



## North Carolina City & County Management Association Conference

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I attended most of the NCCCMA winter conference last week at the Sheraton Imperial. I spent a lot of the time talking with different managers outside of the meeting rooms, so I didn't see many of the presentations. It is an occupational hazard for me. I love to hear the sessions, especially the ones we do, but my job is to spend time with the managers and hear from them.

Our folks were well represented on the program and at the conference. Bill Rivenbark, Greg Allison, and Dale Roenigk conducted a workshop on the new financial condition analysis tool that they have developed—I can't wait to hear how the managers reacted. Fleming Bell did a session for the managers on developing a local code of ethics and training opportunities for their board members. Willow Jacobson participated in a session on improving organizational performance through better human resource management. Michael Crowell and Bob Joyce did a session on the 2010 census and redistricting. Vaughn Upshaw was involved in a couple of sessions focused on elected officials—leadership development and orientation. Gordon Whitaker conducted an orientation session for new managers. Donna Warner organized and participated with me in a listening session with a small group of managers at breakfast on Friday. Carl Stenberg was a part of the conference planning committee, and he moderated a couple of sessions and reported on our Public Executive Leadership Academy (PELA) at the business meeting. David Ammons, Rick Morse, John Stephens, Jack Vogt, Ellen Bradley, and Gini Hamilton, all attended the conference—I apologize if I have missed someone.

Thank you to everyone for the great turnout. It is important because several years ago the leadership for the NCCCMA created a committee to explore a perceived decline in their relationship with the School. One of their concerns was that our faculty seemed to be less involved in their conference. They perceived that fewer people were teaching in the sessions, and that those who taught tended to leave as soon as their teaching was over. They didn't feel like they



connected with our current faculty in the way that they had connected with Jake Wicker and Don Hayman. This conference illustrates the progress we have made in cementing our important relationship with city and county managers.

Here are a few impressions from the conference.

Governor Perdue was the keynote speaker and she said nice things about the importance of the School. In talking about her education priorities, she highlighted the role of public schools in teaching good citizenship. I made a note to talk with her about our Civic Education Consortium.

Rashad Young, Greensboro's impressive new manager, spoke about the spirit of public service at a session primarily for MPA students (from all of the UNC campuses)—he had been an assistant city manager in Cincinnati and the manager in Dayton, Ohio. He was asked whether he noticed any differences in managing between the two states. Rashad mentioned that one difference was a much greater connection between the university and local governments through the School of Government. One reason for that early impression was Carl Stenberg's willingness to respond on short notice to a request from Rashad to facilitate a council retreat shortly after he arrived in Greensboro.

There was a breakfast on Thursday morning for our MPA alumni who were attending the conference—it also included our MPA students and many of our faculty who teach in the program. It is a great opportunity for our students to network with the managers, and the managers are inspired by our smart, creative, and dedicated students. Three students talked about their work experience last summer—they did a terrific job. Chanitta Deloatch (2nd year student) talked about her work with the Guilford County Department of Social Services.

Thanks to Susan Austin, Jean Coble, Sharon Pickard, Susan Lynch, and Faith Thompson for doing such a great job with our alumni and students.

Our support staff does a terrific job with this large, complicated conference. Total attendance topped 500 this year, which I'm choosing to interpret as a good sign for future participation in our programs. At one time or another I saw Julie Seger, Amy Huffman, Jessica O'Sullivan, and JoAnn Brewer working at the conference—and Lisa Sheffield was there throughout the entire conference (even as many were fleeing in anticipation of bad weather) and did a great job.

Many thanks to everyone who participated in any way with this important conference. I was scrambling around and left for part of the time, so forgive me if you were there and I missed you. I invite anyone who attended to share your impressions of the conference.

 UNTY MANAGEMENT

Governor Bev Perdue



Rashad Young



Chanitta Deloatch, MPA Student



Lisa Sheffield