Nebraska Forms Alliance for Conservation
Three Natural Resource Districts and Six State Agencies Work Together

Public policy makers from federal, state and local agencies and political subdivisions gather to listen to a presentation on Platte River projects. An annual air boat tour is organized by the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance to inform public policy makers about Platte River natural resources, projects and public policy issues.

The challenge of fostering a view of conservation that extends beyond corporate limits is an ongoing one for many public administrators. The dynamics of local politics and policy making often enable a point of view that does not take into account the interconnectedness of communities within a watershed. Helping local policy makers understand the broader implications of land use on their natural resources is key to facilitating intergovernmental cooperation. Nurturing an understanding of how conservation on a watershed or basin wide level can positively impact socio-economic factors that contribute to favorable local repercussions is often the carrot that catches an elected official’s eye.

It is the idea of mutual benefits or needs that often tips the scales towards intergovernmental cooperation versus balkanization. Opening the door toward collaborative efforts in the case of the Lower Platte River Corridor in Nebraska was driven by growing

UN Association Recognizes ASPA’s International Efforts
Erik Bergrand

The United Nations Association of the National Capital Area (UNA-NCA) recently recognized ASPA for furthering the principles and goals of the United Nations (UN) through its work on the Global Online Network on Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN). Executive Director Mary Hamilton accepted the UNA-NCA Blue Ribbon Award on behalf of ASPA.

In March the UN launched the UNPAN web site—www.unpan.org. It envisions UNPAN becoming the portal public administration site on the Internet.

To accomplish this, the UN has developed a network of public administration associations, centers and institutes responsible for gathering and posting information online. ASPA is the official United States representative to UNPAN, serving as a North American Online Regional Center.

ASPA was cited by UNA-NCA for “playing a lead role in building a detailed set of databases that will allow the international public administration community to share knowledge, experiences and best practices in sound public policies, effective public administration and efficient civil services.”

New Options for Engaging Today’s Independent Workforce
Gene Zaine

Consultants, contractors, freelancers, project-based workers—whatever you call them, they seem to be everywhere nowadays. They’re managing projects, designing brochures, developing software, scrutinizing corporate takeovers... even running entire companies. Since the 70s, when “working for yourself” began to emerge as a realistic possibility for skilled professionals, career independence has become a tried-and-true way for millions of people to make a satisfying and lucrative living.

But as the number of independents grows, an escalating problem is emerging: the traditional business processes by which independents and organizations work together are severely outdated. Companies everywhere are paying millions of dollars more than necessary to bring on consulting talent, while the consultants themselves are frequently missing out on the financial rewards that an independent career should bring them.

The Surge of Independence
One may ask just how many independent workers are out there. Because this subset of the workforce is still relatively new—and methods for accounting for them are still imperfect—nobody’s exactly sure. The Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that about 12 million Americans (or nearly 10 percent of today’s entire workforce) currently work in “non-permanent” positions, while private-sector reports have estimated the number to be as high as 30 million.

The reasons are clear: autonomy, freedom, flexibility, variety and certainly the opportunity to spend more time with family or pursuing interests. And of course there’s the possibility to make a lot more money than would be likely in a full-time corporate position.

Regardless of the actual number, America’s independent workforce is a huge, talented population capable of producing tremendous benefits for the companies or agencies for which they work.

Today’s Methods: Progress Overlooked
The emergence of new methods to facilitate easier company-consultant relationships is long overdue. Somehow, while most other aspects of business are evolving with efficiency in mind, consul-
Alliance Succeeds in Promoting Intergovernmental Cooperation

From NEBRASKA, pg. 1

concern over the impact rapid population growth and change had on the long-term viability of the region's natural resources. Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts, having been delineated upon the basis of watersheds, were placed in the unique position of already understanding connections often lost to traditional political subdivisions. It was this understanding of interconnectedness that served as the impetus for the creation of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance.

Recognizing the need for intergovernmental cooperation to address the issues of land use, water quality and floodplain management, three contiguous Natural Resources Districts and six state agencies formed the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance in 1997. The Alliance was formed through an inter-local agreement. The initial local agreement is a commitment to raise the hiring and funding of a coordinator. Individual projects undertaken by the Alliance are funded by obtaining grants or funding from federal, state and local entities with interest in each particular project.

The Alliance was formed as a non-regulatory and non-taxing body designed to gather and disseminate information. In this manner, concern over an additional regulatory authority and increased taxation was diminished. The sole purpose of providing information and not regulation for the betterment of local communities is emphasized with all activities. In this way dynamic has been fostered and expertise from federal, state and local entities have been used for the development of local solutions to broader concerns.

A key element in pinpointing areas for constructive dialogue and action was the surveying of elected officials, public administrators, business owners and landowners to gauge major issues of concern. This provided the opportunity for issue specific research, education and public policy development that was meaningful to all parties. The Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance Research Reports provided a concise overview of public concerns as well as a clear indication of needs.

Public opinion showed overwhelming concern about both water quality and flooding and their corresponding relationship to land use as impacted by rapid population growth. The Alliance and Natural Resources Districts proceeded in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to update floodplain mapping and seek environmental restoration of critical habitat for threatened and endangered species. At the same time a study of the hydrological, geological and land conditioning was conducted in cooperation with federal, state, and local authorities. The Alliance recently hired the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to prepare a public policy study of federal, state and local emergency management for addressing the corridors natural resources.

Amed with this data the Alliance has proceeded to develop a local government committee to draw greater cooperation from the eight counties and 25 cities and villages. The local government committee provides the opportunity for communities in various stages of growth and development to share experiences, lessons learned and innovative strategies for addressing a variety of conservation concerns. The committee also provides the opportunity for constructive dialogue between local governments and various federal and state agencies.

Through cooperative dialogue and assistance from such agencies as U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers the Alliance has also been able to provide educational research and programming to assist local governments. One such project is a Water Wellness program designed to allow landowners to do their own water quality, wastewater treatment systems and environmental hazards. Other projects have included testing surface water, ground water and domestic wells to provide information for the development of alternative water and wastewater systems. In addition, cooperative efforts between the Alliance members, local governments, USGS and NRCS have produced public educational materials.

Currently the Alliance is in the process of launching an interactive Web GIS system with support from four Natural Resources Districts and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This system is designed to provide local governments with the opportunity to utilize Geographic Information System (GIS) via the web for land use planning, water quality protection and floodplain management. The system will also serve as a means of keeping the lines of communication open between political subdivisions, while fostering an understanding of the interconnectedness of everyone within the basin. The keys to successful intergovernmental cooperation realized through the Alliance have been: surveying the concerns, providing information verisegregation, openness to adaptive management and the maintenance of local control. While no system is perfect we have found this approach to be constructive toward the sharing of information and the promotion of innovative solutions adapted to match local concerns.

