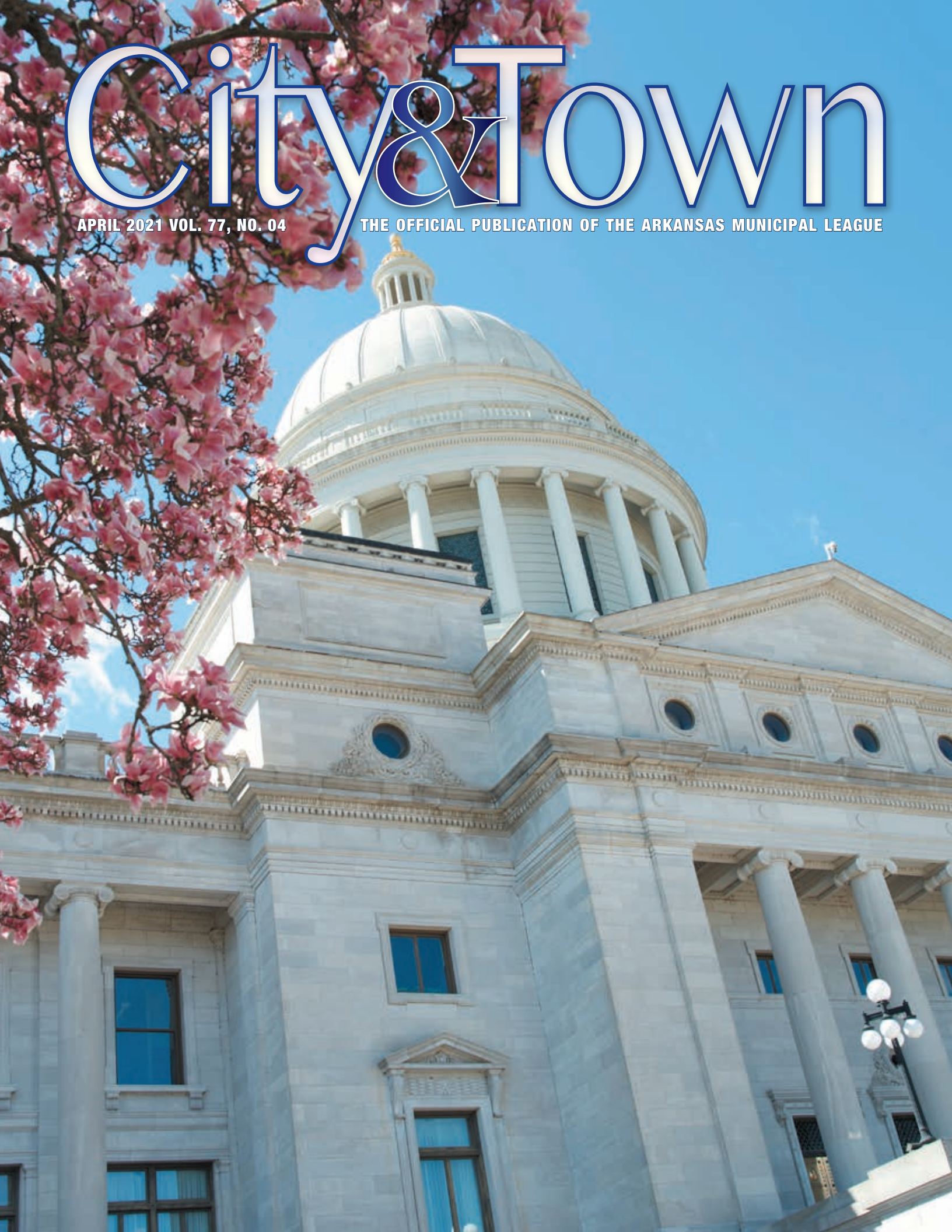


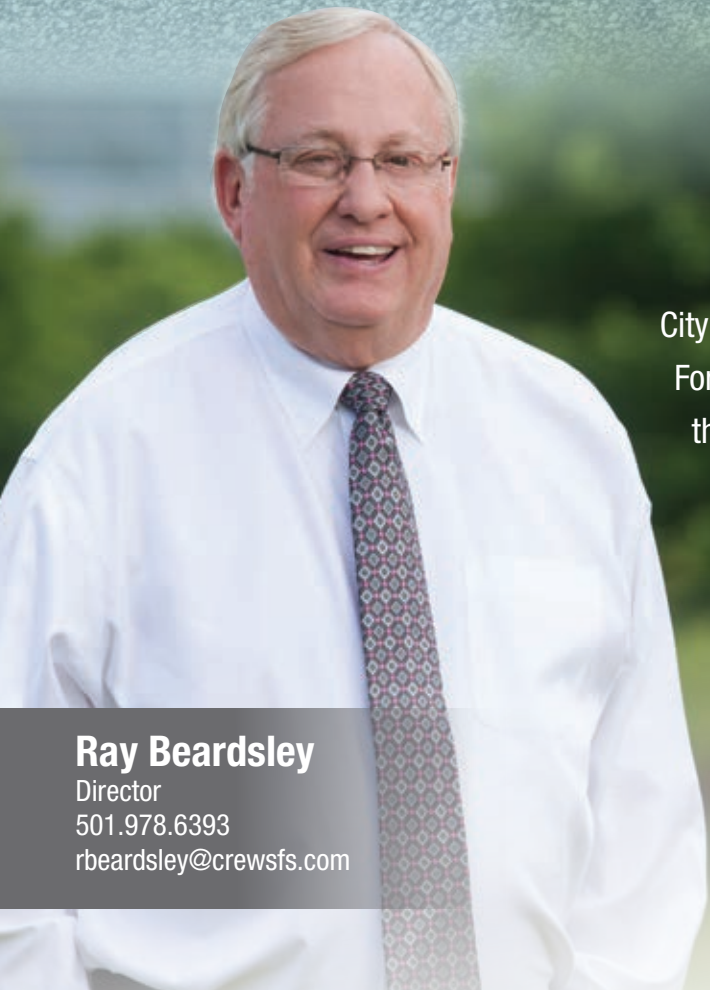
City & Town

APRIL 2021 VOL. 77, NO. 04

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE



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Cover photo by Ben Cline.



ON THE COVER—The pink and white blooms of the saucer magnolias were on full display on a recent March afternoon at the Arkansas State Capitol. Delayed by February’s historic winter storm and a weeklong spring break last month, the legislative session continues and is scheduled to conclude later this month. The League’s team has been busy advocating for our legislative priorities, and their work continues. Read a brief update on the session from Executive Director Mark Hayes in his monthly letter beginning on page 6, and look for a complete session review in the near future. Read also inside about NLC’s virtual Congressional Cities Conference in March, tips for hosting professional public meetings in the virtual realm, the economic and cultural benefits of heritage tourism, the importance of self-reflection in combating implicit bias and much more.—atm

Features

14 NLC touts the ARP at virtual Congressional Cities Conference

One year after its last in-person meeting in Washington, D.C., the National League of Cities gathered local leaders from across the nation together for a virtual Congressional Cities Conference March 7-10, and officials from the administration and congress shared updates on the newly passed American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and other essential issues affecting cities and towns.

20 Centennial celebrations

Two Arkansas cities and one town—Flippin in Marion County, Fountain Hill in Ashley County and Pollard in Clay County—mark 100 years of incorporation in 2021.

23 Cities with stories to tell

Heritage tourism is expected to flourish in the years ahead, and Arkansas cities and towns that have stories to tell and the ability to uniquely package their cultural history are in a great position to draw repeat visitors with experiences that resonate.

24 Professional meeting etiquette still applies in virtual realm

While the virtual meetings that have prevailed during the COVID-19 pandemic—and could likely continue in popularity as we move beyond the current public health crisis—are quite a different experience than their in-person counterparts, the expectation of professionalism remains the same.

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April greetings to my fellow municipal officials,

Last month I told you that March was my favorite month. I did not realize at the time that this year would be an exception. I say that because going through back surgery in March 2021 set me back more than just a little. I am grateful for the pain relief the surgery gave me, it's just the recovery that seems to drag on and on that is discouraging. Several of you knew about my surgery and I thank you for sending the messages, texts and cards encouraging me to get well soon.



I was expecting to spend some time in Little Rock at the State Capitol with the League staff in support of our legislative priorities this year, but that was not possible. I was only able to make one trip before my surgery. We have a tremendously professional and effective League legislative team to fight our battles for us. League General Counsel John Wilkerson leads this team and is backed up by Executive Director Mark Hayes. They, along with Jack Critcher, Blake Gary, Lanny Richmond, Sheila Boyd, Jason Carter, Mark Stodola, Steve Napper and Little Rock's Emily Cox continue their remarkable work week after week ensuring what is important to Arkansas' cities and towns is heard loud and clear by our legislators.

Building positive and strong relationships is extremely important, and that has paid off in how our team has partnered with the Arkansas Association of Counties to help get some high-priority bills passed. Two of those bills are SB305, which increases the bid threshold for public works projects from \$35,000 to \$50,000, and SB456, which increases the bid threshold for commodities from \$20,000 to \$35,000. We are appreciative of the success our team is having. Congratulations to them for a job well done.

Continuing my push for all of Arkansas' cities and towns to take advantage of the five major benefit programs offered by our League, I am begging you to be prepared by utilizing these highly rated benefit programs. Please visit the Municipal Property Program and the Municipal Vehicle Program's new interactive, full-service web portals: www.arml.org/mpp and www.arml.org/mvp.

With warm regards until next month, may God bless you and bless you indeed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Baxter".

Gary Baxter
Mayor, Mulberry
President, Arkansas Municipal League

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

April showers bring May flowers

This month I write in two parts. Two columns if you will. One is very personal, and it is done with the hope of helping somebody. The other, metaphorically, speaks to our state's next steps as the rain of the legislative session comes to an end and we seek to enjoy whatever flowers we may have from those many legislative proposals.



Wells¹

I'll never feel the same way about the month of April. I'll likely never see my birthday of April 3 in the same light. My family will forever be haunted by April, particularly the 18th. A dark anniversary arrives at Casa Hayes on the 18th of April, 2021. One year will have passed since my family lost their son, brother, cousin, grandchild and nephew. On April 18, 2020, as the reality of the COVID pandemic was settling upon all of us, Wells Curry Bratton died from an opioid overdose. Specifically, fentanyl.² He smoked it in his bathroom, standing in front of the mirror in boxer shorts and as the warmth of the drug coursed through his veins he passed out, collapsed, vomited and aspirated.³ Then he died. He was not more than 40 steps from me and Alison. We slept right through it, never heard a thing.

We discovered his body about 9:45 a.m., and all hell broke loose. I started chest compressions and Alison called 911. As hard as I tried to save his life, I couldn't. I didn't. Now, 12 months later those images from his bathroom, of the body bag and public safety vehicles, remain crystal clear. Alison's shrieks stay in my mind with clarity as well. I hear them. I hear them a lot. It's the most gut wrenching, painful and horrifying sound I've ever known. I dearly hope you never suffer them. I dearly hope you never have to face the death of a child because of addiction. It is life cut short prematurely. It's a wound you don't recover from. Rather, you learn to cope.⁴

My mind is wandering as I write this column. I see visions of Wells and our family in happy times as well as in the excruciating mask of death when I saw him last. The 18th will cause tears in our home, no doubt about it. We'll look at pictures, tell stories and quote the million funny things he said and did over the years. We'll call relatives in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Laurel and points in between. Hopefully we will not only survive the day but start another year not just remembering his many wonderful traits but also celebrating him and the many things he did. We don't want him defined by his addiction and death. He was more than that.

It has been a year of firsts since Wells died. Our first summer without him. The first Memorial and Labor days since his death. The first Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Eve without hearing his voice and laughter. These firsts have been very difficult for all of us but none more so than Alison. Maternal feelings are powerful. The connection between mother and child is like nothing else on Earth. Never was it on more powerful display than on Wells' 24th birthday in February. Alison created a remembrance ceremony for the entire family to partake in. We gathered on the small fishing dock at our neighborhood pond at dusk. Alison had 24 white balloons to signify his

¹ www.arml.org/static/arml/2020_05_City_and_Town_WEB.pdf In last year's May column I wrote of Wells and the specifics of his death. I also noted that our state, much like the nation, was and continues to suffer from the COVID pandemic and the opioid epidemic. With COVID vaccines rolling out in record time, it is my supreme hope that the pandemic will be a memory by this time next year. We have much work to do, however, regarding the opioid crisis.

² Heroin and fentanyl are both "opioids." The primary difference between them is heroin is a natural byproduct of morphine and fentanyl is "man made." Both substances give the user an immediate rush and intense pleasure. The effect of the drug is almost immediate upon consumption. The two share a similar dark side as well. Obviously, they are both deadly, however fentanyl can be far more lethal. The smallest amounts of pure fentanyl can kill. Moreover, the largest percentage of users suffer crippling depression and/or anxiety. Given the pleasure both give to the user, it's easy to see where those with emotional issues use the drugs to escape and "feel good" albeit for a short period of time. www.verywellmind.com/what-heroin-effects-feel-like-22047, americanaddictioncenters.org/fentanyl-treatment/similarities

³ Aspiration means breathing foreign objects into your airway. For those who are super intoxicated, laying on one's back and vomiting while in the process of or after passing out can be deadly. <https://rdcu.be/ch6M6>.

⁴ This article does a good job of describing the pain parents feel regardless of the age or cause of death of their child. healgrief.org/grieving-the-death-of-a-child/

birthday and one blue one “to grow on.”⁵ We each spoke about him in our own way. We did our best to celebrate his life. We did our best to forget the horror of the previous months and year. It was beautiful and cathartic.

As we face April the 18th, I know my family will be strong and resilient. I also know that it likely will be one of the hardest days any of us have ever known. We must, however, be strong and persevere. It’s what Wells wants from us. It’s what this opioid epidemic demands of us. It’s rain that brings flowers and it’s in those flowers where we begin to see new life. Out of the dismal days of rain and thunder new life pops from the soil. Grass becomes green and thick. Trees sprout leaves in a magical display of growth. Flowers erupt in waves of color and texture. The air buzzes with new life. Let us hope that the “rain” of death stops and that healing flowers across our state.

