ginsburg has also assisted the Port of Port

Orford in grant writing. Her experience has included about 20 years in the private sector at increasing levels of responsibility in accounting. She holds both a BS and an MBA, with emphasis in finance and accounting, from the University of Phoenix. Ginsburg is well-travelled and has resided in Tokyo, Hong Kong and graduated from high school at Singapore American School.



Deanna Schafer was appointed as Reedsport City Manager in mid-December. She began her career at Reedsport in 2004. Two years later, Schafer was hired as the City Recorder/Administrative Assistant, where she served for 14 years under six city managers and

three mayors. In 2020, she was appointed for two consecutive six-month terms as the interim City Manager and in December, was appointed City Manager by unanimous vote of the City Council.

Schafer attended Southwestern Oregon Community College and Chemeketa Community College with an emphasis towards Accounting, Legal and Business Management programs. She has been a resident of the community since 1982, graduating from Reedsport High School in 1987.

When she isn't working, she enjoys spending time in the outdoors, riding her horses, playing with her dog and caring for their home and land.



From
**Dave
Kanner**



The **Coquille** City Council has selected **Forrest Neurburg** as City Manager effective mid-July. Neurburg served as City Manager in Monte Vista, Colo., for seven years, and in Center, Colo., for three years. He served as Interim/Deputy City Manager in Douglas,

Wyo. for two years, where he also served as Community Development Director. Prior to entering the city management profession, Neurburg served as Executive Director of the Wyoming Housing Network, La Plata Regional Housing Authority and Teton County Housing. An ICMA member, Forrest has a BA in Journalism from Colorado State University. He is also a U.S. Marine Corps veteran.



Like the bird of myth, Phoenix is rising from the ashes. **Phoenix** City Manager **Eric Swanson** says great progress is being made on rebuilding or replacing the 700 structures (600 of them housing units) that were lost in the Almeda fire last September. When we

spoke in late April, Phoenix had issued building permits for 114 housing units (50 single-family and 64 multi-family) and the 200+ unit Bear Lakes Estates mobile home park had been cleared of all debris and was ready to have new homes brought in and set up on the rebuilt home pads. Eric told me the speed of the re-build is driven mostly by the speed of the "ash and trash" removal process, but added, "I've been amazed at how quickly that process has gone." The priority has been on residential properties and Eric estimates that 70-80% of them have been cleared of fire debris. Eric has also focused a lot of attention on a number of projects aimed at restoring public infrastructure that was lost to the fire. That includes \$120,000 worth of water meters, as well as irrigation systems, playground equipment and a city-owned building that was used as crew quarters by the fire district. Surprisingly, not a

single business that was destroyed in the fire has applied for a building permit. Some of that is because commercial sites have been a lower priority for debris removal, but Eric also thinks many businesses are weighing their options and considering whether to rebuild or sell. In the meantime, the city is working with SOREDI (the local economic development agency), which is doing direct outreach to those businesses to make them aware of available assistance. The Almeda fire also directly impacted the city budget due to lost water revenues and utility fees, which Eric has been backfilling with forgivable FEMA loans. As if all this isn't enough, there's still a city to run, and Eric has high praise for his Police and Public Works departments, which have been able to maintain service levels throughout the recovery ordeal. Lastly, Eric has a new mayor, who, he says, has been "super positive" and a mostly new council that has been "cohesive and great to work with through this process."

Over in **Lakeview**, indefatigable Town Manager **Michele Parry** told me she is mulling a plan to market the town – which is the highest-elevation city in Oregon – as the biggest "dark sky" venue in the world. "It's amazing what you see when the moon is not out," she told me. "It's absolutely gorgeous!" When not working on this pie in the sky – or I should say "eyes to the sky" plan – Michele has plenty of other things to work on. She has hired a new "amazing" finance director and says the budget is looking good. A year ago, when I helped Michele prepare her FY '21 budget, things were not looking so good. I was very glad to hear that she's been able to straighten everything out. She is also launching a huge undertaking to improve an extremely run-down section of town where, she says, people are living in what could be charitably described as substandard conditions. She has taken the initial steps toward creating an urban renewal district and is also looking into stepped-up code enforcement. Other items on her plate include a development project in the town's north-end industrial area that has run into difficulties due to price increases and materials shortages, and construction of a new splash pad funded by a grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. She also has two new city councilors and has already engaged her council in a goal-setting exercise. She's feeling good about the council, and confident that the goal-setting will help everyone stay focused.

One final note: Michele told me that Lakeview has a "pay what you can" municipal golf course. There's no set green fee, you just deposit some money in a drop box at the first tee. For a golfer like me (when I play golf, I don't wear a watch; I wear a compass), that sounds like my kind of course!