ASPNA member Gregory S. Fettke serves as coordinator of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance.

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Bringing Ethics and Values into Transportation and Infrastructure Policy Planning

Jeremy F. Plant

I was at a meeting of a citizens group not long ago when a planner from one of the nearby counties made a comment that caught my attention. Commenting about the difficulty in producing a consensus on a plan, or even on a few feasible alternatives, he noted that “planning used to be about interests; now it’s about values, and it’s hard to find common ground.”

Environmental issues, issues of intergenerational and social equity, a not-in-my-backyard argument and a radical decentralization and inclusiveness of decision making processes have slowed down the processes traditionally used to deal with the building and maintenance of physical infrastructure. The most obvious manifestation of this problem is the geopolitical problems of sprawl and gridlock. Is this development, in and of itself, an ethical issue or problem? What sort of behavior should be considered ethical in dealing with the problems of growth management, urban development, narrow markets for a reliance on the automobile and a declining investment in transportation infrastructure?

It is socially difficult to incorporate values and ethics into the infrastructure planning process because, since the introduction of professional planning, capabilities in government, planning and plan implementation was seen as a largely technical exercise. Trained specialists in engineering and management applied their expertise to solve what Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber called ‘tame’ problems, ones that seemed amenable to logic and the scientific method, where facts, not values, were all that needed to be addressed.

Transportation is historically the most important type of infrastructure, and the area where the shift from a tune to a wicked problem problem was most vexing. Building roads was once considered the eminent domain of government. As the old saying went, there was no Republican or Democratic way to build a road. Even Mussolini had a rational side, it seemed: he made the trains run on time.

The illusion of transportation and infrastructure issues as tame problems began to be challenged in the 1960s and 1970s, as the role of transportation in society placed before tame projects, like a highway or bridge, into the social, economic and physical system. In 1974, Robert Caro, in his masterful biography of New York’s great builder, Robert Moses, The Power Broker, made the argument against highways and the automobile civilization an ethical one. Moses was himself unethical, willing to use whatever means necessary to get his way, a selfish and egotistical technocrat who brooked no opposition to his schemes. Moreover, his approach could not have been more against the most obvious ethical approach to employ, utilitarianism. His great projects destroyed the character of the city, had a short-term bias, caused harm to homeowners in vital urban neighborhoods, and contributed to blight and displacement. Thus the issue of ethical conduct in transportation and infrastructure policy was linked to value creation.

The continuing suburbanization of America, and the role played by transportation in the transformation from an urban/rural to a suburban society, cemented the link between transportation and land use issues. In so doing, it guaranteed that they be seen as wicked problems, without agreement on means or ends, and without a clear set of criteria to judge success and failure. Building more highway capacity to ease current levels of demand only seemed to generate more demand, and exacerbate the movement of families and jobs to the fringes of urban regions. Land consumption grew at an even faster rate than population, creating gridlock and environmental deterioration. The never-ending costs of sprawl to be dealt with the dynamics of growth and gridlock sapped government of the resources to invest in new modes of transportation or to make needed improvements in existing infrastructure.

Value choices combined with specific ways of looking at and defining the problem have led to the creation of competing ideologies concerning growth, infrastructure, and traffic congestion. One group, the economic rationalists, favors market-based means of allocating resources. Both the automobile and the single family suburban lifestyle, they say, have won in the market-place (presumably under fair conditions) over their competitors. Government has an obligation to provide the services that a society organized by rational choice has determined to be necessary. Rationality is enhanced by the use of transferable rights and privatized service providers whenever possible, such as toll roads or road user pricing. Critics of this approach argue that it cannot look beyond the present to the future, but its advocates counter that the future is impossible to predict with any precision anyhow.

Adherents of a second approach argue that the highest human values can be best achieved in urban society. Cities are the centers of art, culture, learning, and community. Scholars from Parick Geddes to Jane Jacobs to Robert Caro have stressed the need to preserve cities and prevent their decline through the incentives they feel public policies have created to enable or motivate people to forsake the city for the suburb. This group favors investment in public forms of transportation over the automobile and the highway, and looks critically at measures that sacrifice the distinctive characteristics of urban neighborhoods, accessible recreational and cultural facilities, the aesthetic appeal of urban form.

A third approach focuses on equity issues. In infrastructure investment problems, this typically meant equity between those bearing the direct costs of the improvement versus the more dispersed group receiving benefits. In recent years, it has become more complicated as considerations such as equity (e.g., the aged or the disabled, who cannot use private vehicles, versus car owners) and intergenerational equity have made the determination of costs and benefits, winners and losers, even more problematic. Procedural, as well as substantive, equity has led to the creation of attenuated and often conflicting, processes to make authoritative decisions. The fourth major approach is based on environmental ethics, or the ethics of sustainable development. This requires that actions be selected that include human need and rights along with the rights of nonhumans. The basic values are predicated on a philosophy of value as good and as much for others and the idea that nonhumans, even the nonliving world, have a value beyond that fixed by functional use. While a variety of ideas co-exist under the umbrella label of environmental ethics, their common thread, fact-begging to Neil E. Harrison, is "that each ecology theory offers an ideal ethic of values and is adapted to a world with natural limits."

A fifth approach focuses on participation and discourse as the means to allocate society’s resources. These communitarians argue that science has not been able to solve problems of transportation congestion or the wasteful use of land. The role of the professional planner becomes one of facilitating discussion of alternative future possibilities. One way to move from the known to be the most efficient allocation of resources or the best under a utilitarian cost-benefit analysis. As is the case with the ecological approach, this view of the problems of growth management is socially constructed, and permits us to rethink social relationships different from those now in existence.

Where does this lead us? Separating issues of policy preference from issues of ethical conduct is an increasingly difficult task in a complex system of government. Problems of gridlock and gridlock management certainly illustrate ways in which values enter into a formerly fact-based decision framework. A value-free, scientific approach to the problem falters on the inability to clearly delineate cause and effect relationships connecting land use and transportation factors, and on the need for inherently political determinations of equity calculations. Experts at best can shed light on these wicked problems, but the search for the philosopher’s stone will be vain.