As this awful Year One concludes, it is incumbent on all of us to look at our future. We must demand that the opioid epidemic ends. We must stand shoulder to shoulder with the business community, the medical community, the state and the counties to make that happen. To that end I’m hopeful I’ll be able to report as a byproduct of our rainy April a true growth in the settlement negotiations of our historic and unique case against the opioid industry. To start those negotiations in earnest we must first have a signed memorandum of understanding with the state via the attorney general and the governor. They have the agreement in hand signed by myself and my colleague Chris Villines on behalf of the counties. All the appropriate paperwork has been executed and we await the proper signatures on behalf of the state. Stay tuned.

2021 legislative session: More flowers, less weeds

It has been a historic legislative session if only for the unexpected and massive snowstorm that hit our state in February and shut the Capitol down for a full week. Add to it the very first “spring break” recess I can recall the legislature taking most of another week, and unique seems an inadequate description. Finally, both houses have agreed to extend the session to the end of April! If that happens it will be the longest legislative session since 1931.⁶ 1931! I’ve put a few fun facts about 1931 in this footnote.⁷ Your League staff, and in particular your legislative team, has worked diligently but like most of us are wondering when this train actually gets to the station regardless of the extension.

Here are a few bright legislative tulips coming from the session’s rain and a few weeds we’ve so far managed to pluck:

- Mandatory Partisan Elections for All Municipalities—Not just one bill but two, which then morphed into three: HB1655, HB1252 and HB1252 “Lite,”⁸ amended in committee at the very last minute. The State Agencies Committee in the House heard HB1655 and thanks to your calls and texts the bill was soundly defeated. All appeared over until HB1252 popped up on the agenda for the City, County and Local House Committee on March 31. Yep. Two virtually identical bills by the same sponsor, Rep. Penzo from Springdale/Tontitown, in two different committees. Another first in my career. Just before he presented 1252, he offered an amendment to make partisan elections in cities and towns the default but allow municipalities to pass a resolution to be independent...every two years. Same song, second verse. I’m proud to say your efforts defeated 1252 perhaps even more soundly than 1655.⁹ Well done! Weed(s) picked!
- Act 56—Authorizes electronic public meetings held during a declared disaster.¹⁰
- Act 218—Police reform bill addressing part-time police officer hiring.¹¹

⁵ I know we shouldn’t have released them. It’s bad for the environment for sure. It helped us, however. And it gave Alison some peace. So, with that, I apologize to Mother Nature on behalf of the entire family.

⁶ www.arkmed.org/news/2013/05/arkansas-general-assembly-goes-home-after-longest-session-since-the-depression-health-care-and-medicaid-highlight-the-session/

⁷ U.S. life expectancy: Men, 59.4 years; women, 63.1 years. The Empire State Building was completed. popculturemadness.com/PCM/1931/1931-history-trivia-and-fun-facts/ Average cost of a house: \$6,790. Average cost of a car: \$640. The George Washington Bridge opened, connecting New York City and New Jersey. The drought causing the dust bowl began. The movie Frankenstein was released starring Boris Karloff. William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy were born. Thomas Edison died. www.thepeoplehistory.com/1931.html

⁸ Apologies to the Miller Brewing company, although “Tastes Great! Less Filling!” was one of the greatest ad campaigns ever, ranked 8th best by the magazine Advertising Age. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miller_Lite The beer was first made in 1975 and is described as an American Pilsner. www.millerlite.com/our-beer

⁹ It’s possible that HB1655 will be run yet again but in the amended form of 1252. Fingers crossed that Rep. Penzo sees the proverbial light and drops this abomination.

¹⁰ Thank you, Rep. Lanny Fite, Chair of the House City, County and Local Affairs committee.

¹¹ Thank you, Rep. Carol Dalby and Sen. David Wallace.

- Act 339—Clarifies and makes consistent municipal vacancy statutes. Mucho helpful!¹²
- Acts 370, 366, 365 and 518—All designed to provide long-term financial stability to APERS. These are financially sound decisions and we'll all be glad they occurred in the long run.¹³
- Act 517—No more “pothole” reports for municipalities receiving \$2 million or more in highway revenue. One more piece of red tape gone!¹⁴
- Act 435—Makes bidding dollar amounts consistent between cities and counties and clarifies various exceptions. This will make bidding much easier.¹⁵

As I write, the session has not yet ended. There have been a variety of bills attacking local control, some of which are still hanging around and some of which have become law. We're doing our best to keep the train on the tracks during these last few weeks. Kudos to all of you for engaging with your representatives and senators. The success of any session is dependent on that, however this year it was even more important. Be Local, Be Heard!¹⁶ So far, it's been a good session for cities and towns. Yikes, I hope I haven't jinxed it!¹⁷

Flowers re-planted

The local controller and I married in 2007 and moved into our current home. We needed a lot of space given our four children. We needed privacy for the only girl, Bliss, and we needed room for the boys—Franz, Colin and Wells—to wrestle, play video games, shoot hoops and study (occasionally). We bought a barn! Not quite, but it's big. Over the years we've transformed the place into our home. The local controller is most gifted at design and décor. It was not long until the bricks and drywall that surrounded the six of us began to exude love, caring and the emotional binding that a family is capable of. She did all of that and more. God watched over us. We certainly had some bad times. I mean come on, we had teenagers! I wish I had a dollar for every dent, scratch, broken taillight and banged up bumper they had! Our neighbors called more than once about noise, too many cars in the drive, too many in the street and too many blocking other driveways. I swear, some Saturday mornings I would look out front and think I had become a used car dealer. Crazy, but fun most of the time.

Kids, friends, family and many pets have come and gone through our doors. Throughout it all this big ole house gave us physical and mental cover. Our place of unconditional love. Our kids knew that, and their friends did, too. Alison and I have had more than one child ask us for help. As with all good things, however, change is inevitable. With joy in our hearts for what this incredible home has given us, we've decided it's time for our next chapter. We're putting the barn on the market. With all its improvements, and there are many, to its nicks, scratches and slightly worn feeling it'll make another family happy.

We move knowing our family truly lived and loved at 36 Perdido Circle. With the 18th of April looming, and Wells fresh in our hearts, it's time for a new beginning. A new bloom. In the long run, that's what we all want from our April showers: for our families to prosper, to bloom and to enjoy the birth of new beginnings that come with spring.¹⁸

Until next month, Peace.



Mark R. Hayes
Executive Director
Arkansas Municipal League

¹² Thank you, Rep. Jon Milligan (former mayor!).

¹³ Thank you, Rep. Les Warren. More later, but Rep. Warren will soon be my state rep!

¹⁴ Thank you, Rep. Danny Watson and Sen. Jonathan Dismang!

¹⁵ Thank you, Sen. Gary Stubblefield and Rep. Lanny Fite, chairs of the CCLA committees in the senate and house respectively.

¹⁶ Please re-acquaint yourself with this program. Take a look at the website and the materials. Now more than ever, cities and towns are the backbone of the economy. Make yourselves known! www.belocalbeheard.com/

¹⁷ Jinx, or Jynx as it was spelled in the late 1600s, initially referred to charms or spells. Now of course, it's a precursor to misfortune. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jinx

¹⁸ As things currently stand, we will become residents of Hot Springs, at least temporarily. I suspect I'll be talking with each of you a great deal from the car as I commute!



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Central Arkansas to celebrate new holiday

Mark your calendars for May 1, when central Arkansas will celebrate a new holiday: 501 Day.

Most people know 501 as the area code for central Arkansas. Over the years, 501 has come to represent much more than just part of a phone number; 501 has become a symbol of a beautiful, bustling region in the heart of Arkansas.



The Downtown Little Rock Partnership, together with cities, chambers of commerce and community organizations throughout central Arkansas, created 501 Day to celebrate the region they are proud to call home.

"We're starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel of this pandemic, and we wanted to do something to celebrate the beauty and resilience of our region and its local businesses," Gabe Holmstrom, executive director of Downtown Little Rock Partnership, said. "During a brainstorming session one day, we realized we had this great opportunity to celebrate the 501 on 5/01. We got on the phone with some other 501 cities and it snowballed from there."

On 501 Day, businesses and organizations are encouraged to show their 501 pride with special 501-themed offers, activities, merchandise, public art displays and whatever else they dream up.

Visit Celebrate501.com to see a list of activities planned for the day and to add your own. Follow @Celebrate501 on Facebook and Instagram, and use #Celebrate501 to tag your events.

Meeting Calendar

June 16-18, 2021, Arkansas Municipal League's 87th Annual Virtual Convention

November 18-20, 2021, National League of Cities City Summit, Salt Lake City, Utah

IIMC celebrates 52nd Municipal Clerks Week

The International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC), a professional, nonprofit association that promotes continuing education and certification of municipal clerks for the betterment of the clerk's profession and the municipalities they serve, has designated May 2 through 8, 2021, as the 52nd Municipal Clerks Week.

Initiated in 1969 by IIMC and endorsed by all of its members throughout the United States, Canada and 15 other countries, the week is a time of celebration and reflection on the importance of the clerk's office. In 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed a proclamation that officially declared Municipal Clerks Week the first full week of May. In 1994 and 1996, President Bill Clinton also signed proclamations confirming Municipal Clerks Week.

The 52nd Municipal Clerks Week will feature a weeklong series of activities aimed at increasing the public's awareness of municipal clerks and the vital services they provide for local government and the community. To learn how you can participate and spread awareness in your community, visit www.iimc.com/156/Municipal-Clerks-Week for videos, posters, news releases and other great promotional ideas. 🌐

Obituaries

BOBBIE RAE BAILEY, 86, mayor of Alpena from 1994 to 2019 and an honorary life member of the Arkansas Municipal League, died March 15. Bailey served the League and the cities and towns of Arkansas for 14 years as a member and chair of the Incorporated Towns Advisory Committee, member of the executive committee, and as District 3 vice president for 2008-2009.

GABRIEL (GABBY) ALFONZ DELGIORNO II, 63, supervisor of the De Valls Bluff water and sewer department, died November 12, 2020.

CHARLES HENRY FRITSCH, Jr., 63, mayor of Tillar since June 2020, died March 25.

VERNELL MCKELVY LOE, 91, who served as mayor of Bluff City from 2001 to 2013, died March 21.

ACCRTA scholarships available

The executive board of the Arkansas City Clerks, Recorders and Treasurers Association (ACCRTA) awards scholarships for tuition to attend the Municipal Clerks' Training Institute, the Academy for Advanced Education and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks' annual conference, all of which will enable Arkansas clerks to further educational training.

A scholarship honoring the memory of Bill S. Bonner will be awarded to a first-year attendee in the certification program at the Municipal Clerks' Institute in September 2021. This scholarship covers the registration fee. Additional scholarships include: four local \$400 scholarships to attend the Municipal Clerks' Institute, Sept. 12-16, 2021, in Fayetteville; one \$400 scholarship for the Academy for Advanced Education, Sept. 13-14, 2021, in Fayetteville; and one \$400 scholarship to attend the International

Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) annual conference, May 9-13, 2021, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. These scholarships are in addition to the 11 regional scholarships awarded by the IIMC. Completed scholarship application should be returned to the ACCRTA Scholarship Committee chair:

Andrea Williams, CMC, CAMC
City Clerk, City of Paragould
301 West Court Street
P.O. Box 1175
Paragould, AR 72450

Questions: **Andrea.Williams@Paragouldcity.org**
or (870)239-7500.

2021 APPLICATION FOR SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE

I, _____ am a member of the Arkansas City Clerks, Recorders and Treasurers Association and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, and do hereby apply for assistance from ACCRTA. (Applicant must be a City Clerk, Deputy City Clerk, Recorder, Treasurer or related title at the time of application.)

Name _____ Title _____

Street Address or P.O. Box _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____ Date assumed present position _____

Other related experience: Title _____ Municipality _____ Years _____

Education: H.S. _____ Graduate College (years) _____ Degree _____

Check one: This application is for a ___ First ___ Second ___ Third year Institute

What are the approximate costs of the institute you plan to attend? _____

Travel/Transportation _____ Registration Fee/Tuition _____

Lodging and Meal _____ Total Amount _____

How much does your municipality budget your department yearly for education? _____

What is your reason(s) for applying for this scholarship _____

I understand that if a scholarship is awarded to me, it must be used between Jan. 1, 2021, and Dec. 31, 2021, and that I must attend all sessions.

I do hereby attest that the information submitted with this application is true and correct to my best knowledge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

CHECK THE SCHOLARSHIP FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING:

| | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| | IIMC Conference, Grand Rapids, Michigan | May 9-13, 2021 | Deadline: April 17, 2021 |
| | Municipal Clerks' Institute, Fayetteville | September 12-16, 2021 | Deadline: May 31, 2021 |
| | Academy for Advanced Education, Fayetteville | September 13-14, 2021 | Deadline: May 31, 2021 |

Disclaimer: ACCRTA will not be responsible for applications that do not reach the chairman by the deadline. Please feel free to call after a few days to be sure your application was received.

ACCRTA seeks nominations for Clerk of the Year

The Municipal Clerk of the Year Award recognizes a member of the Arkansas City Clerks, Recorders, Treasurers Association (ACCRTA) who has made significant contributions to the objectives of the municipal clerks profession and to the improvement of municipal government in Arkansas and the clerks own community.

Qualities are length of service, good relationship with other clerks, interest in education, attendance at national and regional conferences, community volunteer, advancing and supporting the municipal clerks association.

Any municipal official or ACCRTA member may nominate a candidate for Municipal Clerk of the Year for 2021. The finalist will be honored at the 87th Annual Arkansas Municipal League Convention, June 16-18, 2021, in Little Rock.

The deadline for nominations is April 17, 2021.