Jackson County managers held their regional meetings via Zoom (again) in March, April and May. In attendance, along with representatives of special districts and state agencies, were **Chris Clayton, Central Point; Danny Jordan, Jackson County; Mark Reagles, Rogue River; Brian Sjothun, Medford; Eric Swanson, Phoenix; and Jessica Simpson, Gold Hill**. Much of the discussion at the March meeting focused on what local governments are planning to do with their share of American Rescue Plan funding. The April meeting included discussion of whether people would mandate that employees get Covid vaccines (it doesn't sound like anyone will) and reopening city halls to the public. While most had reopened on at least a limited basis, few members of the public were coming in. As Chris Clayton wryly observed, "We've learned a lot about how to work remotely, but so has the public." Chris also reported that Central Point has increased its parks maintenance fee and will dedicate the increased funding to reduce fire risk on the Bear Creek Greenway. Danny Jordan reported that he has budgeted \$450,000 for fuels reduction work on the Greenway. Fire season isn't half over as I write this, but there have already been more than a dozen small fires reported in Jackson County. Discussion in May was (among other things) about the problems people are having filling vacant positions, a problem that's not unique to the public sector.

I'd like to close with a brief shout-out to **Jessica Simpson**, who is stepping down from the city manager position in **Gold Hill** and returning to her prior position as city recorder. The city manager position will likely have been filled by the time you read this. Gold Hill went a year-and-a-half without a city manager (not something I'd recommend) after the departure of Rick Hohnbaum, then finally hired a manager in August 2019, who lasted only three months before exiting. Jessica, who had been hired at about the same time as city recorder – her first-ever public sector job – stepped in as city manager and, in my opinion, did an absolutely phenomenal job. She straightened out the city's finances, did some long-overdue municipal code clean-up and even a little bit of remodeling at city hall.

Well done, Jessica. You'll be a tough act to follow!

It was great to see so many of you at the summer conference in Bend. Let's hope the resurgence of COVID due to the delta variant doesn't scuttle the ICMA conference in October!



From
**Larry
Lehman**



Irrigon City Manager Aaron Palmquist said he is very pleased with the strong relationship the city has with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). That agency has funded major improvements in the sidewalks and planting areas downtown and is

scheduled to do another 14 blocks in the very near future.

The housing stock is growing quickly, with at least 67 new single-family home this year, and many more in the planning stage. There are also a number of new businesses ready to locate in the community.

Major improvements have been made in the sewer collection system and the wastewater treatment plant.

Aaron, reports he has a very stable and effective work force.



On May 21, I had a great discussion with **Pendleton City Manager Robb Corbett**. He stated how the federal American Rescue Plan Act has been a big help to the

city in getting through this Covid crises.

He stated that the city is still working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency on the 2019 McKay Creek Flooding and last year's Umatilla River flooding.

We discussed the housing situation. The prices of homes in Pendleton have been very stable over the past 20 years, rising very slowly until the last year and a half, when they seem to be going up at rates equal to the Portland Metro area.

The drone activities at the Pendleton Airport are continuing to increase and now employ about 75 people. The future is unknown but looks very positive for this section of the local economy.

Corbett expects several senior staff members to retire this year and will be working to make sure those positions are filled with competent and caring people.

In early March, I met with **Umatilla City Manager David Stockman**. That city has seen an increase of 180 housing units in the last three years. This is approximately a 10 percent increase in the housing stock.

Umatilla's population is growing rapidly, approaching four percent per year, and new business are moving into the area.

The biggest boost to the city is Amazon. Two data centers have been completed, a third is being constructed and a fourth is planned. These are big dollars to the city via payment in lieu of taxes with the enterprise zone and then income from the electrical franchise fee.

David is proud and pleased with his city staff and appreciates a good relationship with his Mayor and City Council.

Please feel free to call or email the senior advisor in your area if you need assistance.

Dan Bartlett – (503) 791-8060, drbartlet@charter.net

Wes Hare – (541) 947-3700, wehares@comcast.net

Dave Kanner – (541) 851-1267, dave_kanner@yahoo.com

Larry Lehman – (541) 377-3771, larry@wtechlink.us

Sheila Ritz – (503) 698-5171, sheilaritz.sa@gmail.com

David Clyne – (541) 905-3230, davidclyne29@gmail.com

Gary Milliman – (541) 813-9267, gmilliman@brookings.or.us

Dave Waffle – (503) 360-6797, dwaffle.cm@gmail.com



OCCMA
Oregon City/County
Management Association

1201 Court St. NE, Suite 200
Salem, OR 97301

**"OUR MISSION IS TO SUPPORT AND
STIMULATE OUR MEMBERS AND THE
PROFESSION IN ORDER TO FOSTER
RESPONSIBLE, RESPONSIVE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT WITH THE OBJECTIVE
OF IMPROVING THE LIVABILITY OF
OREGON COMMUNITIES."**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
WWW.OCCMA.ORG

Answers for Splash Pads: A Guessing Game

- 1. Keizer**
- 2. Ontario**
- 3. Woodburn**
- 4. Oregon City**
- 5. Wilsonville**
- 6. McMinnville**