If the issues of sprawl and gridlock are not in the forefront of the research that can be advanced, then this suggests that we can only be guided by ideas of virtue: never overestimating the extent to which cause and effect relationships are known, and where certainty can replace uncertainty by valuing and supporting discourse and participation, and by freely and fairly sharing information and informed opinions with the public, by seeing the need for a balance between the demands of individuals and the needs of the broader community, and finally, by respecting a number of potential outcomes that may arise from democratic processes.

For more information, contact Christine Jewett McCrothin at: cjmccrothin@asapnet.org
The word "infrastructure" can be used in a variety of ways. Some of the Merriam-Webster dictionary definitions of "infrastructure" include:

- "The underlying foundation or basic framework (as of a system or organization)"
- "The system of public works of a country, state or region"
- "The resources (as personnel, buildings or equipment) required for an activity"

In different historical contexts over the past seventy years, different mixes of these definitions have included a focus on public works. For instance, during the Depression, public works programs were created that served several complementary purposes simultaneously: They strengthened the nation's infrastructure, addressed problems of mass unemployment, and helped restore social and economic stability to the nation.

In the aftermath of World War II, the Marshall Plan focused on the reconstruction of Europe's infrastructure and the reconstitution of Europe's industrial capacity, both of which were crucial to retaining economic stability in a war-torn Europe.

In recent years, numerous government-sponsored analyses and reports and agency and task group efforts have focused on national infrastructure concerns. In a May 1999 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report on public infrastructure spending, the focus was on public buildings, airports, highways, mass transit, rail, water transportation, hydropower, water resources, water supply and wastewater treatment.

In the late 1980s, the National Council on Public Works Improvement had paid particular attention to highway pavements and bridges. In 1988, the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) issued a report in emphasizing ways of "improving public works and making them more efficient and productive."

In the early 1990s, the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers developed a Federal infrastructure strategy, analyzing accomplishments and outlining issues and options that emphasized types of infrastructure similar to those highlighted by OTA and CBO.

An even wider array of different types of infrastructure were emphasized in a February 2000 report on infrastructure funding trends issued by the General Accounting Office of the U.S. Congress. These types of infrastructure included:
- defense (equipment, procurement, military construction);
- transportation (aviation, rail, highways, mass transit, water transportation);
- water resources, supply, and treatment;
- public housing; public buildings (post offices, court houses, federal buildings, military and public hospitals and clinics, research and development facilities; public lands and parks; and public schools and higher education).

Yet another way of looking at "types of infrastructure" is in the context of "critical computer-dependent infrastructure". The Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 63 refers to critical computer-dependent infrastructures that involve critical operations and functions, including telecommunications, power distribution, national defense, and essential government services.

In the late 1990s, owing to Y2K-related threats and challenges to national and global infrastructure, considerable attention to computer technology and computer systems deemed vital to government, business, and industry. Of particular concern to some were the complex integrated systems found in certain high risk, high hazard sectors: nuclear weapons systems, nuclear power plants and facilities, chemical manufacturing and processing plants, oil and gas refineries and pipelines, biological, chemical, and radiologically hazardous laboratories, plants, storage facilities or sites; and other similarly hazardous sites.

Other Y2K-related concerns included the electric power grid, water purification plants, distribution systems, and wastewater treatment plants; dams, food production and distribution, fuel distribution systems; telecommunications systems; ships, tanks, and ports; the railway system and air transport; mass transit; public safety; the health care system; and the pharmaceutical industry.

During the late 1990s, there was a concern on the part of some that potential Y2K-related problems and possible failures of technology and complex integrated systems might trigger disasters or catastrophes of varying levels of severity. There were additional concerns that such disasters or catastrophes combined with other Y2K-related failures could have cascading impacts, impacts that could affect national and global economic and societal stability. There was also concern about the consequences that regional disasters and catastrophes could have for the environment.

Since September 11, 2001, another set of national and global threats and challenges has emerged. National and homeland security have become prominent concerns. Subsidiary concerns include the cascading impacts that the terrorist actions have had on both the national and global economies. Job security, as well as personal security, have been seriously eroded.

Health Care Cost Management

The health care benefit challenges that employers face today are unlike any seen before. There are an unprecedented number of ongoing issues, such as rising costs. Other issues that have to be factored include consumerism, legislation such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and technology. Today’s challenges are leading many in Human Resources (HR) and in management to look for new solutions that will help them shape their organizations health care strategy, now and for the future.

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Multi-Pronged Strategy Needed to Address Issues of New Infrastructure

From CHALLENGES, pg.4

- A top priority is finding gainful and useful employment for all who are unemployed or underemployed. In addition to implementation of a stimulus package, this can be accomplished using a broad range of innovative ways. These ways include providing people with opportunities for part-time work and job-sharing that would allow them an opportunity to draw a salary while looking for work in their field or while retraining when retraining is necessary. Other approaches include providing for microentreprise and small business loans, fostering the exchange of services ("time dollar" type approaches), and the exchange of commodities for other commodities or services. Innovative low-cost approaches to housing need to be explored and implemented to stave off any increase in homelessness. Job fairs need to be fostered and other opportunities for those seeking positions to find them.
- Concerted efforts need to be made to address particular needs that currently exist. Additional people need to be hired at airports so that the added time spent in line will not deter people from flying. Additional security personnel are needed in airports, mass transit systems, buildings, plants, and hazardous material facilities. Personnel are needed in law enforcement and cybersecurity. Persons are needed to develop business continuity plans, data backup systems, and backup telecommunication systems. Individuals are needed who are skilled in disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. Currently available training opportunities need to be more widely advertised. Major education and training initiatives aimed at capacity building for addressing challenges relating to homeland and national security need to be undertaken. A central information clearinghouse is immediately needed, one manned by information specialists. Social and mental health services, as well as health care services in general need to be expanded. More people need to be trained to serve in public health and safety roles. More people need to be trained in employment services. Individuals are needed to plan, develop, manage, and carry out public works projects, projects that will help rebuild and strengthen those elements of the nation’s physical infrastructure that have been in need of attention for decades.
- Approaches need to be developed and implemented that will encourage the temporary (if not a long term) reordering of monetary incentives on the part of all those in the public and private sectors. Attention needs to be given to the examples of those individuals in the private sector who since September 11 have announced their intention to forego their annual bonuses and/or reduce their salaries. Innovative approaches to diversifying products and services need to be explored. Ways of “saving” companies and enterprises need to be explored. Innovative ways need to be found to keep people usefully employed without resorting to layoffs. Best practices need to be followed when layoffs cannot be avoided. Business for Social Responsibility (http://www.bsr.org) is one source of such best practices.