Requirements for nominees:

- Has been an active ACCRTA member for at least five years
- Holds a city clerk/recorder/treasurer or deputy position
- Is a Certified Municipal Clerk or Certified Arkansas Municipal Clerk
- Provides service to other municipal clerks in the state as the opportunity exists
- Exhibits leadership

Complete the nomination information below and send to:

**Dena Malone, Recorder/Treasurer
City of Clinton
P.O. Box 970
Clinton, AR 72031
clintontreas@artelco.com**

Municipal Clerk of the Year 2021 Please Submit the Following Information

NOMINEE'S FULL NAME AND TITLE _____

ADDRESS, CITY, ZIP _____

BUSINESS PHONE _____

NAME OF THE CITY THE MUNICIPAL CLERK REPRESENTS _____

YEARS SERVED AS CLERK, RECORDER, TREASURER OR DEPUTY CLERK AND YEAR APPOINTED OR ELECTED _____

ARKANSAS CITY CLERKS, RECORDERS, TREASURERS ASSOCIATION (ACCRTA) MEMBER YEARS SERVED AND DATE OF MEMBERSHIP _____

ACCRTA OFFICES HELD _____

ACCRTA MEETINGS ATTENDED _____

ACCRTA, IIMC, OR ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE COMMITTEE SERVICE, COMMITTEES SERVED ON AND NUMBER OF YEARS SERVED _____

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE MUNICIPAL CLERK (IIMC) PARTICIPATION AT ANNUAL AND REGIONAL MEETINGS _____

IIMC WORKSHOPS (DISTRICT MEETINGS) ATTENDED _____

MUNICIPAL CLERKS INSTITUTE ATTENDANCE (NUMBER OF YEARS AND CLASSES ATTENDED) _____

CERTIFICATION RECEIVED:

IIMC CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL CLERK, IIMC MASTER MUNICIPAL CLERK OR CERTIFIED ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL CLERK

DATE OF CERTIFICATION _____

ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE CONFERENCES ATTENDED _____

EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPATION (INSTRUCTOR, PANEL MEMBER, MODERATOR) _____

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT _____

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES _____

OTHER ACTIVITIES _____

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL SUBMITTING NOMINATION _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

NOMINATOR: PLEASE BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE THE REASONS WHY YOU BELIEVE YOUR NOMINEE SHOULD BE SELECTED AS THE 2021 MUNICIPAL CLERK OF THE YEAR. _____

With local aid on way, NLC charts path forward at virtual Congressional Cities Conference

By Andrew Morgan, League staff

Respond, recover, rebuild. Over the past year, the National League of Cities has focused its efforts on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and getting direct help to cities, towns and villages across the nation, Executive Director and CEO Clarence Anthony said, kicking off the annual Congressional Cities Conference. The conference, which traditionally brings city officials from across the nation to Washington, D.C., was held virtually March 7-10. “For local leaders, the needs of our residents come first, and we are there to make sure that we are the final stop in a lot of ways to serve their needs,” Anthony said. “It’s been a privilege to serve and to hear the actions, the stories, the commitment and the perseverance of local leaders over the past year on behalf of their residents and hometowns.”



Anthony

On March 6, on the eve of the meeting that brought more than 1,800 local government leaders together online, the U.S. Senate passed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP), and it has since been signed into law by President Joe Biden. It includes \$130 billion in direct aid to local governments split evenly between cities and counties.

The NLC and state leagues were instrumental in making sure that lawmakers understood the need for the direct funding in this package, which “preserves this essential aid to our essential cities,” Anthony said. “We’re still a long way from normal, and the devastation of the pandemic continues. But we are one step closer to the much-needed direct relief to all cities, towns and villages.”



Maness

This year opens a new chapter in our nation and a fresh opportunity for cities to work with Congress and the new administration, he said. “Cities, towns and villages are a part of that new chapter. Local governments have been clear: We don’t want just to survive; we want to thrive. We don’t just want to respond; we want to recover and rebuild.”

NLC President Kathy Maness, a Lexington, South Carolina, council member, echoed Anthony’s call to respond, recover and rebuild during her address to members during the opening general session. She also reminded city leaders of the theme of her year as president: Cities Stronger Together. “Because we’ve done this together. And the only way we can make it out of this crisis is together.”

A year ago in Washington, D.C., was the last time many of us gathered together, she said. “What a difference a year makes. You know what hasn’t changed? How local leaders lead. We’ve been on the front lines since the very beginning.”

Maness gave an overview of the NLC’s work to help cities respond, recover and rebuild.

Respond—The NLC has worked over the past year to provide its membership with the most up-to-date information and resources to fight the pandemic at home, with guides available online covering public health literacy, budgeting and fiscal assistance, housing insecurity issues and more, she said. In February, the NLC launched a vaccine education initiative with a focus on providing Black Americans and other underserved

communities with accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccines.

Recover—Cities need a federal partner in our collective recovery, and the NLC has worked to build meaningful relationships with the new administration and Congress through its Cities are Essential campaign. The inclusion of funding for local governments in the ARP is a crucial outcome of these efforts, she said. “We are leaving it all on the field in this fight to get direct money to every city, town and village.”

Rebuild—The NLC is committed to helping cities come back from this pandemic better than we were before as businesses rebound, residents get back to work and schools reopen, Maness said. “This moment provides an important opportunity for us to invest in future generations and be at the forefront of building more equitable communities.”

The work isn’t done, she said and encouraged local officials to continue to be advocates for the 19,000 cities, towns and villages across the country. “Telling your story and advocating for your community is more important than ever before.”

VP Harris addresses city and town leaders

During the March 8 opening general session, the NLC welcomed Vice President Kamala Harris to the virtual stage. Her vice presidency represents several firsts for our nation, including being the first woman of color to serve in the position. Appropriately, she gave her remarks on International Women’s Day, which marked the beginning of International Women’s Week, March 8-12.

Harris touted the ways the ARP will directly benefit cities and towns and the American people. “This plan is big, and it is bold, and it will help us beat this virus and build back our economy,” she said.

The legislation includes targeted support to scale up vaccination distribution, provide relief to small businesses and help schools safely reopen. State and local governments lost 1.3 million jobs over the past year, she said, and the ARP provides direct funding for cities and towns. It also provides relief payments directly to qualifying individuals and a \$3,000 tax credit per child that is expected to lift half the children in the country living in poverty out of poverty, Harris said.

Support for the relief package is broad and bipartisan across the country, if not in Congress, she said, with three out of four Americans in favor. “For a year now, we have faced this crisis of almost immeasurable proportions, impacting the health of our communities, the livelihood of our businesses and the education of our children. Through it all, local leaders, you, have been in



Harris

the thick of it.” Being a local government official is a 24-7 job, and this year has tested your limits, she said. “And still, you keep getting up every morning and working to make things better.”

The pandemic has laid bare the economic and racial disparities in our health care systems, Harris said, and we must now ensure that the relief available through the ARP is distributed equitably. “We need to acknowledge the pandemic has made worse the fissures and the flaws and the failures that already existed in our systems and in our structures. We’ve seen that race and place matter a lot in how well protected a person is from the virus, or not. And race and place have played a role in access to services.”

A new COVID-19 Health Equity Taskforce is now studying inequities that exist in the response to the pandemic and recommending courses of action, Harris said, and local leaders are vital to the solution. She announced that \$250 million in grants is being made available for localities to partner with community organizations to promote health literacy, with a focus on getting underserved communities the information they need to stay safe and get vaccinated. They expect to fund projects in 30 urban communities and 43 in rural communities for two years, she said. Information on this new grant program is available at minorityhealth.hhs.gov.

“Please work with us to put equity at the center of our collective response,” Harris said. Your residents will continue to look to local leaders as much as they look to Washington, D.C., or the administration, she said, for action, comfort and hope. “What you do, especially at this moment of crisis, couldn’t be more important.”

Congressional leaders weigh in

Both Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi addressed the conference, discussing the ways the ARP is designed to help individuals, small businesses and cities.



Schumer

“When we put this pandemic in the rearview mirror, there’s more work to be done to put this country back on track,” Schumer said during the March 9 closing general session. Priorities on which congressional leaders are working with the Biden administration, he said, include climate proposals to reduce emissions, create jobs and make communities more energy efficient; infrastructure investment in roads, bridges and broadband capability, the energy grid, and public transportation.

Schumer pledged to work with local government leaders on each of these priorities. “The time has come to turn the page and begin a new chapter of leadership in our nation, and we will need America’s cities to lead the way.”

Speaker Pelosi also addressed attendees on March 9, where she thanked the NLC and its leadership for advocating for the issues important to cities and towns, which have influenced important legislation, including the ARP. “Many of your priorities are our priorities as well because you’ve made them known to us.”



Pelosi

She also thanked NLC President Kathy Maness “for her visionary leadership, particularly to advance youth civic engagement in our cities.”

Pelosi called the passage of the ARP “a beacon of hope for America’s families and struggling small

businesses.” She stressed the importance of the direct aid it provides for local governments and cities of all sizes, “from the largest metropolitan areas to the smallest towns.”

“And we have ensured greater eligibility and—magic word—flexibility so that you can use the funds in the unique way that you know best, including addressing revenue loss and the health and economic impacts of the pandemic,” Pelosi said.

Strong local advocacy for the relief package has resulted in more than 75 percent of Americans supporting the legislation, she said. “We’re so pleased with that. Across the country it is bipartisan.”

Economic outlook positive, Yellen says

Providing direct aid to cities and towns through the ARP is an essential part of the nation’s overall economic recovery in the wake of the pandemic, said Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen, who addressed the closing general session of the conference on March 9. She also noted that cities have not experienced the consequences of COVID-19 in a vacuum, citing the very difficult year Lake Charles, Louisiana, has experienced. In addition to the pandemic, Hurricane Laura devastated the area when it made landfall August 27, 2020. Six weeks later, Hurricane Delta struck. In February of this year, the unprecedented winter storms that swept across the middle of the country caused infrastructure damage across the city.

That’s four federally declared disasters in nine months, Yellen said. According to Lake Charles Mayor Nic Hunter, the region’s mortality rate shot up 25 percent in 2020, Yellen said, and she quoted him: “If the federal government can do something to help my city return to a semblance of normalcy, they should do it.”

Not all cities across the country suffered as heavily, but all cities suffered, she said. “My message to you is that is not only a completely understandable request after such a horrific year, it’s also very good economic policy,” Yellen said.

In the response to the Great Recession, federal stimulus didn’t provide enough aid directly to cities and towns, Yellen said. “It was a profound error” that undermined the recovery. History won’t repeat itself thanks to the ARP, she said. “Your voice made a difference and will make a difference across the country.”

As the implementation of the ARP Act gets underway, the overall economic outlook is positive, Yellen said. “In the coming days, our Treasury team is going to work to get this aid out in the quickest way possible, and the one that produces the greatest impact. To do that we’re going to need your input and advice. If we do our job, I’m confident that Americans will make it to the other



Yellen

side of the pandemic and be met there with a measure of prosperity. By the end of the year, I expect your city economies will resemble 2019 much more than 2020.”

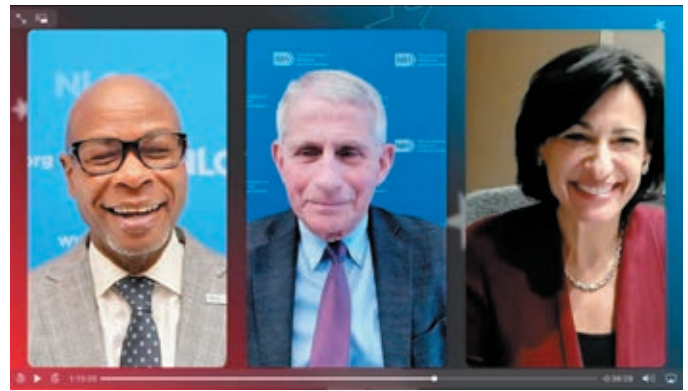
Beyond the recovery from the immediate crisis, the ARP allows us the opportunity to build back better while addressing inequity, climate change and other pressing issues, she said. “If we want the United States to remain a leading force in the 21st century then we’re going to have to attack these challenges.” City and town leaders have an ally at the Treasury, she said. “Economic policy-making finds its humanity in the city budget.”

Not out of the woods yet: Drs. Fauci and Walensky on pandemic progress

Before introducing Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to discuss the current trajectory of the virus and strategy for vaccine deployment, NLC Executive Director Clarence Anthony, during the opening general session of the Congressional City Conference, reflected on the past year.

“Exactly one year ago, local leaders were gathered in Washington, D.C., for this very conference,” Anthony said. “We were very likely one of the last in-person conferences as the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic gripped our nation in the days, weeks and months to come. As local leaders, you’ve been at the forefront of the response to this deadly virus, and this conversation could not be more critical to you as local leaders.”

Fauci, who has become a household name and trusted source of information during this crisis, is Biden’s chief medical advisor and has served under six presidents going back to the Reagan administration. He noted some positive recent developments—with caveats—as we track the data on the virus. Over the first few months of this year, we’ve seen a decline in new cases per day, Fauci said. “The good news is that it’s coming down. The sobering news is that it’s starting to plateau a bit, and the history of this virus has told us when you



In a virtual panel discussion, NLC Executive Director Clarence Anthony, left, discusses the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic with Dr. Anthony Fauci, the administration’s chief medical advisor, and Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the CDC.

start to plateau at a level as high as this, which is about 60,000-70,000 cases a day, that you are by no means out of the woods and you’ve got to continue to do the type of public health measures that we talk about all the time—the masking, the physical distancing and the avoidance of congregate settings, particularly indoors.”

It could be possible that the worst is behind us thanks to vaccines being available, he said. “The more people we get vaccinated and the more quickly we do it the better off we are, but now is no time to declare victory, because we still have a considerable amount of viral dynamics that we’re dealing with.”

The new variants are a concern and provide a new challenge for us, he said. Some of the variants spread more rapidly, cause more sickness and can evade the protection offered by the vaccine, Fauci said. “So we take them very seriously, we monitor them and, if necessary, we will modify our vaccines to address them.”

The Biden administration has pledged to have enough vaccine available by the end of May to vaccinate every eligible person in the country, Fauci said. If we can meet the logistical challenges of distributing those vaccines, we could have a large portion of the population vaccinated within a couple of months after that or by late summer, he said.