Not everyone can be expected to recognize immediately the merits of this multi-pronged strategy, a strategy aimed at strengthening essential aspects of the nation’s infrastructure. The value of the strategy, however, may become increasingly compelling with time as the harshness of present realities become more and more evident. The current abundance of good will, patriotism, and constructive and creative energy available makes this an excellent time to build support for and to implement such a strategy. It is hard to imagine a more opportune time to join forces to do what we can to strengthen national, economic, and personal security.

APSA member Paula Gordon is currently director of special projects of the Research Program in Social and Organizational Learning at The George Washington University and serves as a faculty associate at the Johns Hopkins University. E-mail: pgordon@erols.com.

Let's Elect

Tim Clark
Vice President of ASPA

We know I am Clark as a real leader of the good government community in this country, and we urge you to consider voting for him in the upcoming ASPA election.

Tim is an unconventional candidate for the office — but he would bring a fresh eye and a distinctive set of experiences to our society. He hasn’t had a career in government, or in the academy; yet has devoted his professional life to researching, writing and publishing about American government at all levels. He has shaped three magazines - National Journal, Empire State Report, and Governing - into real forces for good in the government community. Last year, the Association of Government Accountants included him among 28 people honored for contributing most to promoting government accountability during the past 50 years.

Tim has been an active member and past president of the National Capital Area Chapter of ASPA, and is a fellow of NAPA. He believes, as do we, that a broad program of outreach to people doing the work of government in all sectors of our economy can position ASPA for significant growth and a greater influence on behalf of the public sector. He is well equipped to accomplish that task.

The impressive roster of leading academics and practitioners who are backing Tim’s candidacy can be found on his Web site: www.govexec.com/aspa. We hope you will get on the bandwagon!

Wishing you safe holidays and a stronger ASPA,

The Committee to Elect Tim Clark for Vice President of ASPA

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- Experience - Vision - Leadership - Experience - Vision - Leadership
New Staffing Model Emerges

From WORKFORCE, pg. 1
tant procurement and management processes have been virtually overlooked. The result has been curiously inefficient models that have changed little in the past decade.

Here’s why today’s methods suffer. Traditionally, organizations in need of a project specialist call on staffing or professional consulting companies to locate candidates and provide employment services such as payroll, health benefits, retirement plans, tax reporting, etc. Although expensive (many staffing companies mark up their consultants’ billing rates by 30 percent to 60 percent), the hiring company has few alternatives for engaging the right contract talent even their project done right, the staffing company’s mark-up simply becomes a necessary evil.

Meanwhile, if the consultants themselves have their sights set on a certain project, they often have no choice but to go through a staffing company as their engagement vehicle. Why? Because companies generally don’t want to work directly with individuals who work as “1099 independents” (i.e., unaffiliated workers who submit IRS 1099 tax forms) because they risk having those individuals be reclassified by the government as employees. When this happens, companies can be forced to pay back benefits and penalties that can range well into the millions of dollars.

Certainly, the staffing model helps consultants in some important ways. Consultants who use staffing companies are matched with available projects and their employment administration is handled for them. But there’s a price to pay—most consultants have to lower their hourly rates to remain competitive after accommodating for the mark-up the staffing company charges their client.

An alternative Fortunately, a new employment model has evolved that can pay huge dividends for the independent workforce and the companies that rely on their talent. It is called the Alternative Consultant Employment (ACE) model. Companies built on this model basically serve as the employee for consultants—without charging or charging for the job project matching and recruiting functions staffing companies provide.

Designed to give consultants more money and greater independence, the ACE model operates on the realization that today’s consultants and clients can find each other directly—without relying on staffing companies. In fact, the Internet has made this easier than ever. Simple searches of on-line job boards can yield results where providers and consultants’ resumes that far exceed what exists in staffing companies’ proprietary databases.

But what about benefits, payroll, expense reimbursement, tax administration and everything else staffing companies (and, for that matter, traditional companies) provide? They’re all covered in the ACE model. Here, consultants are W-2 employees and are therefore eligible for benefits such as group-rate health insurance and 401(k) plans, as well as administrative services such as client billing, collections, and regular payroll.

The difference? Cost and opportunity. By focusing exclusively on consultants’ employment services—and not on project matching—ACE providers charge significantly less than staffing companies for the same employment services. Also, ACE consultants can now engage with a wider selection of major companies more easily than ever before.

Keeping both sides happy Consultants are not the only ones helped by the emergence of the ACE model. Because it cuts out links from the consultant supply chain, companies and government agencies can now engage contingent workers for a significantly lower mark-up than possible with staffing or consulting companies. Corporate “first movers” are leveraging this model by establishing their own internal contractor recruiting engines—thus limiting reliance on staffing companies for locating talent—and simply funneling their new consultants through an ACE provider.

Gene Zaino is the Chairman and CEO of Contractors Resources (www.contractorresources.com). He can be reached at gzaino@contractorresources.com.

An "Ethics in Practice" Award will be given for the first time at the ASPA National Conference in 2002.

You are strongly encouraged to nominate individuals that you know who face ethical challenges in their workplace and have found ways to successfully resolve them.

Deadline for nominations is January 20, 2002. Guidelines for the nomination form are found on page 9.

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United States Versus the World?

William A. Miller

Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, a main architect of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in 1947, probably spun in her grave when the U.S. lost its commission seat in the recent election. Four candidates vied for three open seats, with France, Austria, and Sweden outpolling the United States. Secretary of State Colin Powell indicated 43 countries—of the 53 members—would vote for the U.S. The U.S. garnered 29 ayes. What happened? Why did its European allies defeat the U.S., a leading proponent of human rights? Some U.N. pundits opined that flagrant human rights violators, such as Libya and China, fed a stealth campaign to oust the U.S. so it would not proliferate resolutions condemning their alleged abuses. That partially explains the problem, however, there are several more plausible answers. Right or wrong, the U.S. exudes the image of an arrogant bully who wants to run the world, but doesn’t want to put itself at risk, either politically or militarily. Several countries, especially close allies, complain that the Bush Administration conducts a "unilateral" foreign policy that is far from being "bipartisan." There are major reasons for the world uniting against the U.S.: First, few issues have galvanized the world faster and more effectively than the Missile Defense Shield System. The system is roundly criticized because it may trigger an arms race (China and Russia will not stand by and watch their missiles become obsolete). It will negate the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with the Russians (of even greater concern is that the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty’s Article IV will be violated since nuclear powers will not downsize their arsenals) and cause destabilization. It will not work; and will cost far more than the $60 billion projected cost (the final could be $500 billion). Second, the U.S., which benefits most from U.N. services, is viewed as a deadbeat that does not pay its legitimate and fair share of the U.N. budget. There is immense resentment by U.N. members because the Clinton Administration, (which was forced by the U.S. Congress), negotiated a change in the U.S. assessment to U.N. headquarters from 25 to 22 percent in peacekeeping dues from 31 to 27 percent. Poorer countries, such as South Korea and Argentina, picked up the U.S. share of the tab. Legally and morally, the U.S. should pay 26 percent of the dues. Other major gripes include the United States’ lackadaisical approach to the United Nations, especially by arbitrarily thumbing its nose at major international treaties, such as the Kyoto Global Warming and the International Criminal Court. Kyoto was extremely irritating because the Administration refused to discuss legitimate concerns—and there were several—that our Allies had with the original version. Inability to secure a U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations who could have legitimately and forcefully lobbied other members. Former Ambassador John Negroponte, who may experience severe Congressional grilling because of his alleged involvement in human rights violations in the Honduras, has been offered to the Senate for approval. Not strongly reprimanding Israel for inhumane treatment of Palestinian civilians; preventing poor countries from copying the AIDS drugs and distributing them; unilaterally scuttling the peace talks between the North and South Koreans; and implementing a global gag rule, which banned U.S. aid to international groups that used their own funds to offer abortion counseling or services or simply lobbied for legal abortions. This setback is not irreversible, however, it is an embarrassing defeat for the Bush Administration’s rapprochement with the United Nations and its human rights crusade. To reverse the situation, the Administration should: First, engage, engage, and engage at the United Nations, while taking no vote for granted and no seat as an absolute right. One step would be to select a U.S. Ambassador nominee who is knowledgeable and will be respected by most of the other 188 countries. Begin the dialogue now with the Europeans to secure a commission seat next year. Second, become a financial leader at the United Nations by reversing the U.S. House of Representatives childish vote to punish the United Nations by withholding $244 million in legal aid fees we owe (the

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Source Code: 124
UN Seat a Privileged, Not a Right

From UN SEAT, pg. 7

Bush Administration opposed this action by Congress. This has nothing to do with the commission vote. Secretary Powell should begin a campaign to reinstate our United Nations assessment to 25 percent and lobby Congress to pay 100 percent of our dues to U.N. agencies. Congress should be congratulated for appropriating $582 million in back dues to the United Nations for 2001 and for voting to return to UNESCO.

Third, become involved in discussing the various treaties. Many of these agreements, when ratified by a certain number of countries, will affect us. We should help set the agenda, rather than sit on the sidelines. Also, President Bush should personally encourage the U.S. Senate to ratify—even over the objections of Senator Jesse Helms—the numerous treaties, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, that are languishing on Capitol Hill.

Remember it was not the United Nations as an organization that ousted the U.S., it was primarily our allies who are apparently getting fed up with our leadership, or lack thereof. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson were both quite distressed in the U.S. losing its seat, and hoped it would return as soon as possible. The culprits, if there are any, are our friends and their disdain for U.S. foreign policies. The Administration and Congress need to get serious about the United Nations, leave their marbles on the ground, and play the game.

ASPA member Bill Miller is the Public Administration Delegation Leader.
Email: Millerbyun@aol.com

CALL FOR PAPERS

The American Society for Public Administration's Section on Transportation Policy and Administration (STPA) invites submissions for its 3rd Annual STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION

STPA invites undergraduate and graduate students who have written research related to transportation policy and administration during calendar year 2001 to submit copies of their papers for consideration. Papers should be prepared according to a standard style such as APA. They should be between 15 and 25 pages in length and include citations and references. The review committee encourages students to submit copies of previously prepared research papers, conference papers, and journal article manuscripts. Literature reviews and review essays are not eligible for consideration. The committee will evaluate papers in a blind review process (students are asked to limit self-references to a title page that can be removed prior to review by the committee). Reviewers will rate papers on the relevance of the research to transportation policy and administration, the appropriateness of the chosen methodology, the clarity of the writing, and the overall quality of the paper.

The best paper will receive a $100 prize and a certificate of recognition from the Section on Transportation Policy and Administration. The best paper will also be recognized in the section's newsletter and on its web site. The winning paper will be announced at the ASPA national meeting in Phoenix, Arizona in March. The deadline for receiving papers is January 15, 2002.

Papers can be submitted via regular mail, fax, or as an e-mail attachment. Please use MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) if sending as an attachment. Submit to: Scott E. Tarry, Associate Professor, Aviation Institute University of Nebraska Omaha, 6001 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68182-0506, email: starry@unomaha.edu, fax 402-554-3781.

Questions about the submission process or the award can be directed to Scott Tarry at starry@unomaha.edu or 402-554-3190.

DON MENZEL

ASPA Vice President

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- Initiated the "Ethics Moments" column in the PA Times 1997
- Author of eight articles and essays in PAR
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- Extend ASPA's influence to all areas of government and the non-profit community
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- Promote partnering with ICMA, the U.N., and the National Forum for Black Public Administrators
- Advocate career development opportunities for students and young professionals
- Build support for NAPA and NASPAA's work in social equity and democratic governance
- Commit to making member, chapter, and section needs an integral part of my priorities
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Commentary

Public Administrators as Movie Heroes

Mordecai Lee and Susan Paddock

Since popular culture loves bureaucrat bashing, audiences are often presented with bureaucrats to jeer. Nonetheless, there are a few movies with heroic public leaders, such as "Patton" or "Crimson Tide." A few other movies glorify front-line public employees who deliver public services, including "Serpico," "Cliffhanger" and "Backdraft." But, what about your garden variety bureaucrat? Has a movie audience ever cheered the typical deck-bound paper-shuffling public administrator?

We searched for films about management rather than leadership; administrators rather than a direct-service employees; administrators in important rather than incidental roles; and heroic action that preferably is administrative. Here are twenty we found.

"A Bell for Adano" (1945): A World War II Army civil government officer (John Hodiak) is in an Italian village. Before the war, the town had a bell whose ringing set the pace of life. Realizing the bell's symbolic importance, he scrounges one from the Navy.

"Ikiru" (1952): Japanese bureaucrat (Takashi Shimura) has spent his entire career sitting behind a desk piled high with paper, putting his seal to documents. After learning that he has a fatal illness, he decides that a petition from a poor park should be acted on, rather than simply given the normal endless runaround.

"Smalto the Balliff" (1954): A Japanese district governor is removed from office and disgraced because he resisted a policy of the central government that would unduly burden citizens. Eventually, his son (Yoshikl Haayagyi) also becomes a district governor and faces the same situation.