Local elected officials are trusted by their communities, Fauci said, and he asked city and town leaders to encourage their citizens to take the vaccine when it becomes available and to not pull back prematurely on public health measures. “In other words, listen to the recommendations of the CDC regarding mitigation methods.”

According to CDC data, 52 percent of eligible adult Americans received the flu vaccine during the 2019-2020 influenza season. For COVID-19, that number would not be enough to achieve herd immunity, Walensky said. “The bottom line is no; 52 percent is not likely to be enough. We don’t exactly know what the level is, and with increasing transmissible viruses, as Dr. Fauci just

discussed, we believe the level to be even higher than we thought over last summer.” They now estimate that it will take a 70- to 85-percent vaccination rate to achieve herd immunity, she said.

“Everyone who is willing and wanting should roll up their sleeves and get vaccinated,” Walensky said. It is also an essential step to protect those who may be immunocompromised and cannot receive the vaccine, she said.

The administration is deeply concerned about the health inequities compounded by the pandemic, Walensky said. America’s Black, Hispanic, indigenous and other communities of color have been hit especially hard, and they are also being vaccinated at much lower rates than white Americans. “Latinos and Hispanics are 2.3 times more likely to die, and African Americans two times more likely to die from COVID-19,” she said. “We know data from the CDC for the first six months of the pandemic shows life expectancy dropped one year for all Americans. Life expectancy dropped 2.7 years for African Americans and 1.9 years for Hispanic Americans.”

Of those now vaccinated, 65 percent are white while only 9 percent are Hispanic and 7 percent African American, she said. “These inequities have been deep, they have been longstanding, they’re resulting in disparate health outcomes and we have to fix this,” Walensky said.

The CDC and the administration are working with local governments, pharmacies and other community partners to increase vaccine availability to high-risk groups, she said and urged city and town leaders to mobilize networks at home to reach out to their citizens.

“They don’t necessarily want to hear from me,” Walensky said, “they want to hear from you, trusted people in their communities—community-based organizations, faith-based organizations. And the more people in those local organizations who get vaccinated and who serve as an example for others, the more people will want to be vaccinated.” 🙏

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ABHOF grants help bridge the gap in Arkansas' Black communities

By Mya Hall

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame (ABHOF) induction ceremony was postponed until fall 2021. But this small setback has not stopped the impact this organization has on communities across the state.

In September of 1992, Charles Stewart and Patricia Goodwin founded the ABHOF Foundation as a benefit for the Arkansas Regional Minority Business Development Council. The organization's first induction ceremony dates back to October 1993. Since then, more than 150 Arkansans have been inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame. These individuals have been awarded for their many accomplishments in contributing to African American culture.

Among the trailblazers in Arkansas history who are inductees of the ABHOF is Senator Irma Hunter Brown of Little Rock. Brown served 24 years in the Arkansas legislature. She was the first African American woman to have been elected both to the Arkansas House of Representatives and to the Arkansas Senate. She has been described as an agent of change and currently serves the community through her work with the Friends of Haven of Rest Cemetery, a nonprofit group improving the condition and appearance of the historic African American cemetery in Little Rock.


In addition to highlighting the contributions of African American Arkansans, ABHOF also awards grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 to assist communities and organizations across Arkansas. The first grant was given in June 2004, and since then the ABHOF Foundation has awarded over \$500,000 in grant funding. These grants helped serve more than 200,000 Arkansans in over 60 counties.

The Ozark Living Newspaper Theatre Company (OLN) and the Hannah Pregnancy Resource Center are two of the many organizations that have benefitted from ABHOF grants. OLN was able to conduct two training events and workshops with juvenile court personnel from around the state, said Producing Artistic Director Adam Frank. "The grant OLN received from

the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame for our juvenile court theater program was like a pebble dropped into the middle of a pond," Frank said. "With the grant, we were able to conduct workshops for at-risk youth and personnel involved with the court systems in Faulkner County and the surrounding area."

The events focused on basic comedy improv and Boal-based Theatre of the Oppressed training. After receiving the training, attendees disseminated and implemented what they learned in their respective communities. OLN also worked with graduates of the program in Cleburne County to support them in the creation of their own juvenile court theater workshops in Heber Springs. The grant allowed OLN to create a transferable restorative justice theater model for youth, a project OLN hopes to continue post-COVID-19.

The Hannah Pregnancy Resource Center is another organization that received an ABHOF Foundation grant. Executive Director Paula Williams shared that ABHOF grants helped her organization meet their clients' needs. Their three centers in south Arkansas provide options for teen pregnancy, unexpected pregnancies or expectant mothers in need of assistance.

ABHOF grants provide the resources needed to positively impact African American and other underserved communities. To apply for an Arkansas Black Hall of Fame grant, applicants must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, hospital, public school or government agency that is eligible for tax-exempt status and is located in the state of Arkansas. Learn more about the ABHOF and available grants at www.arblackhalloffame.org. 



Mya Hall is an intern for the Center for Community and Economic Development at the University of Central Arkansas. She is currently a junior in the UCA Schedler Honors College double majoring in philosophy and African American studies. Learn more about CCED at www.uca.edu/cced.

Two cities, one town turn 100

In 1921, three Arkansas communities officially incorporated, and this year they celebrate their centennials: Fountain Hill, Flippin and Pollard.

By Andrew Morgan, League staff

Fountain Hill

Fountain Hill, an Ashley County town with a population today of around 175, is like many of the dozens of small agricultural communities that dot the points between the slightly larger cities amid the south Arkansas pine belt. The diversified farming of the 19th century narrowed its focus toward timber, which by the turn of the 20th century was the region's economic driver, with the county's largest city, Crossett, dubbed the "Forestry Capital of the South."

That timber still rules the local economy in and around Fountain Hill is inescapable, with log trucks grinding through on Highway 425 every couple of minutes. During the lunch hour, work trucks line the parking lot of the lone diner. The old Fountain Hill Grocery has long since been shuttered, its services replaced by the one-stop across the two-lane highway and a nearby Dollar General. For anything more than the basics, Monticello's just a short drive to the north or, if you are inclined to keep your tax dollars in-county, Hamburg and Crossett are a few miles to the south.

Before consolidating with Hamburg schools in 2004, Fountain Hill had its own district. The water tower still pays homage to The Wildcats. The town is not completely without amenities, however. John Boyd Park is a mix of old and new, with a sheet metal slide and vintage jungle gym next to some colorful, newer playground equipment. A pavilion and a paved walking track around the perimeter provide residents with opportunities for socializing and exercising.



A vintage hand-painted sign hangs on what was once the town's grocery and general store.



The Fountain Hill water tower honors The Wildcats, the local school's pre-consolidation mascot.

PHOTOS BY ANDREW MORGAN

Flippin

Located just a few miles from the south shore of Bull Shoals Lake in north central Arkansas, the Marion County city of Flippin is a hub for the region's many recreational and tourism opportunities. Established in the early 1800s as a farming community, the economy of the city and the region was largely agriculture based for many years. That changed with the building of the Bull Shoals Dam on the White River and the creation of the lake. Tourism has been the main economic driver of the area since the mid-20th century, especially fishing.

For fishers of bass and other anglers, Flippin means Ranger Boats. In 1968 Forrest L. Wood designed and built a new boat to take advantage of the burgeoning freshwater sport. The first batch of boats were manufactured in what is now city hall. The company has grown into a worldwide operation, but its headquarters remain in its hometown.

YOU KNOW RANGER from Saturday-morning television. They're the most famous builder of those low-slung bass boats that zoom across the screen like metal-flaked rockets. Now, Ranger is heading for the big water with its 250 Center Console. This boat showcases a good deal of boatbuilding experience and it might make you believe that there's a piece of ocean in Flippin, Arkansas.

Saltwater boats are not an entirely new challenge for Ranger (they already have 21' and 23' center consoles), but this 25-footer is meant to run with the big boys. During our test in the ocean off Key Largo, Florida, the lumps were smoothed by a solid fiberglass hull with 20 degrees of transom deadrise. Ample flair forward handles spray. The ocean ride was steadfast and quiet.

SHORT TEST

RANGER 250 CENTER CONSOLE

Saltwater potential from Arkansas.
BY PETER FREDERIKSEN



PROPULSION AND PERFORMANCE Ranger 250 Center Console

Standard power: none

Optional power: twin outboards up to 400 hp

Test boat power: twin 150-hp Yamaha V-6 outboards with 158-cu. 3.54" bore x 2.68" stroke, svinging 14" x 17" three-bladed stainless-steel propellers through 1.85:1 reduction

| speed | | % of | | % of | | efficiency | | operation | |
|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------------|-----|-----------|-------------|
| open | close | max. | opt. | max. | opt. | mpg | mpg | range | angle level |
| 10.5 | 8.7 | 5.5 | 5.2 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.2 |

tional Bennett trim tabs. The poly cap is an excellent fillet board. One complaint I had about the cockpit was the size of the stainless-steel cleats. The fiberglass covering boards are equipped with stainless-hawse pipes, a nice finishing touch. But instead of 6" cleats, I'd prefer 8".

A no-cost option is a choice of either twin pedestal seats or a leaning post with seven rod-holders, storage beneath the cushion and room for a livewell under the aluminum frame.

The console has storage inside, along with a pair of drinkholders, room for electronics and a well-placed fiddle rail on the top shelf.

There's no shortage of competition in the saltwater center console market, and with a base price of \$29,925, plus another \$20,000 for the Yamaha the wide-

Flippin gets a shoutout in a positive review for a new Ranger Boat model in an early 1990s issue of *Boating* magazine.

The city is marking its centennial with several events this year, with local businesses and community organizations joining in the celebration of the milestone. Trinity Streetrods held a combination grand opening open house and centennial celebration in January. On March 18 the city renamed its main street Forrest Wood Drive in honor of the bass-boat innovator. And on April 10 the city will hold its 100th Anniversary 5K run. The race route starts at the high school—the roots of which predate the city's incorporation by several decades—and goes by Ranger Boats HQ, appropriately. Local business Mountaineer Gear & Outfitters is celebrating the occasion as well, producing custom shirts with the city's centennial logo. You can also purchase the popular "This is My Flippin Shirt" tee. In throwback tie-dye if you wish.



PHOTOS COURTESY MOUNTAINEER GEAR & OUTFITTERS



Locally made shirts celebrate the centennial and have a little fun with the city's name.

Pollard

If you're coming from central Arkansas, Pollard is certainly a more out-of-the-way destination. The small



PHOTO BY ANDREW MORGAN

Pollard sits in the scenic rolling Crowley's Ridge foothills above the broad expanse of flat Delta farmland below.

Clay County city is just five miles south of the Arkansas-Missouri border. Once you exit U.S. Route 67—the future Interstate 57—there’s still a ways to go along the small state highways and county roads criss-crossing the northeast Arkansas farm terrain. At McDougal, there’s wayfinding signage to let you know you’re almost there. Approaching from the west on 62, Crowley’s Ridge cuts across the horizon—Pollard is nestled up there amid the ridge’s hills and dips, and the seemingly endless stretches of row crops below give way to small dairy farms.

Pollard is named for one of the prominent families who moved to the area in the years following the Civil War. When the Butler County Railroad built a line through Pollard in 1914 to move timber, the community was platted around the new depot, and it was officially incorporated in 1921.

Over the past several decades, the population of the small city has remained fairly steady, with 220



A local resident of the canine variety rambles past the small city’s municipal building.

calling Pollard home as of the 2010 census. According to Recorder/Treasurer Janice Chandler, it should remain at about that level when the results of the 2020 census are in. 🏛️



Arkansas cities must tell stories, promote culture and creativity to reach heritage tourists

By Tina Alvey Dale

Heritage tourism is more relevant and important to Arkansas than ever, according to travel advisors. But just what is it, and how can Arkansas cities capitalize on it?

Cheryl Hargrove with Hargrove International, Inc. discussed “Heritage Tourism: More Relevant than Ever” during the 2021 Arkansas Governor’s Conference on Tourism and Hospitality, which was held virtually this year, March 2-3.

First there is the definition: Heritage tourism is “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present,” Hargrove said. It includes historic, cultural and natural assets.

“Certainly COVID has challenged our tourism industry, but it has also offered an opportunity to look at our destinations in unique lights and really appreciate what we have in our own backyard,” Hargrove said. “Heritage tourism can be a catalyst in Arkansas, more than it already is.”

The heritage traveler is a desirable traveler. They are older, more affluent, educated and often married. They are frequent travelers, taking on average 3.61 leisure trips in the last three years (compared to 3.4 trips for the general traveler), Hargrove said. They also spend more on travel. The heritage traveler spends, on average, \$1,319 per trip compared to the \$820 the average traveler spends per trip. They are more likely to stay in a hotel, motel or bed and breakfast, and 46 percent of their total trip expenditures are on activities, dining and shopping, she said.

“They spend more, stay longer and visit more frequently,” Hargrove said. “They seek out authentic America. They enjoy shopping on Main Streets.”

Heritage visitors want to experience “something new/different” that is preferably “educational.” They seek out little-known destinations nearby, ones that are off “the beaten path” and nostalgic locations. There are five principles needed to draw the heritage visitors:

- Focus on authenticity and quality;
- Preserve and protect resources;
- Make programs and sites come alive;
- Find the fit between community and tourism; and
- Collaboration.

Communities can reach these visitors by giving them a sense of history in unique and intimate settings and telling a story. Tourism leaders need to find a way to share the important and relevant stories that resonate with visitors, and they need to make certain those stories are updated and refreshed and presented in new and changing ways in order to draw repeat visits, Hargrove said.

Cities need to take a look at the gateway to their city and what they can do to make it more attractive to visitors. They also need to find a balance that brings in tourists without pushing away residents.

“Arthur Frommer has a great quote. ‘Tourism will not go to a city that has lost its soul.’ We need our cities to remain a great place to live, work, play and visit,” Hargrove said.

Along with placemaking, intentionally leveraging the power of the arts, culture and creativity to serve a community’s interest while driving a broader agenda for change, communities must remember placekeeping, honoring the cultural lives of the community, preserving and protecting local architecture and other authentic characteristics of place, she said.

Hargrove gave three emerging trends in heritage tourism she thinks are areas on which to concentrate: multigenerational travel where grandparents, children and grandchildren can all connect with activities and opportunities that resonate with all ages; travel bubbles that attract more local visitors exploring their areas and regions within easy driving distance; and subscribed stays.

Surveys show that up to one-fifth of U.S. workers could be entirely remote after COVID-19, Hargrove said.

“As people realize they can work remotely, they realize they have choices of where they want to live. Or maybe they want to go and stay for a month or three months. So looking at how to make sure your destination is an attractive place to allow remote workers to come and frequent and stay and enjoy, and pitching it through your heritage, your unique natural habitats and cultural assets is a way of attracting these digital nomads,” she said. 🏠

This story first appeared at Talk Business & Politics (talkbusiness.net) and is reprinted courtesy of the online news platform.



Tips for enhancing professionalism during virtual meetings of local government

By Robert “Bob” Widner

To reduce the risk of person-to-person transmission of the COVID-19 virus, nearly all Colorado local governments at least occasionally resort to alternative meeting platforms to conduct what we now call “virtual meetings.” Common alternatives to in-person public meetings are web-based virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom, GoToMeeting, RemotePC and Microsoft Teams. It is likely that the use of these platforms will continue into the future as an option for conducting public meetings.

Local governments recognize that public meetings are a primary means by which citizens observe and judge the conduct of government. To ensure a higher level of efficiency and professionalism during in-person public meetings, most local governments employ uniform practices and impose rules on the conduct of the meetings. These practices and rules are tailored to instill public confidence in government decision-making through procedures that promote efficiency and professionalism.

Should the nature of virtual meetings lessen the concern that open meetings be efficient, professional and foster ongoing efforts to instill confidence in government? Assuredly, no. This article offers tips and suggestions to elected officials and staff to help ensure that

virtual public meetings maintain the same formality, efficiency and professionalism as an in-person meeting.

Although there are many similarities between in-person and virtual meetings, there is at least one important difference. An attendee observing an in-person meeting will view the meeting within a much larger context. That is, during an in-person meeting, an attendee’s attention is diverted to a significantly greater number of visual points of interest within the meeting room—the workings of the staff meeting members, the comings and goings of other attendees, the displays from monitors, screens and handouts, and a host of other actions and activities. Moreover, attendees are often seated at a distance from the decision-making body and their views may be obscured in part by computer monitors, the dais and other attendees seated in the meeting room.

In contrast, the virtual meeting focuses the attendee’s view to a much more limited, and much closer, visual display of the faces of the members of the decision-making body. In effect, the meeting members’ images are made available for a high level of scrutiny not commonly available during an in-person meeting. It is therefore important that the meeting members remember to consistently project an image of engagement,

attention and professionalism, perhaps even more so than during an in-person meeting. The following suggestions provide ways to facilitate that trust-invoking representation.

Prepare for the virtual meeting

Preparing for a virtual meeting is no different than preparing for an in-person meeting. Preparation is always necessary to allow the meeting member to effectively participate. However, a lack of preparation may be more observable during a virtual meeting. Due to the closer view of a meeting member's face and the ability to observe where their attention is diverted during the meeting, the meeting member's consistent or frequent reading of materials and sorting through the meeting packet can project a disconnection with the meeting that can appear to viewers as a lack of preparation.

An overlooked aspect of preparation for a virtual meeting is the need to practice and understand the operation of the virtual meeting software. Practice may often enable you to troubleshoot problems more efficiently during the meeting. For example, knowing where to locate and manipulate the application's controls for the speaker volume, microphone and camera will enable the member to cure a problem without interrupting or delaying the meeting.

Ensure you have the meeting invitation or access link in advance

An important and often avoidable disruption in any meeting is a member's tardiness. Unforeseeable problems will at times arise, resulting in a late arrival, but late arrivals often delay the start of the meeting while the body awaits the tardy member, who may disrupt the meeting while taking a seat or logging in. For virtual meetings, tardiness due to an inability to locate the meeting invitation or access link may be largely avoidable. Much like knowing where the car is parked and the car keys are located to avoid a late arrival to an in-person meeting, the virtual meeting member must know how to access the meeting link.

Log in to the meeting in advance

Armed with the meeting invitation or access link, the meeting member should always make the effort to log in early enough to ensure that the link is correct and to remedy any problems should the link prove defective or if camera and volume levels need adjustment. Because the solution to fix a defective link or the inability to access is often simple, the best time to seek assistance is before the begins and not after.



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Set up your camera in advance

The meeting member's relationship to the camera is significant during a virtual meeting. It is through the camera that the meeting member will engage the public and project an image that is both professional and representative of the importance and decorum of the public meeting. Camera setup considerations include:

- **Room lighting**—Ensure that the room lighting for the time of the meeting is appropriate. Room lighting varies throughout the day and what worked wonderfully and rendered an image not unlike a movie star at 2 p.m. may project a dark, shadowed and indecipherable face at the time of the public meeting. Spending the beginning of the meeting adjusting the camera and lighting can be distracting to other meeting members.
- **Camera angle**—Often overlooked is the image displayed by the camera angle. The camera should be located to afford a direct front view of the meeting member's face. The goal is to position the camera to allow an image of direct eye contact with the viewer. Any other camera angle risks projecting an image that the meeting member is disconnected or disinterested in the meeting. Angles that project the side of the meeting member's face while they view a monitor located to the side of the camera can give the appearance that the meeting member is conducting other business unrelated to the meeting.
- **Camera background**—The most common background during virtual meetings is the participant's home or office setting. When this is the case, consider taking a critical view of your background to ensure you are projecting a professional image. Some virtual meeting platforms allow the use of virtual backgrounds or full-screen images of pictures and patterns projected behind the speaker. Although virtual backgrounds can be an entertaining option, consider the appropriateness of the virtual background. Images that display political or commercial messages, personal images of children and family, or exotic island beaches may detract from the decorum and purpose of the public meeting. Some communities require the use of uniform or standardized virtual backgrounds for elected officials and administrative staff. These backgrounds may project the logo of the community or another image that is representative of the community and that advances the professionalism, purpose and decorum of the meeting.

Check audio settings: volume and speakers

Not uncommonly, meeting members are unable to hear other attendees or are unable to be heard. The

reason is often due to misadjusted microphone volume or speaker levels. Log in to the virtual meeting early to check volume and speaker levels.

Be aware of the potential for the broadcast of pre-meeting comments

Once logged in to the virtual meeting, use caution when greeting others and engaging in pre-meeting banter. Because virtual meetings make it difficult to “see” all the persons who are with you “in the room,” participants may be lulled into a feeling of privacy akin to the casual conversation that can precede an in-person meeting. Unfortunately, the virtual meeting microphones may be active, and the public may hear pre-meeting conversations. This is not to say that “hello” and “how are you” banter is unacceptable, but more substantive discussion about matters on the agenda or attempts at humor such as “I am not ready for this meeting because I couldn't find my vodka” can unintentionally project an unprofessional image to the general public.

Remove nearby phones or electronics

As you would during an in-person meeting, remove or silence all telephones and other electronic devices near your camera and microphone. A ringing mobile phone is amplified in volume during virtual meetings and can create a disruption. Remove, silence or unplug other noise producing devices in the room such as landline telephones.

Avoid cross talk

Some meeting platforms allow more than one participant to speak at a time. Such cross talk leads to an inability for attendees to follow the discussion. It is important that the meeting's chairperson manage the participants' opportunities to speak in order to ensure a clear and understandable meeting. Nothing is more unprofessional and frustrating than to be unable to hear the conversation and understand the comments.

Befriend the mute button

A common but avoidable disruption during virtual meetings stems from background noise caused by a live microphone. Rustling papers, a squeaking chair, a barking dog or the inflective utterance of disapproval or disgust during the meeting are common. The mute button can be your best friend when seeking to avoid such disruptions or, at times, embarrassments.

Observe common in-person meeting etiquette

Perhaps due to being physically alone during a virtual meeting, some members may engage in activities that would be deemed unacceptable during an in-person meeting, such as leaving the room frequently, using the telephone or evident multi-tasking. During a typical in-person meeting, you would not cover your face for extended periods of time and then uncover your face

only when you desire to speak, so shutting off your video during the virtual meeting should be avoided unless the practice is established as part of the meeting's rules.

Especially for meetings where the public is in attendance, professionalism can be enhanced by dressing appropriately. Proper dress displays a level of respect for the meeting and its purpose.

Follow established rules for motions and procedures

There should be little difference between procedures followed during an in-person meeting and a virtual meeting. The same rules of procedure for making motions, requiring seconds and considering agenda items should apply. Virtual meetings do not alter the need for fairness and equity. Follow the rules of procedure whenever possible.

Log off and then double check that the microphone and camera are off

During in-person meetings, you are visible and audible to the other participants in the room until you completely exit the room. For virtual meetings, the same

is true. Until you turn off your access, your camera and your microphone, you remain "live" to any remaining participants. Double check your exit in order to avoid the types of examples you can find by searching "embarrassing video meetings" on YouTube. Remember, the meeting is not over until you have exited the room.

Local governments expend considerable effort to ensure that in-person meetings project professionalism and efficiency in pursuit of the goal of instilling confidence in government. Because the virtual nature of a public meeting does not diminish this goal, members of local governments should always strive to ensure the same attentiveness to professionalism and efficiency for the virtual meetings. 🏛️

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Bob Widner is a founding partner of the Colorado local government law firm of Widner Juran LLP in Centennial, Colorado, and has served as the city attorney for Centennial since 2004. Bob served as president of the Colorado Municipal League in 2020-2021. More about Bob can be found at lawwj.com.

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The advertisement features a photograph of an indoor swimming pool with lane lines. In the background, a large digital display shows meeting schedules: 'DISTRICT MEET FRI 10 & 18' and 'STATE MEET FRI 10 & 29'. Various logos are visible on the pool deck, including 'VERNON COOPERATIVE', 'SAINT MARY'S', 'FIRST STATE Bank', and 'Russellville'. The company logo 'ETC Engineers & Architects, Inc.' is prominently displayed at the top in a green banner.

Wrestling with implicit bias

By Scott Paine

Recently I was reminded of an unpleasant truth about the way I think. You'll need some background to appreciate it fully.

When I was 9, I went to my first summer camp. All my camp memories are positive, filled with the smiling, laughing faces of my new friends, my camp buddies. All but one of them are Black.

A few years later, at a Boy Scouts camp, I spent a lot of time at a campsite that was populated by kids, mostly Black, from the inner city. Initially, I hung out with them because their scoutmaster had been my scoutmaster at a previous camp. Over time, I became fully woven into their troop's life.

I remember being puzzled and amused by the attitudes I encountered. The boys from the inner city thought I was very brave because I would walk around camp at night without a flashlight. They thought I was at risk of being eaten by wild animals or of getting lost in the woods.

The boys at my campsite, mostly white, saw me as brave because I wasn't afraid to hang out with the Black kids from the inner city. I don't know what risk they thought I was running.

I share this bit of autobiography to make this point: To the best of my recollection, I did not have a negative perception of Black people as I went off to college. My first summer on campus, I became infatuated with a rising senior. I was pretty sure she was out of my league, but that didn't stop me from hanging around. One summer evening, we gathered at a friend's suite to drink, talk and sing. (Historical note: The drinking age was 18, and there was no prohibition of alcohol in the dorms.) For whatever reason—the wine, the music or her near-yet-distant presence—I found myself becoming increasingly sad as well as increasingly inebriated. Not wishing to become a drunken fool in her presence, I bade them all goodnight and went for a walk on the quad to clear my head.

After a while, I encountered a young Black man. He asked me if I knew a certain student or where a certain dormitory was. Small as our campus was, I recognized neither the dorm nor the person he was seeking. I paused to try to clear things up and see if I could be helpful. I had no thought of being at risk, even though it was fairly late, the quad was pretty dark and we were

alone. No concern at all. He called to his buddy who was walking nearby (and whom I had not noticed until then). As we continued to talk, his buddy came over...and stuck what felt like a gun barrel in my stomach. They quietly instructed me to give them my wallet and keys. (I remember protesting about the keys. Although it was summer, the Michigan evening was turning chill, and I was concerned about staying warm. The weird things one does under stress.) Then they told me to turn around and walk slowly away, not making a sound.

After this incident, I found that I reacted differently than I had in the past when I encountered a group of two or three young Black males. Whereas before they had simply been guys who were Black, I now perceived them as a threat. After some time had passed, I recognized what I was doing and worked, consciously, to ensure that whatever I felt, my behavior was appropriate.

That was 44 years ago.

Recently, driving through my neighborhood, I saw a young Black man getting into a car where it appeared his buddies had been waiting. He had a small package in his hand.

These are the things I observed. Then, uninvited and unwanted, my inner voice said: "Drugs. These guys are dangerous."

I had no rational basis for this thought. None.

My neighborhood is diverse, made up of Black families, white families, mixed-race families, as well as people of Indian and Palestinian ancestry, among others. I often see young men, including young Black men, walking, riding, driving, hanging out. That's our community.

Yet my subconscious made the gross leap to a racial profile.

I can try to rationalize it away. Truth is, my eldest son and his family used to live right in that part of the neighborhood, maybe a house or two away. Truth is, their next door neighbor was a drug dealer who delivered small packages curbside to his customers. Truth is, my son would be visited at odd hours by strangers, often under the influence of something, trying to buy a hit. Truth is, my son took his family and moved out.

But the truth is, that drug dealer was...white. And yet I can't remember a time when I saw a young white man get into a car where his buddies were waiting, a small

package in his hand, and thought: “Drugs. These guys are dangerous,” without substantially more evidence. This sludge in my brain is what is meant by implicit bias.

I doubt that anyone with whom I work professionally, in ministry, or with whom I socialize would say that I have negative opinions of Black people or other minorities. Some might say that I have been an ally to various minority groups, both in my years of public service and in other aspects of my life.

And I am guilty of implicit bias.

Not because I want to be. Not because I think it’s right. But because life experiences, cultural themes, media images and a host of other factors have worked on me in such a way that, under certain conditions, I will judge another not by the content of their character, but by the color of their skin.

The bias doesn’t always express itself so boldly, so clearly. It can operate in the background when I review applicants for a position. It subtly influences my decision about whether to read a book based on the author’s name and perceived race. It can condition my response in a conversation, prompting me to be open to someone’s ideas or to dismiss them even before I hear them. The worst part of implicit bias is, I don’t always know when it has played a role in the choices I have made and the way I have treated others.

The only way I can remedy this problem is to hold what one of my dearest friends and colleagues calls the “ugly mirror” before me. I must be willing to accept what I know but don’t want to be true: that I can operate out of prejudice. I must be willing to examine my impressions, my snap judgments, with, among others, a racial lens. I must have the courage to ask myself to prove my case, to produce the evidence, to justify (not rationalize) my judgment.

It isn’t fun.

But there is, for me at least, a bit of good news. Because when I drove by that young man, when my inner demons screamed “danger,” I noticed...and I resisted. 🙏

Scott C. Paine, Ph.D., is director of leadership development and education for FLC University. This article appeared originally in the first quarter 2021 issue of Quality Cities, the official magazine of the Florida League of Cities, and is reprinted with permission.

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Designed to Serve

Meet Linda Burgess, code and opinions attorney for the Arkansas Municipal League.

City & Town: What are your duties and responsibilities at the League?

Linda Burgess: One of the many reasons I enjoy my work so greatly is because I get the chance to explore interesting areas of the law. More specifically, I work with the League's motor vehicle cases and codification program, and I assist municipalities with their legal inquiries.



How long have you been working at the League?

How did you get started? I began working at the League on March 10, 2020, and have just celebrated my first anniversary here! I began right as COVID made its first appearance in our state. It was impressive to witness the dedication of the League staff to the municipalities all through the pandemic. I could tell right away that I was going to become a part of a great team!

What advice would you have for someone just getting into public service? Stay the course even when discouraged, and trust in yourself. Your work today could make all the difference for someone in the future.

Where did you grow up? How has it changed? I grew up in Little Rock, specifically in the Broadmoor area across South University from UALR. We lived in southern California for about 10 years on base at Camp Pendleton, and although it was lovely, there is truly no place like home. When we returned to Little Rock in 2006, the change to the city was enormous. Luckily, we moved home just in time to see the last game at Ray Winder Field. Places like Ray Winder and the old dome theater on University are just memories now, but my office is right next to Dickey-Stephens and that is fantastic! A lot has also stayed the same. We visit the Arkansas State Fair every year, and a visit to the Historic Arkansas Museum is always a treat. The most important thing that has stayed the same is the people. Little Rock has always had a lot of really good and hardworking people.

What is your favorite spot in your hometown? By far my favorite spot in Little Rock is Broadmoor Park. It is a hidden gem, with a beautiful little fishing lake, a really neat log cabin clubhouse, a playground and a lovely vintage swimming pool. I enjoy taking my little boy to the same park that is so dear to me from my childhood. Specifically, I grew up on Talmage Drive, and my little boy always gets a big kick out of driving down that street that is also his middle name!

What is your favorite part about working for the League and the cities and towns of Arkansas? I just really enjoy helping the municipalities work on the issues they face. I have a lot of love for my own city, and I understand that everybody that I come into contact with through my work feels the same way about their own city or town. While in California, I always took a lot of pride in being an Arkansan, and now I have this wonderful opportunity to learn about all of the municipalities and meet the amazing people who reside in them. 🏡



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Meet Paragould Fire Chief Kevin Lang.

City & Town: What are your duties and responsibilities in Paragould?

Kevin Lang: As fire chief I am responsible for ensuring our firefighters are properly trained and have the equipment they need to do the job of keeping our citizens safe. This involves managing the budget and performing ongoing assessments of our training levels and equipment/apparatus inventory among other things.



Why did you choose your profession? My father retired as a captain after 28 years with the Paragould Fire Department, so I spent a lot of time hanging around the fire station as a kid. I went into retail management after high school, but after a few years I began to wonder about the fire service. I received my AAS in fire science in 1998 and was hired by the PFD as a firefighter/pump operator. Moving into administration was not on my radar, but when the chief position became available in 2007, Mayor Gaskill convinced me that I would be a good fit.

What's your favorite aspect of your job? What's the biggest challenge? Helping our citizens in their time of need is the most rewarding part of the job. Working with the public to ensure that fire codes are followed is the most challenging aspect.

What is the public perception versus the reality of your job? I think most people believe it revolves around responding to fires. While I do sometimes go to fires or accidents, in actuality I ensure our firefighters have the equipment they need, review construction plans to verify they meet building and fire codes, process invoices and payroll, meet with citizens and business owners, and make sure we spend tax dollars wisely.

In what season does Paragould shine the most? Spring. Everything is turning green, people are getting out and about and working on their lawns.

What's the biggest lesson you've learned by working for a city government? You have to administer the rules and be flexible where possible but fair. At the end of the day you have to be able to lay your head on the pillow knowing you have made the best decisions you can to keep the city and your department moving forward.

What advice do you have for someone who would like to follow your footsteps into this job? Prepare yourself for a little stress but a lot of satisfaction. You are the person who will answer for everything that takes place within your department. Not all of your decisions will be popular or easy, but it will be the most rewarding job you will ever have.

What are three "can't miss" things that someone can do if they visit Paragould? We have many great parks, with the community center and water park being the jewel of our parks system. Our vibrant downtown area features great shops and restaurants, and Crowley's Ridge State Park offers fishing and many scenic hiking trails. 🏰

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Analyzing the 7 critical components of an effective safety program: Incident investigation

By Allen Green, League staff

In February, we introduced the seven critical components of an effective safety program: management commitment, training and education, accident/injury analysis, audits and inspections, incident investigation, program review, and recordkeeping. In March, we examined the management commitment component in depth. This month, we will discuss the importance of incident investigation.

An effective safety program must include a strong incident investigation component. If not, the same mistakes, injuries and property damage will continue to occur. A good incident investigation should accomplish the following:

- Determine the root cause and other contributing factors,
- Develop and implement effective corrective actions that prevent reoccurrence of the same or similar incidents, and
- Share learnings with others potentially affected.

When a personal injury, property or equipment damage, or a near hit/close call occurs in the workplace, a thorough investigation should be conducted. The goal is to prevent reoccurrence. The first and most important step in this process is to encourage employees to report all incidents in a timely manner, regardless of how minor they may seem. There are lessons to be learned from every incident if you look hard enough. The objective of the investigation is to determine the root cause of the incident, as well as other contributing factors, and put corrective actions in place to prevent the same incident from happening again. Avoid placing blame on individuals and approach the issue as a process/system error and thus an opportunity for improvement. If you don't, you will miss out on a chance to mitigate a safety hazard.

The essential steps for an effective investigation include:

- Scene preservation
- Information gathering
- Evaluation of information collected
- Root cause determination
- Development and evaluation of corrective actions
- Selection and implementation of corrective actions
- Shared learnings with all who could be affected or exposed to similar hazards

Getting started

First, preserve the scene and gather as much information as soon as you possibly can following an incident. Take photos, measurements, and get written statements from those involved as well as witnesses. Evidence and memories fade quickly, so time is of the essence. It may be several days before a formal sit-down investigation takes place.

Second, evaluate the information gathered. Make it clear that the investigation is not a blame game but a fact-finding mission. Automatically blaming the employee is generally a cop-out and almost guarantees that you're not going to prevent reoccurrence. Utilize a team approach. Typically, the injured employee, a witness, supervisor and manager should be involved. Having a supervisor or manager in the room can be intimidating to the employee, but it shows management's commitment to safety. Also, make sure someone is responsible for taking good notes. Using a whiteboard or flip chart helps keep everyone on board and allows for greater input and clarity.

To keep the investigation process simple and consistent, try using this old tried and true method:

- **Who**—Who was involved? This may include the injured employee, other employees involved and witnesses.
- **What**—What happened? Give a description of what happened. Be sure to include the time just before or leading up to the incident, the actual incident, and actions taken immediately following the incident.
- **Where**—Be specific in determining where the incident occurred.
- **When**—Be as specific as possible on the time of occurrence. A common practice is to develop a timeline leading up to and including the incident, as well as post-incident actions and reactions.
- **Why**—This is where we establish why the incident occurred. It is important to attempt to arrive at a root cause of the incident that lead to the injury, damage or close call.

Determine the root cause

There are many tools and techniques on the market to assist with root-cause analysis. A few of note include: fishbone diagrams, Pareto charts, failure modes and

effect analysis, the TapRoOT system, and, my favorite, the “5 whys” system. Each of these tools has its place and purpose. Some work better than others in certain situations. Keeping it simple is key. Just remember to look at three critical factors: man, machine and the environment.

The 5 whys technique is probably the oldest, simplest and most widely used. No formal training required. Simply keep asking “why?” until you can go no further. Depending on the complexity of the incident, this typically takes around five steps or less. Here’s a simple example: Truck would not start. Why? Battery was dead. Why? Alternator not charging. Why? Belt loose. Why? Tensioner out of adjustment.

Without all the whys, you may have just bought another battery and had the same issue all over again. Use this concept for each “branch” of the cause pathway. While most investigations are simple and clear-cut, there may be multiple potential causes when an incident is more complex.

Develop, evaluate and implement effective corrective actions

When developing and evaluating corrective actions, be sure that the root cause is the primary focus. In other words, make sure you fix the cause and not the symptoms. Too often during the development of corrective actions,

we get caught up on the symptoms, personal preferences or other tangents, all of which may be good things to do, but they may not address the causal factors. If the root cause is not directly addressed, the issue can and probably will reoccur sometime down the road. An effective corrective action should permanently prevent the same issue from reoccurring. This should be your standard.

If there are multiple corrective actions for the same issue, evaluate all options for cost, time, effectiveness and other site-specific factors. Then select and implement the most feasible option. Track progress on the corrective actions selected, then audit and evaluate for effectiveness in the field.

Sharing lessons learned

Finally, don’t forget to share the lessons learned from the investigation. Utilize this information to educate and train employees. If not, you are missing out on a very good opportunity. Make sure findings are implemented across all applicable departments. 🏠



Allen Green is the League’s loss control liaison. Contact Allen at 501-374-3484, ext. 122, or email him at agreen@arml.org.

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PHOTO BY JIM VON TUNGELN

Potentially controversial issues arise constantly, such as how to treat these structures in residential districts.

When the zoning doesn't quite fit

By Jim von Tungeln

Despite the best efforts of well-intentioned people, sometimes a city's land-use plan and the zoning code designed to implement it fail to work. At the least, they fail to work for a specific property owner wanting to use property in accordance with the plan. Spooked by public resistance, the city says, "No." Why does this happen, and what options exist?

Such an impasse arises for myriad reasons. First, despite what some planners tell us, they are not perfect predictors of what land use is appropriate for each parcel of land in the city.

Second, the best-laid plans suffer from what planners call the "breadth and depth syndrome." Planning analysis, because of limited resources, runs broad but not very deep. Yes, in some areas, such as downtown, it runs deeper than in others, such as new subdivisions. But plan recommendations rest on what economists might call a macroanalysis. They flow from visions, policies, data analysis and citizen participation. But they may lack the depth of review that produces proposals able to withstand challenge.

Neighbors in the vicinity of a proposed land use often provide the microanalysis of a plan and zoning

recommendations. Sometimes such analyses are based on longtime experience, or facts not easily determined by a casual look. In such cases, neighbors can provide a valuable service.

In other cases, however, input is based on rumors, generalizations, prejudices and false data. Hence the existence of the term NIMBY, or "the use is fine but not in my backyard" (See: "rental, short-term"). The planning commission, and ultimately the elected body, must then make one of the toughest types of decisions associated with the planning function. This is to determine whose rights prevail: the owner of a specific property or nearby neighbors?

Finally, conditions may change from the time the planning and zoning code come into effect and the time at which a property owner chooses to act. The opening of a bypass, for example, may have a drastic effect on demand for commercial zoning. As a result, it may benefit nonresident travelers at the expense of countless property owners within the city.

Property owners who suddenly find their personal plans at odds with municipal plans face a choice between accepting the status quo or seeking relief in several ways. The first choice is the most common. It is to seek

a rezoning. This requires an amendment to the zoning ordinance (code), which consists of a text and map. In this case, the applicant will ask for an amendment to the map, requiring public notice, a public hearing, planning commission approval regarding planning compatibility, and city board or council approval as municipal law.

A newly rezoned property enjoys all the permitted uses outlined for that specific district, subject to setbacks, height and other restrictions clearly stated. In traditional zoning dogma, the planning commission considered only the appropriateness of a zoning district for a property and not the specific use of many that might be allowed in that district.

Many tales exist like this one from a major city in our state. A rezoning request was approved for a commercial district, supposedly to house an upscale lifestyle center—think Tiffany & Co., Saks Fifth Avenue and the like. Renderings pictured banners, award-winning landscaping and people waving from the drawing. As the ink dried on the rezoning ordinance, the project became a discount warehouse. It's still there, but nobody waves. Oops.

Because of this, some cities have eschewed tradition and legal precedent and now require an enforceable site plan for rezoning approval. Legal confirmation regarding this requirement is likely to be tested someday. Stay tuned.

Some applicants seek relief from a specific zoning condition if it causes an undue hardship to the property involved. Such a unique condition must prevent the property owner from achieving the same level of use of the property as that enjoyed by neighbors not burdened by the condition.

Justification for a zoning variance is, as they say, “a tough row to hoe.” Variances traditionally granted in the state came nowhere near meeting that standard. Instead, they were approved, against legal advice, based on inconvenience. Times are “a-changing” in this regard, because of training by the Arkansas chapter of the American Planning Association and the Municipal League. Applicants should be aware.

Cities with access to a professional staff allow an applicant to seek a specific site plan through the processing of a planned unit development. This is a complicated process where the applicant receives the benefit of flexible regulations and the city receives the guarantee of specific design. Planners call it a win-win situation.

A final opportunity for relief, if a desired use is not permitted, lies in the so-called conditional use process. Conditional uses, also known as “uses permitted on review” or sometimes “special uses,” are common in zoning codes. They can be confusing and are often

misused. To understand what they are, it is helpful to first consider what they are not.

A conditional use is not a use variance. It does not allow a use that is not permitted in a particular zoning district.

It is not a methodology by which some applicants can use land in ways forbidden to others.

It is not a methodology by which nonconforming uses become conforming.

It is not a methodology with which to circumvent the city's adopted land-use plan.

A conditional use is one that is permitted in a particular zoning district although it is not permitted by right, i.e., without conditions. It is a use that, because of broad variances in size, bulk, traffic impact, material storage, visual dominance and other variables, requires a special review by the planning commission for application on a specific site. This review may determine that its use at the location in question meets specific and measurable criteria contained in the zoning code. Or the review may determine that it can meet those criteria if approval requires reasonable conditions.

As with all aspects of zoning, conditional uses should reside with the land and not the applicant. Nor should arbitrary “sunset” limitations hinder their use. Conditions should be measurable and enforceable. And since it represents a detailed review, not a change to the zoning code, there is no reason for involvement of the elected body. This is a local choice, but requiring such involvement can add unnecessary work to an already busy board or council.

As a last resort, an applicant may seek an amendment to the land use plan. This may or may not result in rezoning approval. Conformance with the land use plan does not confer a right for a rezoning. It is, however, a consideration that should not be unreasonably denied, but often is. Such is urban planning, perhaps best known as an area in which two reasonable people, with no base motives, may review the same facts and come to totally different conclusions.

Pity the planning commission that must deal with such differing conclusions that are voiced by powerful interests. According to the African proverb, “When the elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.” 🐘



Jim von Tungeln is staff planning consultant and available for consultation as a service of the Arkansas Municipal League. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. Persons having comments or questions may reach him at 501-944-3649. His email is uplan@swbell.net.

Building healthier communities through diversity

By Brian Gittens, Ed.D., MPA

Countless studies have shown that a more diverse health care workforce translates to healthier patients with better health outcomes. There are many explanations for this, but often it boils down to simple trust. We all need to be comfortable with our care providers, capable of sharing important personal information without hesitation or fear of judgment or embarrassment.

Many people feel most comfortable doing that with someone they feel they can relate to. So they want a care provider who looks like them or comes from the same place geographically. They want someone who they believe will understand them and their health.

That is why our mission is to create more diversity within the health care field. We want a health care workforce that reflects the population of the state.

Disparities in minority health

April is Minority Health Awareness Month, a time to remember that not everybody gets the same level of care. Every year, minority populations in Arkansas and across the country experience higher rates of preventable conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

The past year has been especially hard on minority communities as the COVID-19 pandemic has put these disparities in sharp relief. African American, Hispanic, Marshallese and other minority communities have experienced higher rates of COVID-19 infection, more severe cases and hospitalizations, and more fatalities. If our health care system were equitable, this would simply not be the case.

One of the ways we combat these differences is through organizations like the Arkansas Minority Health Commission. Its mobile health unit and sponsorship programs help organizations—such as providers like UAMS and others—who conduct outreach to minority populations, offering direct care, preventative care and education.

For the past year, that work has included efforts to educate people on the need for things like wearing masks and social distancing. It has also supported COVID-19 testing for countless communities without easy access. It now also includes efforts to promote and provide COVID vaccinations, as these hardest hit communities often lack the health care infrastructure needed for vaccine distribution.

Equity vs. equality

I want to pause here to explain why we talk about equity in care rather than equality, because they are not the same thing.

Let's imagine we were giving away free bicycles. When considering equality, we'd want to make sure everyone got one, regardless of who they are.

But with equity, we'd want to ask who can actually use the bicycle. Equity means providing taller people with bigger bikes, children with smaller bikes and those who use a wheelchair with hand-cranked bikes.

Equity is about providing resources where they're needed so that equality becomes possible.

Planning for tomorrow

There are many ways to promote equity in care, but one of the most important is ensuring that tomorrow's health care workforce is more diverse. That means making sure that everyone has an opportunity to enter the field.

That requires building a pipeline to channel students all the way through the educational system so that, when the time comes to make choices about academics that will define a working career, all students—and especially minority and underrepresented students—have the opportunity to choose health care.

Students need to be exposed to these careers early. That is why the UAMS Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion offers a variety of summer educational programs designed to expand that opportunity to students at every educational level, from kindergarten to undergraduate.

Historically, many of these programs have been held on our Little Rock campus, which limited their availability geographically. However, with the rapid growth of online learning over the past year, all of these programs will be available online statewide.

That expanded access is a win for equity and just one way in which we're working to build a more diverse workforce and a healthier future for all Arkansans. 🏛️



Brian Gittens, Ed.D., MPA, is the vice chancellor of the Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

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PHOTO COURTESY WYNNE PROGRESS

In 2017 the Wynne Tree Board celebrated 10 years as an official Tree City USA community. One requirement for being recognized as an Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA community is to have a tree board designated by city ordinance that is responsible for community tree care.

Growing the community forest through teamwork: Developing local tree boards

By Krissy Kimbro

Just as an ecosystem's growth depends on organisms successfully functioning together, the urban forest's health depends on symbiotic relationships among community partners to facilitate successful growth. Across Arkansas, urban forests are managed by a variety of partners, including city planners, landscape architects, certified arborists, municipal foresters and community volunteers. For an urban forestry program to be effective, these partnerships need to be effective. Education and an awareness of shared goals can help this effectiveness and can increase the success of local urban forestry programs.

The community forestry team

Depending on the size of a community, those making decisions concerning community trees may be limited to one or two municipal employees, or they may be part of a large group of partners and stakeholders. With city employees often working at capacity, adding "extra" projects such as Arbor Day celebrations, park beautification events and community-wide debris removals can seem daunting. Turnover among elected city officials following elections can result in the loss of valuable knowledge and experience. By building partnerships within the community, municipal leaders

can help alleviate the workload on city employees and officials while ensuring that progress toward their goals for the community forest continues.

When a community is looking to grow its urban forestry program, to whom should they look for assistance?

Tree advisory committees/tree boards

One of the most valuable assets to a community forestry program is a well-functioning tree advisory committee or tree board. Establishing a tree board to serve as an advisory group to city government is an excellent first step toward establishing or improving the community forestry plan. A large budget that easily covers the purchase of new trees and the maintenance of existing trees is a blessing, but without the right people making the best decisions on how to spend that budget, it's like rainwater that lands on pavement and runs off without ever reaching the roots of nearby trees: completely useless. A group of advisors with a variety of experience levels and a mix of strengths can help ensure the continuity of progress toward urban forestry goals and can provide valuable advice for municipal decision-makers.

Responsibilities of the tree board

Most tree boards share similar responsibilities, but each community can tailor how specifically or how broadly the board's tasks are defined. Most importantly, the tree board provides city government leaders with recommendations on how publicly owned trees should be planted, maintained and removed. Additionally, they may be responsible for assessing the current state of the community forest. This is usually done through an inventory analysis and helps determine short-range and long-term objectives for the community forest.

Tree boards can be invaluable in planning and conducting education campaigns and tree planting programs. They can educate the public and advocate for the development of tree care ordinances. As an impartial body, a tree board can review complaints and address tree safety issues in public areas.

A comprehensive urban forestry management plan is a valuable aspect of any well-managed community forest, and many tree boards will take on this task or will approve the development of a management plan written by an urban forestry professional. They can bring in additional resources by helping the city apply for grants, by soliciting private donations and by organizing fundraisers, as well advocate for larger tree-care budgets. Finally, the tree board can be responsible for the preparation of an annual plan of action and an annual report to the governing body.

Tree board structure

An effective tree board will be comprised of members with a variety of strengths and backgrounds. When recruiting members or filling vacancies on the board, consider the following organizations: urban forestry councils, regional planning organizations, nonprofit groups, professional societies, colleges and universities (faculty, landscaping staff, students), local "green" coalitions, garden clubs, landscape and nursery industry professionals, and state and county forestry and extension service employees. Additionally, partnering with the local public school district could present the opportunity for a mutually beneficial relationships with students and educators.

Be sure that the board's membership reflects the diversity of the community so that all citizens have a voice in its decisions. Consider rotating leadership duties and member terms of service to allow for the introduction of new ideas while maintaining knowledge and experience. Finally, seek out members who have a mindset focused on seeking solutions to problems and not just on identifying problems.

Tree board development

To maintain the professional skills of the tree board, encourage members to keep abreast of current research and trends in the field of community forestry and tree care. There are several resources available for tree boards and municipal governments looking to strengthen their advisory teams. The Arbor Day Foundation hosts thorough online training for those interested in the development of a tree board, whether they are local volunteers just starting the process or seasoned tree board veterans. Tree Board University, found at www.treeboardu.org, is made up of eight online courses and provides the opportunity to network with like-minded tree board members from across the country.

The community forest belongs to and benefits the lives of all members of the community. Spring is a great time for new beginnings and fresh starts, so if your community is looking for new growth, consider the impact a tree advisory committee can make. Take action now to build an effective team or to infuse a renewed spirit of action into a local tree board and see what grows! 🌳



Krissy Kimbro is the urban and community forestry coordinator for Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division. Contact Krissy at 479-228-7929 or email kristine.kimbro@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

New water meter tech saves time, money

By Danny Hernandez, EI

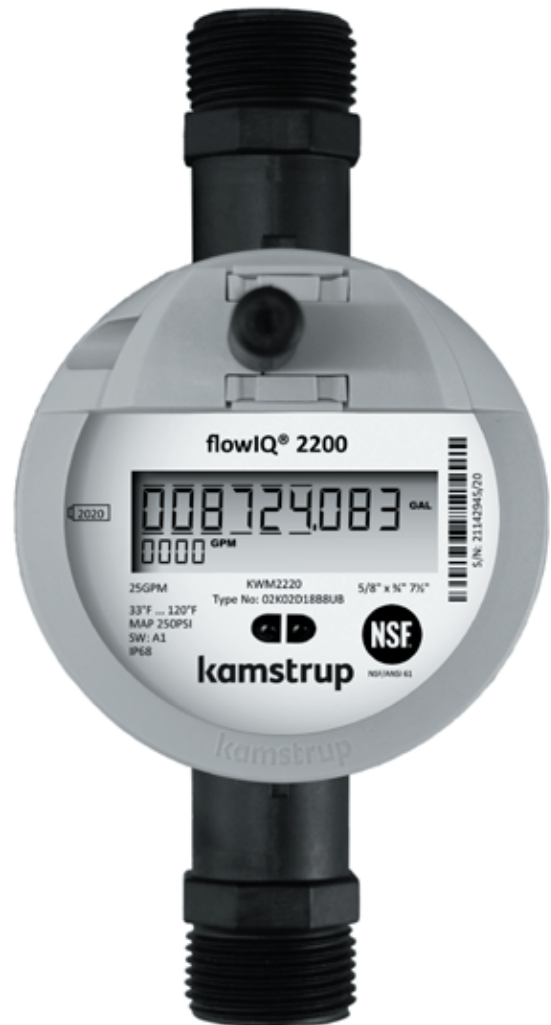
With the rising cost of the production of clean drinking water, it is becoming increasingly important to ensure that as much of it as possible gets metered before being delivered to the customer. Traditionally, water meters have been read by hand and recorded before being sent to the billing department. Then, weeks later, it is paid for by the customer. That means that it could be 30 days or more before a water leak or other issue is found.

In the past, water meters had many moving parts inside that would deteriorate from wear or increased buildup of minerals. Over time this would make the meter less accurate and create a scenario where the amount of water that passes through the meter is not an exact representation compared to the bill.

Today's new smart meters allow the utility to read, bill and collect what they are due. The more popular meters manufactured now utilize ultrasonic and electromagnetic detection, which requires no moving parts, no strainers and no maintenance.

There are two main options when it comes to metering technology. Automatic meter reading (AMR) gives the utility the ability to walk or drive near their system and read the meters from a data collector without having to open the meter box lid. These meters transfer the encrypted data to the collector, which can then be automatically sent to the billing department. These meters can also transmit data to a centrally located receiver that can be placed on a tower or elevated water tank so that a large portion of the system can be read without having to get in a vehicle.

Another option for even more control over the distribution system is Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI). This technology allows the meter to send and receive data. This gives the utility the ability to read and process water usage data from the office. In addition to automatic reading on a particular day, the meters can be read multiple times a day, giving increased accuracy. The utility can also control valving located within the meter itself that can control flow if there is an instance of late or non-payment. The utility has the ability to turn off the meter if a customer is away on vacation and doesn't want to worry about water leaks. Also, in an instance where water usage must be conserved due to drought or issues in production, the meters can detect usage over a set amount and alert the customer if they



are nearing the maximum amount. This translates to customers being more aware of the amount of water they are using overall.

Both metering technologies can detect if a user attempts to remove a meter in an attempt to steal water. And new meters don't allow for the possibility of a reverse-flow read. The GPS coordinates collected during installation allow the utility to accurately depict the size, location and status of the water system. This information can also be used to help plan for future growth and water demand.

According to David Coston, manager of Malvern Waterworks, on meters with AMR technology, misreads and rereads happen infrequently, if at all. Being able to read most of the system automatically from the vehicle means that the monthly reading takes a fraction of the time. That translates to a decreased need for multiple



February's snowstorm. At its peak, the software in the main office indicated that more than 400 water leaks were occurring at the same time. The new monitoring capabilities and GPS location tracking allowed the city to respond to the leaks quickly. The mobile app that accompanies the water meters gives their customers the ability to monitor their usage, which reduces the amount of calls they receive for complaints, Robinson said. Overall, water loss throughout the distribution system has dropped nearly 20 percent, he said.

Replacing existing meters, whether all at once or over time, gives the utility the ability to accurately monitor and bill the water sold to customers. If the value of the lost water is compared to the cost of replacing faulty meters, the new meters will more than likely pay for themselves. 🏠

people meter reading, and workers can be shifted to other tasks. However, he emphasized the need to continue to visually monitor the system to ensure that there are no leaks or other issues.

The city of Wooster made the switch to AMI meters, and Mayor Terry Don Robinson said the new meters paid for themselves quickly, especially during this



Danny Hernandez is a project designer in MCE's water/wastewater department and works out of the Little Rock office. Contact Danny by phone at 501-371-0272, or email him at dhernandez@mce.us.com.

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2020/2021 State Turnback Funds

| Actual Totals Per Capita | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | STREET | | SEVERANCE TAX | | GENERAL | |
| MONTH | 2020 | 2021 | 2020 | 2021 | 2020 | 2021 |
| January | \$6.789 | \$6.659 | \$0.083 | \$0.071 | \$2.145 | \$1.951 |
| February | \$6.340 | \$6.607 | \$0.118 | \$0.163 | \$1.087 | \$0.893 |
| March | \$5.758 | \$5.693 | \$0.101 | \$0.110 | \$1.087 | \$0.892 |
| April | \$6.088 | | \$0.064 | | \$0.924 | |
| May | \$5.943 | | \$0.034 | | \$0.924 | |
| June | \$5.605 | | \$0.030 | | \$0.924 | |
| July | \$6.094 | | \$0.022 | | \$2.795 | |
| August | \$6.478 | | \$0 | | \$1.542 | |
| September | \$6.399 | | \$0.014 | | \$0.728 | |
| October | \$6.378 | | \$0.021 | | \$0.893 | |
| November | \$6.340 | | \$0.060 | | \$0.893 | |
| December | \$5.984 | | \$0.105 | | \$0.893 | |
| Total Year | \$74.197 | \$18.958 | \$0.652 | \$0.344 | \$14.838 | \$3.736 |

| Actual Totals Per Month | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| | STREET | | SEVERANCE TAX | | GENERAL | |
| MONTH | 2020 | 2021 | 2020 | 2021 | 2020 | 2021 |
| January | \$12,833,880.33 | \$12,587,621.61 | \$156,199.64 | \$134,647.89 | * \$4,054,970.57 | * \$3,688,464.32 |
| February | \$11,984,924.80 | \$12,488,753.05 | \$223,221.26 | \$308,183.56 | \$2,055,049.55 | \$1,688,281.84 |
| March | \$10,883,990.67 | \$10,760,836.82 | \$191,150.53 | \$207,709.60 | \$2,055,396.67 | \$1,685,424.74 |
| April | \$11,509,342.85 | | \$120,647.65 | | \$1,747,446.98 | |
| May | \$11,233,895.61 | | \$63,817.15 | | \$1,747,094.76 | |
| June | \$10,595,347.60 | | \$57,224.47 | | \$1,747,446.98 | |
| July | \$11,520,392.64 | | \$41,735.92 | | ** \$5,284,317.00 | |
| August | \$12,263,537.56 | | \$0 | | \$2,919,346.12 | |
| September | \$12,097,147.76 | | \$26,456.51 | | \$1,376,535.41 | |
| October | \$12,057,206.89 | | \$39,675.17 | | \$1,688,464.32 | |
| November | \$11,984,780.59 | | \$113,060.67 | | \$1,688,281.98 | |
| December | \$11,312,336.38 | | \$199,121.43 | | \$1,688,464.32 | |
| Total Year | \$140,276,783.68 | \$35,837,211.48 | \$1,232,310.40 | \$650,541.05 | \$28,052,814.66 | \$7,062,170.90 |

* Includes \$2 million appropriation from the Property Tax Relief Fund

** Includes \$3,513,475.64 supplemental for July 2020

Local Option Sales and Use Tax in Arkansas



KEY: Counties not collecting sales tax

Source: Rachel Garrett, Office of State Treasurer

See also: www.dfa.arkansas.gov

| Sales and Use Tax Year-to-Date 2021 with 2020 Comparison (shaded gray) | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Month | Municipal Tax | | County Tax | Total Tax | | Interest | | |
| January | \$68,199,990 | \$62,951,910 | \$59,726,912 | \$54,023,046 | \$127,926,902 | \$116,974,957 | \$14,602 | \$137,620 |
| February | \$79,611,239 | \$73,128,305 | \$68,300,663 | \$61,276,755 | \$147,911,902 | \$134,405,060 | \$20,412 | \$151,340 |
| March | \$66,877,931 | \$57,761,974 | \$57,918,592 | \$49,863,364 | \$124,796,523 | \$107,625,338 | \$13,492 | \$140,860 |
| April | | \$58,720,966 | | \$50,676,002 | | \$109,396,969 | | \$173,069 |
| May | | \$64,061,809 | | \$55,167,274 | | \$118,762,027 | | \$51,758 |
| June | | \$61,816,632 | | \$54,700,218 | | \$120,220,830 | | \$37,445 |
| July | | \$66,569,122 | | \$58,404,198 | | \$127,921,569 | | \$27,240 |
| August | | \$69,810,263 | | \$61,352,447 | | \$132,096,586 | | \$22,963 |
| September | | \$69,731,104 | | \$62,286,322 | | \$132,017,426 | | \$14,982 |
| October | | \$67,795,513 | | \$60,898,642 | | \$128,694,156 | | \$13,552 |
| November | | \$70,085,468 | | \$62,498,473 | | \$132,583,941 | | \$12,579 |
| December | | \$67,813,178 | | \$60,080,515 | | \$127,893,693 | | \$14,370 |
| Total | \$214,689,160 | \$790,246,247 | \$185,946,168 | \$691,227,256 | \$400,635,327 | \$1,488,592,551 | \$48,506 | \$797,777 |
| Averages | \$71,563,053 | \$65,853,854 | \$61,982,056 | \$57,602,271 | \$133,545,109 | \$124,049,379 | \$16,169 | \$66,481 |

MUNICIPAL MART

To place a classified ad in City & Town, please email the League at citytown@arml.org or call 501-374-3484. Classified ads are FREE to League members and will run for two consecutive months from the date of receipt unless otherwise notified. FOR NON-MEMBERS, classifieds are available for the rate of \$0.70 per word and will run for one month unless otherwise notified. Once we receive the ad, we will send an invoice. The ad will run once payment is received.

BROADBAND SERVICES SUPERVISOR—Hope Water & Light has the following position open for immediate employment: broadband services supervisor. The broadband services supervisor will direct the activities of the Broadband Services Department and implementation of the fiber to the premise project. Bachelor's in business management, information technology or a related field preferred. Must have advanced knowledge of networking technologies, broadband technologies, provisioning CPE equipment, managing Wi-Fi systems and managing core and access broadband systems. Preferred technical skills and abilities in the following: Windows server, Linux, LAN/WAN, TCP/IP, DNS, DHCP, fiber and copper cabling, firewalls, Cisco router and switch experience, Juniper Core Router and Junos Operating System experience, routing protocols, server virtualization, VPN, VLAN, broadcast and multicast traffic, GPON Fiber technologies, voice and QOS methodologies, and scripting languages. Fiber optic OSP construction knowledge also preferred. Must be able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations. HWL offers an excellent benefits and salary package. Visit www.hope-wl.com to view the full job description. Resumes should be submitted to: HR Dept. P.O. Box 2020, Hope, AR 71802. The position is open until filled. Priority given to those applying by March 12. EOE.

DEPUTY CITY MANAGER—The city of Hot Springs is hiring for the administrative/management position of deputy city manager. Works under the administrative direction of the city manager, performs highly responsible and complex professional administrative work while assisting the city manager with the direction and coordination of activities of assigned city departments and/or divisions, provides leadership in policy formation and implementation, and promotes effective and efficient operations throughout the organization. Requirements: bachelor's in public admin. or related discipline, nine years related experience, seven years related management experience, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Salary: \$105,000 - \$115,000 DOQ. Position is open until filled.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The city of Hardy seeks to fill the position of full-time director of public works, which performs professional, technical and administrative work planning, organizing and directing public works activities, including sanitation, street maintenance and repair, truck/vehicle maintenance, traffic signs and street/right of way clearing. Must possess a HS diploma, have 10 years of experience in public works including technical experience in water and wastewater operations and the management of technical personnel. Must possess Class 2 Water Distribution and Class 3 Wastewater certification or ability to obtain within six months of employment. Must possess valid Arkansas DL and may be subject to complete a drug screen, criminal history check and physical. A full job description and employment application form may be obtained at Hardy City Hall, 124 Woodland Hills Road, Hardy, Arkansas 72542, or by calling 870-856-3811. A resume may also be submitted with application. EOE.

DISPATCHER—The city of Camden is accepting applications for the position of police radio dispatcher I. The police radio dispatcher I is under the general supervision and direction of the on-duty watch commander and the department superintendent and is responsible for transmitting, receiving and routing in an efficient, calm and professional manner, public requests for police services or information to the appropriate field unit or division of responsibility. Must be willing to work any shift. Must pass a thorough background investigation. No felony convictions. Must possess a valid Arkansas DL. Salary: \$24,000 plus benefits package. Full job description and applications are available at explorecamden.com/city/resources.

ELECTRIC MANAGER—Clarksville Connected Utilities is now accepting applications through April 16 for electric manager. The electric manager must be able to understand standard electrical distribution, construction and maintenance methods. Responsible for overseeing all things related to the daily operations of the electric department. Education and experience: Bachelor's degree in engineering or related field; six years of electric utility experience, three years in a managerial or supervisory role. OR: HS diploma or equivalent; 10 years of experience in electric distribution, three in managerial or supervisory role. OR: Any combination of related education, experience, certifications and licenses. CCU is locally owned and operated with excellent pay and benefits. EOE, Drug Free Workplace. Applications may be dropped off 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the CCU Business Office, 400 West Main Street, Clarksville, AR 72830, or email debbie.pintado@clarksvilleconnected.net.

FIRE CHIEF—The city of Camden is accepting applications for the position of fire chief. Min. qualifications: completion of training at a certified state or national fire training academy and completion of college with specialization in fire service, personnel management, planning, public or business administration or civil engineering and

extensive experience as a fire officer in a fire dept. or comparable fire agency. Must reside in Ouachita County at the time of employment, must possess a valid Arkansas DL, Fire Fighter II Certification, must be a Certified Instructor and Fire Officer and be in good physical and mental condition. Must pass background check with no felony convictions. \$60,000-\$68,000 per year DOE plus benefit package. Full job description and applications available at explorecamden.com/city/resources or call the Camden Fire Department at 870-836-2413. EOE.

PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR—The city of Paragould is seeking an experienced, highly motivated, community-minded director to oversee the parks and recreation department. Responsible for planning, organizing and administering a comprehensive program to provide year-round leisure, recreation and parks programs within the city of Paragould including city parks, community centers, aquatics center, senior center, and various fields and open spaces. Requires bachelor's in recreation, parks management, business admin., physical education or related field, plus five years of progressively responsible experience in parks and recreation, including two years of supervisory experience, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Salary: \$50,000-\$59,527 DOE. Comprehensive benefits package, including participation in APERS. Submit an application online at www.cityofparagould.com. Please attach a resume. Open until filled. For more information please email Human Resources Director Tisha Baldwin at tisha.baldwin@paragouldcity.org. EOE.

PATROL OFFICER—The city of Austin Police Department will be taking applications for a F/T patrol officer. Must possess Arkansas DL, HS diploma/GED, pass a background check and drug test. Preference given to certified law enforcement officers. For an application, visit Austin City Hall, 3181 Hwy. 367, Austin, AR 72007, or call 501-843-7856.

POLICE CHIEF—The city of Hackett is accepting applications for the position of chief of police. Must be U.S. citizen, 21 years of age, HS graduate or GED, possess valid DL, no felony convictions. Must have three years of experience and have completed CLEST basic police training or equivalent. Applications available 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. M-F at Hackett City Hall. Deadline: April 15.


POLICE CHIEF—The city of Pine Bluff is seeking a proven leader to serve as its chief of police. The chief of police is responsible for planning, organizing and directing activities of the Pine Bluff Police Department to ensure effective enforcement of laws and ordinances, protection of lives and property, and initiation of crime prevention endeavors within the community. The chief of police works under direction of the mayor. Bachelor's degree and 11-15 years of related experience and/or training or equivalent combination of education and experience and a minimum of five years of management experience. Salary negotiable. Must provide a cover letter and resume to vickiec@cityofpinebluff.com no later Friday, April 30.

POLICE OFFICER—The Carlisle Police Department is accepting applications for a full-time police officer. Preference given to CLEST-certified applicants. For more information, visit www.carlisle.org/employment.htm or call 870-552-3431.

POLICE OFFICER—Cherokee Village is accepting applications for a police officer. Must meet all requirements of Arkansas law enforcement standards and training. Certified officers preferred. Applications available at City Hall, #2 Santee Drive, Cherokee Village, AR 72529, or call 870-257-5225.

POLICE OFFICER—The Des Arc Police Department is accepting applications for a full-time certified police officer. Comes with full benefits. Applications available at Des Arc City Hall, 107 S. 3rd Street, or send resume to P.O. Box 389 Des Arc, AR 72040. For any questions, please call 870-256-3011.

STREET DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR—The city of Greenwood has an opening for a full-time street department director. Qualifications must include a two-year college degree or technical program certificate, or three years related experience and/or training, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Applications available at www.greenwoodar.org or at Greenwood City Hall, 30 Bell Road. For more information, contact dsmith@gwark.com or call 479-357-1132. Open until filled. EOE.

TREASURER—The city of Camden is accepting applications for the position of treasurer. The city treasurer is under the administrative direction of the mayor and reports directly to the city council. The treasurer is responsible for work of unusual difficulty in performing at a high-level staff capacity, undertaking complete responsibility for the finances of the city. Requirements: bachelor's degree or higher in accounting or related field. CPA preferred. Previous experience in accounting field is required. Pay range: \$45,000-\$60,000 DOE plus full benefits package. Full job description and Applications available at explorecamden.com/city/resources. EOE. 



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