"1944" (1956 and 1984): Bureaucrat Winston Smith (Edmond O'Brien and John Hutt) rebels against the agency he works for. Its mission is to enforce laws criminalizing certain ideas, words and even thoughts. When he decides to violate the policies his agency enforces, he loses his job and life.

"Esther and the King" (1960): The Persian Empire has two senior administrators, corrupt First Minister Haman and ethical Lord Mordecai (Denis O'Dea). Haman falsely charges Mordecai with malfeasance. Although he faces execution, Mordecai persists in acting honestly based on his Jewish faith. Finally, Haman is exposed and hanged while Mordecai is reinstated.

"To Kill a Mockingbird" (1962): Mentally disabled citizen prevents a murder from occurring and, in the scuffle, unintentionally kills the murderer. Sheriff Heck Tate (Frank Overton) knows these facts and has the duty to report them. He realizes the unintended consequences of such a deed action and reports his administrative discretion and omits the role of the Good Samaritan in his report. He believes his action accomplishes a just result.

"The Hill" (1965): At a military prison, guards abuse prisoners and intimidate the Medical Officer (Roy Scheider) from intervening to protect the health of the prisoners. Finally, the doctor uses his authority and stops the abuses.

"The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming" (1966): During the Cold War, a Soviet submarine runs aground off New England. It demands a landing party to seize a boat to pull it free. Sighting Russian sailors, the residents shift between panic and jingoism. Police Chief Link Mattocks (Brian Keith) calms his nervous officers and trigger-happy citizens. In a showdown confrontation, he acts heroically by preferring to look foolish rather than exercising his discretionary powers unwisely.

"Bullett" (1968): A police team, led by Frank Bullitt (Steve McQueen), has tracked an assignment. When Bullitt submits a report to his supervisor (Simon Oakland), another official demands the supervisor immediately punish Bullitt. Instead, Bullitt's supervisor risks his own position to give Bullitt more time to find out what went wrong.

"Jaws" (1975): After a fatal shark attack, the police chief (Roy Scheider) gives in to the town's civic and business leaders and does nothing. But, after a second attack, he stops bending to their wishes. When nothing else works, he bullies the mayor — his boss — into signing a requisition to hire a shark-killing specialist.

"All the President's Men" (1976): The movie glorifies "Deep Throat" (Hal Holbrook), the government official who anonymously helps two reporters expose the Watergate crime and cover-up. However, a second heroic bureaucrat is often forgotten. A high-ranking FBI official (Jess Osuna) is unhappy that his agency has been blocked from conducting a thorough investigation. Putting his own job in danger, he helps the reporters. Both courageous bureaucrats act on their commitment to the rule of law and the Constitution.

"Brubaker" (1980): The new warden of an Arkansas prison farm (Robert Redford) uncovers corruption that victimizes the prisoners. The culprits extend throughout the power structure, including powerful politicians. Despite their pressure to keep his findings confidential, he goes public and is then fired.

"Absence of Malice" (1981): A U.S. Assistant Attorney General (Wilford Brimley) has to clean up a legal and public relations mess his predecessors have created. He fires the perpetrators and prepares a detailed public statement. Committed to legality and professionalism, he proceeds unhesitatingly, regardless of the consequences, his efforts to reestablish mail service. The film shows that the organized delivery of public services is the essence of modern society. Public administration brings order out of chaos. It is civilization.

Interestingly, of these 20 movies, all the bureaucratic heroes are men and most are involved in a uniformed service. They are individual heroes, while their agencies are the opposite.

Some of these movies aren't very good. Nonetheless, this short list includes some highly regarded movies, with five on various "top 100" lists, eleven nominated for Oscars and five winners. So, notwithstanding the small number of bureaucratic heroes in movies, public administrationists can proudly identify themselves with these Hollywood crumbs.

Invitation to readers: We welcome receiving you nominations of other films that meet the four criteria we used for this list. Also, we're seeking examples of an entire agency acting heroically, rather than just a heroic bureaucrat in conflict with his/her agency.

ASPA members Mordecai Lee (mordecai@uwm.edu) and Susan Paddock (spaddock@uwm.edu) are University of Wisconsin faculty, in Milwaukee and Madison, respectively. This article is adapted from "Strange But True Tales From Hollywood: The Bureaucrat as Movie Hero," Public Administration and Management: An Interactive Journal 6.4 (Winter 1998-1999).
Letter to the Editor

Public Administration Departments Entering Internet Age

Dear Editor:

While browsing the Education Supplement in the October issue of PA TIMES I noticed that many public administration departments advertised their web sites. This was of interest to me after having participated in a panel on e-government at ASPA’s 62nd national conference in Newark this past March. Out of curiosity I decided to see how public administration departments have changed their ads over the last few years to reflect the increasing use of the Internet in the public and private sectors. Whether departments are leading or following the advance is indeterminate but some interesting findings came to light after comparing this year’s supplement to that of October 1997, just four years ago.

There were 41 departments advertising in the 1997 issue and 60 in the 2001 issue. Not counted were advertising for schools’ upcoming conferences and the second ad from the lone aggressive department which actually has two ads in the 2001 supplement. Recorded was whether the ads contained a classic mail address, defined as minimally a zip code to indicate such mail was invited, a telephone number, an e-mail address, and a web site address (URL).

The accompanying chart shows the results in left-to-right order of increasing technological sophistication. In 1997, 90.2 percent of ads contained a classic mail address whereas only 61.7 percent contained one in the 2001 issue. Telephone numbers provided remained about the same percentage, dropping from 97.6 percent to 96.7 percent. E-mail addresses increased from 48.8 percent to 63.3 percent, and web sites increased from a paltry 39.0 percent to an impressive 81.7 percent.

Only tentative conclusions can be drawn. For example, a department may not have a telephone number or an email address in its ad but may provide those to visit its web site. But a safe supposition will be that the departments provide contact information in their ads using the method they believe are most important in attracting students.

It was gratifying to see the surge in the use of web sites, with the rate more than doubling in only four years. However—what is almost overlooked in our focus on Internet usage is the surprising finding that the fraction of public administration departments giving their classic mail address in their ads has dropped from tenfold to less than two-thirds. One would have expected a rise in dependence on Internet but certainly not such a precipitous drop in classic mail usage. It would seem that departments are increasingly relying on communication methods which provide quicker response times.

Ron A. Rosenberg
Monroe County
Department of Social Services
President, Greater Rochester Chapters
of ASPA

---

The Greater Rochester Chapter

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- Chapter Development Committee
- Program Committee for ASPA National Conference 2000
- Program Committee for ASPA National Conference 2002
- Action Team for Indicators of Chapter Section Health
- Action Team for Alternative Membership Benefits

Goals & Objectives
- Improve communication between National Council Members and the local chapters
- Increase responsibility of National Council to local chapters
- Ensure that ASPA National meets the needs of the local chapters
- Strive to enhance the perception of public service

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Seeing Things in the Entire

In the same way that events tend to concentrate the mind, events focus public institutions on their core purposes. The events of September 11, 2001, and the challenge of global terrorism helps us, as Dwight Waldo was fond of saying, "see things in the entire." Although certainly no Waldo, I shall attempt here to see things in the entire by considering several of the subjects that have dominated public administration over the past two decades.

The reform hegemony has dominated public administration for the last two decades, everyone seemed to agree that things simply had to be changed. "Re" words were everywhere—reform, retraining, reengineer, results. If you rejected the consensus that our public institutions were broken and needed to be fixed you were a retrograde (another "re" word) doil blindly defending the status quo. Reform has been pilled on reforms to the point of reform fatigue. Downsizing has resulted in fewer staff. The rush to contract-out has resulted in a sharply diminished capacity to manage contracts. Worst of all, in much of the rhetorical justification for public sector reforms, the reformers have characterized public employees as hopeless bureaucrats and their agencies and jurisdictions as unresponsive and wasteful.

Then came September 11, 2001, and now we understand. When our country, our states, or our cities are threatened, we value order, predictability and reliability and we expect our public institutions to provide the security that comes from order, predictability and reliability. On one hand, our air travel security system badly failed that test. On the other hand, local fire, police, and emergency services passed the test with remarkable competence and unassuaged courage.

Consider the differences. Local police and fire are distinctly public, governmental and concentrated. They are, in the language of organizational theorists, high culture organizations, with extensive training, uniforms, rank, ceremonies, and deep traditions. They are unionized and demand fair pay and benefits. They are loyal to one another and to their city, a kind of old-fashioned reciprocity which exchanges dedication and hard work for fair pay and respect. Far from perfect (we all know the challenges of police corruption and the problems of race in the police and fire services), when called upon for effective service and heroic tasks, they do not hesitate. The close connection between the New York City police and fire services and Mayor Giuliani are well known and serve as an interesting example of loyalty and reciprocity, including both its positive and negative characteristics.

By comparison, the air travel security system is highly fragmented and anything but concentrated. The airlines are expected to provide well-maintained airplanes and reliable, safe services, they are also expected to guarantee that passengers will be safe from other passengers. They attempted to do this through a series of contracts and subcontracts, that, like most contracting regimes, emphasized cost savings at the expense of competence. Linkages between the federalized air traffic control system (until recently there were calls to contract-out air traffic control), local government airport authorities and departments, airlines, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and the Department of Transportation (DOT), are complex and fragmented. But, in the logic of high reliability systems, such systems can work if there is very tight coupling between the parts, including high levels of training, low staff turnover, contingency drills and exercises, and, above all, the financial resources needed to do the job. Some parts of the system, such as air traffic control and airline pilots and staff, could be described as high culture organizations practicing tight coupling. But other parts of the air travel security system, particularly passenger and baggage screening, are the opposite of high culture organizations and are very loosely coupled.

The events of September 11, 2001, put the differences between local police and fire services and the air travel safety system in bold relief. Running counter to both the political and the public administration hegemonies of the last two decades, the Congress responded by federalizing the processes of passenger and baggage screening. In time we will see a high culture uniformed, trained, fairly paid cadre of public servants to vouchsafe our air travel. Congressman DeLay, who opposed federalizing air passenger and baggage screening on the grounds that it may be harder to fire public employees, was right. In return for a highly trained, low-turnover, reliable cadre of air safety public servants, we must provide job security. How can we possibly expect them to be loyal if we are not loyal to them?

Easily the clearest thinking on this subject, thinking decidedly counter to the reigning hegemony, can be found in Larry Terry's splendid little book. Leadership of Public Bureaucracies. Terry argues that what really matters is public institutional integrity—patterns of distinct competencies and shared value commitments. In somewhat more elaborate terms he describes institutional integrity as the “completeness, wholeness, soundness, and persistence of administrative processes, value commitments, and unifying principles that determine an institution’s distinctive competence.” To make institutional integrity happen, leaders need power and authority and the skills to conserve the distinctive capacities of agencies, bureaus and jurisdictions. What institutions do not need is powerful, swaggering, heroic leaders, entrepreneurs, risk-takers, and change agents. Instead public institutions need leaders who understand the institution’s core values and competencies, respect and protect their traditions, and who know how to adapt the institution’s values, competencies and traditions to new and changing circumstances. The key word here is adapt. James Q. Wilson describes the process of institutional leadership as managing the fine-tuning and adaptive process as “added on to existing tasks without changing core tasks.” John P. Olsen describes the public sector leader as a gardener, an anti-hero who understands the soil, the seasons, the need for careful planning and preparation, and understands deeply that ultimate productivitv will be determined by careful tending and nurturing. Gardeners know institutional integrity.

The events of September 11, 2001, seen in the entire, teach us that we need a highly reliable air travel security system that is governmental, built on the logic of institutional integrity, and led by a group of very good gardeners. Fly well and safely my friends.

ASPM member H. George Frederickson is the Stein Professor of Public Administration at the University of Kansas and the author of The Spirit of Public Administration (Jossey-Bass, 1997).

ATTENTION
PA TIMES readers sent many supportive email and phone responses in response to "What Now? International Relations in the Aftermath of Terror," which appeared in the October issue. And this piece did include an error. Afghanistan is Islamic, and not Arab. I regret this error, and appreciate it being brought to my attention. —Donald Klingner
SECTION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNMENT (SSTIG) OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

2002 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING TO BE HELD DURING THE 2002 ASPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA.

Monday, March 25, 2002 • 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Maricopa Room, Phoenix Crowne Plaza Hotel
Dinner will be served.
All SSTIG members are urged to attend this meeting.
Please confirm your attendance and indicate any dietary restrictions by contacting Paul Hallacher at hallacher@psu.edu or (814) 865-6042

2nd ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION
TO SUPPORT GRADUATE STUDENT PARTICIPATION AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Last year, the Section on Science and Technology in Government (SSTIG) of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) established a program to support attendance by Masters and Doctoral degree students in Public Administration and Public Policy programs at the ASPA annual national conferences. The SSTIG provides a $1,000 scholarship per student to cover costs associated with attendance at these annual national conferences.

This year, scholarships will again be provided to two students to support their attendance at the 2002 annual conference, scheduled for March 22-26 in Phoenix, Arizona. One scholarship will be awarded for an essay addressing information technology issues, and one will be awarded for an essay addressing any other science and technology issue.

Any graduate student of Public Administration or Public Policy with interest in science and technology in government is eligible to apply for these funds. The student need not be a member of ASPA or SSTIG to apply. However, scholarship recipients who are not members will be required to join both ASPA and SSTIG before the conference. Last year’s scholarships winners were Debra Abram, an MPA student at the University of New Mexico, and Min-Wei Lu, a PhD student at the Georgia Institute of Technology School of Public Policy.

To apply for a scholarship for the 2002 conference, students must submit four items by January 15, 2002. The four items are:
1. A cover letter signed by the student;
2. A two-page, double spaced essay answering the question: What is one of the most important science and technology issues confronting Public Administration today?
3. An up-to-date curriculum vitae; and
4. One letter of recommendation from a faculty member in the program in which the student is enrolled.

Application packages for the 2002 national conference should be mailed to SSTIG, c/o Paul Hallacher, The Pennsylvania State University, 304 Old Main, University Park, PA, 16802, and must be received by January 15, 2002. A sub-committee of the SSTIG Executive Committee will review the application packages and awards will be announced by January 31, 2002. Additional information on the 2002 ASPA national conference may be obtained at the ASPA web site, www.aspanet.org.
AGA to Award Five Federal Agencies with Certificates of Excellence in Accountability Reporting

The National Science Foundation, the Social Security Administration, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the U.S. Department of the Treasury have been honored recently with Certificates of Excellence in Accountability Reporting from the Association of Government Accountants (AGA).

A distinguished panel of government financial managers chose to honor these five federal agencies for their exceptional fiscal year 2000 Accountability Reports. AGA, along with CEAR Board members, federal agency administrators and chief financial officers celebrate the accomplishments of these five agencies and presented them with special awards to honor their outstanding efforts.

"We hope that through these awards, the public will come to see that the production of an outstanding Accountability Report requires a grand cooperative effort among many agency departments and staff," stated AGA Executive Director Charles W. Calkin Jr, CGFM. "We saw the extent of this effort throughout our entire review process and we are extremely pleased with the results these government agencies have made. The program has come a long way in three years—and so have the agencies accountable reports."

In 1997, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the CFO Council called for a certificate program to encourage and recognize excellence in Accountability Reports. AGA was asked to step forward and answer that call. AGA established this award program in conjunction with the federal Chief Financial Officers’ (CFO) Council. Its goal is to recognize federal agencies that have achieved excellence in the preparation, issuance and timeliness of Accountability Reports. This distinction is a significant accomplishment and honor for a federal agency and its management.

AGA is an 18,000-member professional association devoted to meeting the continuing professional educational needs of financial managers at all levels of government, the private sector and academia. For more information about the association or the Certified Government Financial Manager CGFM program, call 800 AGA-7211.

Financially Correct

Recently the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) released "Financially Correct," a video program produced to help educate the public about why high-quality financial reporting is so important to investors and the efficiency of the financial market.

For more information contact FASB at (203) 847-0700.

Recipients of 2001 IPMA Agency Awards for Excellence Announced at Conference

At the International Personnel Management Association (IPMA) annual conference this year Association President Susan Toy Stern announced recipients of the IPMA Agency Program was initiated to provide, attendable, and small agency: the County of Riverside, California (large agency); Sedgwick improvements in Disciplinary Processes, and the City of Cupertino, California (small agency). The IPMA Agency Awards for Excellence recognize the overall quality, accomplishments, and contributions of agency personnel programs that exceed the normal operation of a "good government program."

The County of Riverside, California is the recipient of the IPMA Agency Award for Excellence for a Large Agency in recognition of: its implementation of several innovative changes in the area of Recruitment and Selection, in which the application process was consolidated and alternative recruiting is performed through the strategic placement of kindred. Advances were also made in the area of Compensation and Classification, in which an alternative method of IT compensation encourages employees to obtain new training, and ensures the county has the IT skills necessary to continue to enhance this technological advancement. In the area of Employee Benefits, the Executive Council works closely with all employees to provide real health insurance coverage to all employees.

The recipients of the IPMA Agency Award for Excellence for a Medium Agency are the City of Cupertino, California (small agency). The IPMA Awards for Excellence in the area of Strategic Planning, the city has employed a new approach to the implementation of the planning process, which has resulted in significant improvements in the results of the planning process. The county has also proven its responsiveness to employee concerns and diversity issues through the creation of the Strategic Assessment process, a Diversity Committee, and the Managing a Diverse Workforce program. These improvements, coupled with the county's commitment to the modernization of functional procedures, places the County of Cupertino, California as a leader in HR innovation.

The City of Cupertino, California is the recipient of the IPMA Agency Award for Excellence for a Small Agency due to improvements it has made in the area of Rules, Regulations, and Policies, which provide for consistency and equal opportunity for all employees in the administration of the HR function. In the area of Employee Development, the Building Employee Skills through Training program was established to educate employees, annually, on a variety of issues. In the area of Labor Management, committees were formed to create a positive labor relations environment. Significant changes were also made in the areas of Classification, Benefits, and Recruitment. All of these changes have helped establish the City of Cupertino as a professional and contemporary human resources operation.

Case Studies on Local Campaign Finance Reform

The New Politics Program of the National Civic League (NCL) recently completed a report entitled Addendum to Local Campaign Finance Reform: Additional Case Studies. The report contains accounts of the impact on local elections where campaign finance measures were put into place.

To obtain a copy of this report please contact NCL at 1319 F St., NW, Suite 20, Washington, DC 20005 by phone at (202) 783-2961, by fax at (202) 347-2161 or by email at ncl@ncl.org.

OPM’s USA Staffing a Leader in Electronic Government

USA Staffing, a powerful staffing tool from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), is being recognized by E-Gov, a private communications company that brings together public sector and industry partners to identify, create and implement effective online service delivery for citizens.

E-Gov will be sponsoring E-Gov 2001, the International Electronic Government Conference and Exposition, which is the only event focused exclusively on E-Government policy, implementation and technology. USA Staffing will be featured at this conference under the "Trepreneur" category, which was awarded to ten winning programs. These ten winning programs will host "hoots" during the conference.

GAO Releases Reports on Elections

The General Accounting Office (GAO) has recently released several reports on elections. These reports are available on GAO's website at www.gao.gov. The reports include:


