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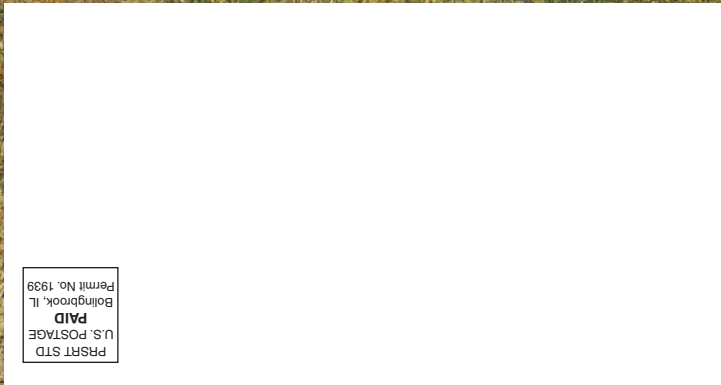
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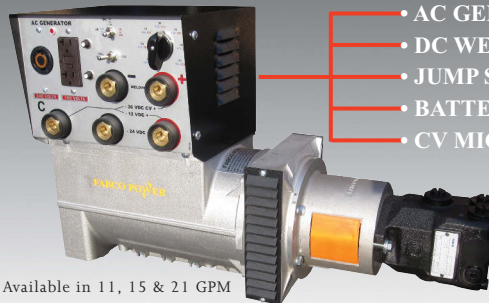
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ON THE COVER

Many city, county and state agencies are seeing the value of cooperative buying as it streamlines the process of securing needed equipment, saving both money and time. Buyers will have to do their homework, but they can certainly be confident that manufacturers, like Land Pride, are there to help throughout the process.



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Infrastructure major priority in 2017



Sarah Wright | Editor

MANY MUNICIPALITIES ARE undoubtedly still grappling with budget woes, even though as a nation, we seem to be well on the road to recovery. However, there is still work that needs to be done. In particular, underfunded pensions remain a concern, with a recent *The Associated Press* article — “Pressures piling up on state and city budgets” — and data from the nonprofit Center for Retirement Research — noting U.S. state pensions plans are underfunded by at least \$1 trillion.

A related topic that may have quieted some since the initial headlines about Detroit, but never truly went away is municipal bankruptcy, only now the rumblings are about Dallas. In many cases of municipalities facing bankruptcy, underfunded pensions funds have proven to be a major factor.

For instance in Dallas, its pension fund for its police officers and firefighters is near collapse, with the Dallas Police and Fire Pension System asking for a one-time infusion of \$1.1 billion, comparable to Dallas’ entire general fund budget. The situation has understandably caused fear among retirees. The *New York Times*’ article “Dallas Stares Down a Texas-size Threat of Bankruptcy” stated, “Over six recent weeks, panicked Dallas retirees have pulled \$220 million out of the fund. What set off the run was a recommendation in July that the retirees no longer be allowed to take out big blocks of money. Even before that, though, there were reports that the fund’s investments — some placed in highly risky and speculative ventures — were worth less than previously stated.”

Dallas — like other cities facing unfunded pension funds — has some tough decisions to make. No one wants to cut benefits to public servants who have served their communities, but when it comes down to it, there may be no choice, especially if it comes down to slashing vital services.

However, not everything is gloom and doom as we enter 2017. After a D+ report card in 2013, America’s infrastructure is finally getting the notice it requires, with cities and states having issued \$149 billion in bonds for new infrastructure projects in 2016 — a figure that, as Thomson Reuters data noted, put 2016 municipal borrowing on track to surpass each of the past five years. The *Wall Street Journal* noted, “The total bond issuance, including refinancing, has reached \$388 billion, also a five-year record.” Another record figure was the authorization of \$55.7 billion of debt on Election Day by voters for infrastructure projects — the most approved since 2008.

President-elect Donald Trump has also promised to make the investment of \$1 trillion in infrastructure during the next decade a priority during his presidency. With any luck, both political parties will get on board and address key components before they crumble. After all, there are 60,000 bridges in the U.S. in need of repairs, and no one wants to be on one of them when it fails. Beyond repairs, America also needs to catch up with technology, building infrastructure that supports various alternative fuels and

smart vehicles: We have a steep list of needs to check off if we hope to keep up with the number of innovations that crop up at a rapid pace.

Not only are roadways and bridges drawing attention, but so, too, are America’s water and wastewater systems. With the Flint water crisis still fresh in mind, cities are taking note, not wanting a repeat locally. Ann Arbor, Mich., is one such city trying to stem a potential crisis by addressing a spreading toxic groundwater plume. The plume is more than 4 miles long and a mile wide and is a remnant of the Gelman Science medical filter manufacturing plant.

According to the *Detroit Free Press*, Ann Arbor Charter Township, Scio Township and the Sierra Club’s Huron Valley group have petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency to “conduct a preliminary assessment regarding whether the Gelman Sciences Inc. site should become a Superfund site, the federal program often utilized to clean up the nation’s worst, most complicated polluted areas.” If Ann Arbor is accepted into the program, it will join 65 Superfund sites in Michigan, hopefully safeguarding its community from the fallout Flint and its residents are still addressing.

Partnerships will undoubtedly play a major role in addressing our infrastructure. Public/private partnerships, in particular, have been growing, and for some cities, they are helping create economic growth. For instance, Oakwood, Ga., has seen major success with both public/public and public/private partnerships, saving the town money while also bringing economic benefits. More on the town’s success can be read in Barb Sieminski’s article on page 26.

Hopefully, 2017 will bring more good than headaches and see many necessary infrastructure and other projects come to fruition.

Also, we here at *The Municipal* would like to send our thoughts and prayers to the communities that have been impacted by the wildfires in the southern Appalachians and other locations within our readership. **M**





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Cooperative buying saves time and money



by DEE WARREN | Land Pride Marketing Manager

IN TODAY'S WORLD OF TIGHT BUDGETS AND LEAN STAFFING, IT is imperative that city, county, municipal and state agencies make the most of their grounds maintenance budgets with reliable equipment at reasonable prices. But how should you approach that? Requests for proposals are time consuming and chew up some of the precious dollars that are allocated in the budget and simply negotiating your best deal is not how government works.

So why not let someone else do the leg work? That's where cooperative buying has a place in a grounds maintenance department. Generally speaking, purchases in these departments are big machines that can be a budget buster if you're not careful.

If you're a grounds maintenance manager looking to buy a rotary cutter or a seeder or a mower, cooperative buying can mean less time soliciting bids and more time actually doing the tasks associated with grounds maintenance. And today, many states and many more cities, counties and municipalities see that value and utilize a cooperative purchasing agency to maximize their time and their dollars.

So how does cooperative buying work?

It's really quite simple: A cooperative model allows a manufacturer like Land Pride to respond to a RFP that covers a large group of buyers, and it allows a large group of buyers with similar interests to leverage their buying power to get great government discounts on products. By

Cooperative buying can mean less time soliciting bids and more time actually doing the tasks associated with grounds maintenance. Land Pride offers contracts with many cooperative buying groups. (Photo provided)

using a cooperative model, government agencies save time and effort because the process is simplified for the buyer.

Take for example a nearby state department of transportation that worked with Land Pride on a recent purchase. The fleet manager called Land Pride in need of rotary cutters for their roadside maintenance. He was looking for a solution that saved him time and money while still getting the brand that he and his crew wanted. Land Pride suggested using the competitively bid National Joint Powers Alliance cooperative-buying contract that Land Pride had to simplify the buying process.

In fairly short order, Land Pride quoted the rotary cutters that the state wanted with substantial discounts as outlined in the NJPA contract. State officials reviewed the quotes and issued purchase orders, and Land Pride built, shipped and invoiced the state. Within a few weeks, the process was complete.

What can cooperative buying do for you?

Once a manufacturer like Land Pride responds to an RFP and is awarded a contract by a designated public agency, members of the cooperative can purchase any number of products at substantial discount. Not every state, city or county has a need for a fleet of folding



Land Pride's contract with BuyBoard in Texas has proven beneficial to the cooperative's large number of schools and universities. The company has been able to personalize suggestions to make sure school districts receive the right equipment for their ground operations, such as Land Pride's All Purpose Seeder APS1560. (Photo provided)



Through cooperative buying, grounds maintenance managers have access to needed equipment like rotary cutters, seeders and mowers while also making the most of their equipment budgets. Pictured is Land Pride's Core Aerator CA2572. (Photo provided)

rotary cutters, and that's OK. Many times, the manufacturer's complete product line is available on the contract. In the case of Land Pride, that's over 350 products that can be purchased by agencies across the United States.

And it's not just states, cities and counties. Many school districts participate as well. With education budgets in many areas shrinking fast, cooperative buying can stretch dollars farther. The BuyBoard is a cooperative located in Texas and has a large number of schools and universities as members. For them, Land Pride's contract has been very beneficial.

One Texas school district contacted Land Pride in need of an overseeder and core aerator to care for its sports fields. After talking to the grounds maintenance manager, Land Pride recommended an all-purpose seeder because there would be times that the district would be seeding new turf as well as overseeding existing turf. The district was grateful for the direction in the buying process, was happy with the price and had both pieces of equipment within six weeks of ordering them.

Guidance in the process

Enhanced customer service is one thing that sets cooperative buying apart from the bid process. When going out for bid, the agency has already made the decision on the equipment that will be purchased, but what if that's not the best solution for the task?

Consider this: A local municipal golf course approached Land Pride about a quote on a commercial zero-turn mower to maintain its fairways. Being a return customer, Land Pride knew that the golf course owned a 39 HP compact tractor and suggested that a Land Pride All-Flex Mower would do a great job and cut down on mowing time. After reviewing the quote, the superintendent realized that the AFM4211 was indeed the way to go. The PO was issued and the golf course soon had its AFM4211 purchased at a substantial discount thanks to Land Pride's NJPA contract.

Cooperative buying has options

There are many cooperative buying groups that government agencies can be a part of. Land Pride offers contracts with several, including



By purchasing through a cooperative contract, grounds maintenance managers in many government agencies can take advantage of the time- and money-saving benefits that the contracts provide. (Photo provided)

NJPA and BuyBoard just to name two. But with so many cooperative contracts available, buyers need to choose the one that best meets their buying needs.

Organizations like NJPA and the BuyBoard make sure everything is transparent. They maintain all of the paperwork, and they are competitively solicited, evaluated and awarded by a public agency that is bound by laws regulating the process. Everything is available for public review.

By purchasing through a cooperative contract, grounds maintenance managers in many government agencies can take advantage of the time- and money-saving benefits that the contracts provide. Buyers will have to do their homework, but they can certainly be confident that manufacturers like Land Pride are here to help with the process. Finding a contract and manufacturer that you like is better than trying to navigate the buying process alone. **M**



‘The Quietest Town in America’

By RAY BALOGH | The Municipal

Welcome to the hushed confines of Green Bank, W.Va., noted as “The Quietest Town in America.”

Within the tiny unincorporated hamlet of 143 residents, cell calls and texting are prohibited; car radios scroll across the dial in the vain search of a signal; and nary a television, wireless internet connection or microwave can be found.

The tiniest infractions of the electronics ban are ferreted out by a pair of RFI, or radio frequency interference, police who patrol the streets in a technologically equipped Dodge Ram pickup, reminiscent of “Ghostbusters,” to locate the stray malefactors.

About 10 years ago the scientific gendarmes detected a faint anomalous signal and traced it down to the electric heating pad in a backyard doghouse. The combination of a wet family pooch and non-waterproof blanket caused the heating pad to emit irregular bursts of energy.

The RFI enforcers have also tracked down interference from arcing power lines, uncapped cable lines, varmints chewing through electrical wiring and one resident’s electronic doorbell.

Green Bank is nestled near the center of the National Radio Quiet Zone, a 13,000-square-mile area embracing portions of West Virginia, Virginia and Maryland. The area was designated by the Federal Communications Commission in the 1950s to facilitate scientific research.

The reason for Green Bank’s scrupulous electronic quietude is a 485-foot behemoth outside of town: the Robert C. Byrd Green Bank

Telescope, or GBT, which scientifically uninitiated locals facetiously refer to as the “Great Big Thing.”

The GBT is the world’s largest fully steerable radio telescope and is dedicated to the tireless search for signals from outer space. The 2,004 receptor panels on the 2.3-acre concave collection dish are individually adjustable and can be focused to capture the slightest pulse emitted from the cosmos.

The telescope is exquisitely sensitive. “The types of energies we look at are less than the energy of a single snowflake falling on the earth,” said Director Karen O’Neil. In mathematic terms, that amounts to a billionth of a billionth of a millionth of a watt. Cellphones emit about three watts, hence their prohibition in the surrounding area.

The slightest extraneous charges can deluge the telescope’s sensitive equipment, drowning out the signals some project devotees have been waiting their entire careers to hear.

Therefore, only diesel vehicles are permitted within a mile of the GBT to avoid interference from spark plugs; the county sheriff’s department communicates on a predesignated frequency and cannot use mobile computers in its squad cars; and employees of the telescope and accompanying observatory interact on walkie-talkies.

LEFT: The GBT is the world's largest fully steerable radio telescope and is dedicated to the tireless search for signals from outer space. The 2,004 receptor panels on the 2.3-acre concave collection dish are individually adjustable and can be focused to capture the slightest pulse emitted from the cosmos. (Andriy Blokhin/Shutterstock.com)

RIGHT: Green Bank, W.Va., is called "The Quietest Town in America," with many electronics prohibited since the town resides near the center of the National Radio Quiet Zone, a 13,000-square-mile area embracing portions of West Virginia, Virginia and Maryland. (Photo provided)



Even the battery-operated fans sold in the facility's gift shop were banned when it was discovered the energy waves from the souvenirs grossly distorted the observatory's data.

The GBT, the largest of the 10 telescopes in and around the observatory campus, scans the skies about 6,500 hours a year, collecting, storing and categorizing signals for analysis. The observatory has done a yeoman's service in shedding light on the origin and nature of the universe since it began science operations in 2001, including:

- mapping a hydrogen cloud hurtling toward the Milky Way at 150 miles per second
- detecting a supercluster of galaxies 500 million light years in diameter containing 100 million billion suns
- finding complex sugar molecules in space

The residents do not seem to mind the restrictions. They are satisfied with the throwback environment of a community consisting of early 20th century homes, quaint shops, a school, post office, library, barbershop and, most recently, a Dollar General, which provides Green Bank's only grocery outlet within a 26-mile radius.

Resident Hanna Sizemore described the scene from her backyard view of the Allegheny Mountains. "We're in a little bubble of the past here," she said. "It's kind of a little oasis."

"If you work in Green Bank, it's because you want this kind of life," said Michael Holstine, the observatory's business manager.

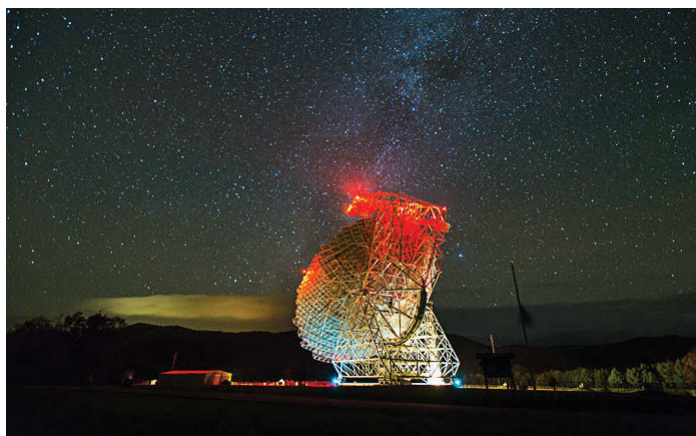
Consequently, the townsfolk are amused by the befuddlement of some of the area's 25,000 annual tourists who cannot get cellphone coverage or Wi-Fi.



"Some people when they come here really freak out because they can't have access to their little devices," observed Jay Lockman, GBT's principal scientist.

Others lament the incessant reliance some visitors place upon their communications gadgets.

"When they're in the restaurant, often you'll see two people having dinner together, but they're both on their



cellphones," said resident Katherine Lafleur. "It's heartbreaking just to see mothers who are not paying attention to their beautiful children." Green Bank is a mecca for those seeking to shield themselves from the painful effects of those very conveniences.

About a dozen "electrosensitives" have migrated to the area to escape the ubiquitous radiation and find healing for their symptoms.

They claim the frequencies inherent in modern technology cause them to suffer electromagnetic hypersensitivity, or EHS, a syndrome including recurrent headaches, dizziness, nausea, rashes, chest pains, fatigue, hair loss and speech difficulties.

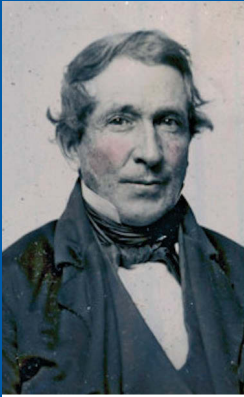
The medical community has not recognized the syndrome, and some studies indicate the symptoms are psychosomatic.

But to some, the pain is real — and Green Bank is the cure. **M**

For more information, visit www.pocahontascountywv.com, www.greenbankobservatory.org or www.science.nrao.edu/facilities/gbt.

Only diesel vehicles are permitted within a mile of the GBT to avoid interference from spark plugs. (Photo provided)

William Butler: *Saugatuck, Mich.*



For several years, William G. Butler (1799-1857) and his wife, Emily, were the only white inhabitants of what would become known as Saugatuck, Mich., and its surrounding county of Allegan.

They were by all historical accounts “on the most kindly terms of friendship” with the Native Americans sharing their wilderness habitat.

The Butlers settled as the first permanent residents of the county in 1830, residing in the riverside log cabin Mr. Butler built in what is now downtown Saugatuck.

Butler made a living trading with the local Native Americans, receiving game, furs and sugar for whiskey, a commodity for which there was a constant demand.

Butler’s successful business would require him to travel, often for days at a time, and Emily would host Indian squaws and natives at the cabin.

The area lacked a mill, requiring Butler to travel the arduous 75 miles to Elkhart, Ind., trips he always disliked.

Other white settlers joined the Butlers in 1834 and built a tannery on the river, which courses along the city’s downtown area. Soon afterward other entrepreneurs built a warehouse and dock at the river’s mouth and houses sprang up for settlers moving up river looking for a suitable home.

According to author David Schwartz in the book “History of Allegan and Barry Counties”:

“Affairs in that vicinity took on such a lively aspect that there was strong talk of starting a town there, but the project never resulted in anything more definite in shape than a plat on paper.”

Butler, however, had platted a village on his expanse of property in 1833 and called it Kalamazoo. He sold an interest in the property, retaining a share for himself, and a post office was established in 1835. The commissioned postmaster suggested the name Saugatuck, Indian for “mouth of river,” and the name was changed upon the town’s incorporation in 1863.

Butler continued to be one of the town’s prominent citizens until his untimely death in 1857 in a log-rolling accident.

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The overall amount that U.S. state pension plans are underfunded by.

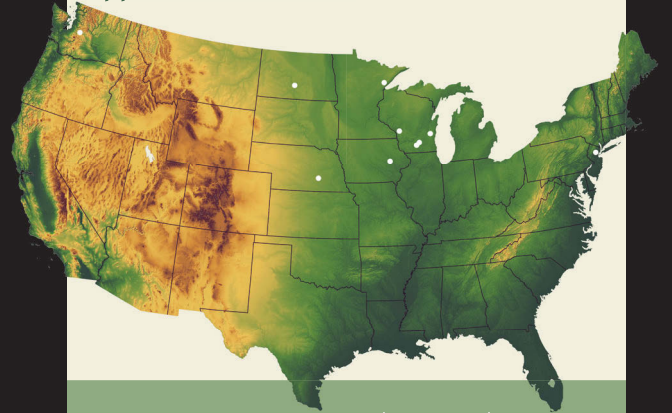


Source: www.sltrib.com/home/4554419-155/pressures-piling-up-on-state-and

Did you know?

\$55.7 billion

On Nov. 8, 2016, voters across the country authorized state and local governments to borrow this amount for infrastructure projects, marking the most borrowing approved since 2008.




Source: www.wsj.com/articles/as-donald-trump-plans-building-boom-cities-and-states-rush-to-borrow-1478952007

\$755,000

The amount that Marquette Township, Mich., is required to give Lowe's as a tax refund after the home improvement and appliance chain successfully challenged its tax assessment, reducing it from \$5.2 million to less than \$2 million.

See story on page 28.

8.1 percent

 The personal income growth seen in Odessa, Texas, making it the city with the most booming income.

See this month's Top Ten on page 50.

86 percent

Oakwood, Ga., now has more employment than its population and a tax base with 86 percent value as commercial/industrial. The town has more than 6,000 jobs compared to its population of about 4,163. Partnerships have helped in this growth.

See story on page 26.

\$312 million

Voters in Fairfax County, Va., approved three referenda authorizing the issuance of this amount in municipal bonds for various projects, including parks and park facilities; Metro improvements; a senior center; a community center; and emergency homeless shelters.

Source: thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/economy-budget/307052-bonds-are-a-fair-responsible-way-to-finance-projects



Getting the best value out of the bidding process

by SARAH WRIGHT | The Municipal

While bid processes are guided by law, regulation and sometimes policy, the smaller the entity the less likely it is the municipality will have codified its procurement process – and certainly the less likely it will put out any sort of bid request on its own.

In many cities and towns in the state of Alabama, for example, a widespread preference for avoiding having to wade through complicated and time-consuming bid contracts manifests itself in extensive piggybacking on

state government or department of transportation contracts for everything from infrastructure to street signs.

Although entities with populations larger than around 50,000 will usually have a

procurement structure in place, it's not all that unusual for cities with smaller populations to operate in an ad-hoc manner when it comes to purchasing practices. Because how a city handles procurement derives from either legislation or policy, in the absence of legislation an entity is permitted to structure this authority as it wishes and via any number of distinct processes.

For service and product providers, the great differences in procurement practices

LEFT: A carefully outlined bidding process, paired with transparency, will not only show bidders, but citizens the city is committed to operating fairly, cutting down on complaints while ensuring bidders return for future contracts. (Tashatuvango/Shutterstock.com)

RIGHT: Working with other nearby agencies to plan projects, such as road construction, so they occur roughly at the same time can enable all involved to receive the best value for their funds through cooperative purchasing. (vodograj/Shutterstock.com)



generates confusion. How procurement is handled, by whom and whether or not bids are let—and how those calls are advertised—varies not only from state to state by city to city, creating an overwhelmingly dense thicket the supplier must traverse in order to let the municipality know there's an efficient, quality product available, possibly at a lower price than is being paid currently. So how do you streamline the process and make a city's project and needs stand out to potential providers?

Have a game plan

"It starts with a high level of planning," Brent Maas, executive director of business strategy and relationships with NIGP: The Institute for Public Procurement, said. "It's ideal in the procurement process to make sure whoever is the chief or single procurement officer has the opportunity to sit with the agency management to discuss goals before the coming year."

Some of this discussion, according to Maas, should include what major projects are in the works and what the organization's overall priorities are. By having procurement folks involved from the beginning, everyone is on the same page, streamlining the process while also allowing procurement officers the chance to relay procurement climates and what suppliers might be available for a specific service or product in addition to any state or federal contracts that might be accessible. They will also know the proper rules of engagement.

"It is important to know your rules," Maas said, noting requirements and legislature will dictate how agencies proceed.

Be specific, but remain inclusive

Once everyone is on the same page, Maas said, "Know what it is you need and clearly identify that in your list. That is critical because it will influence who out there can provide it."

The more unique an item is, the more likely it will narrow down perspective providers or suppliers. In some cases, a city might find itself faced with single sourcing, which, of course, might limit its ability to get the most bang for its buck. The pool of potential bidders will also be impacted by geography, with more remote localities already faced with a limited pool of potential bidders. For this reason, Maas recommended not going too specific when other similar products will work just as well.

"It can make a huge difference," Maas said of being too specific. "You can restrict the field. The more broader the field, the more competitive it is."

While naming specific brands can be done, Maas suggested cities instead use language open to a variety of bidders, rather than exclusive. It might also be beneficial to look at similar contracts from other agencies or local governments to either learn from them and their language, or even borrow from them while modifying wording to fit your agency's specific needs.

Broadcast wide and maintain transparency

When placing notifications of requests for proposals, be as inclusive and transparent as possible to keep the pool of providers as large as possible. While newspapers have been a staple for notices in the past, Maas

said they are becoming a third choice, especially in areas where it is not a requirement. Rather, the two most commonly used means are opportunity notification systems or the city's own website.

"The real point is you want to broadcast to as many (providers) as you can," Maas said, adding cities will then want to be consistent during future RFPs so providers know what to expect.

Additionally, be active during the process rather than passively placing a RFP on the city or town website where, Maas said, each provider will have "equal opportunity to not become aware." The passive approach can leave cities open to complaints they didn't create a level playing field. "You want to be open to as many relevant players as you can," Maas said.

Suppliers should not be expected to have an extra level of awareness, such as having to constantly track a city's Twitter feed for RFPs. "It's not a good practice," Maas said. "You could do it as supplemental, but don't rely on it as a single mode." Several methods of notification might prove the key to rounding up a larger number of relevant suppliers, thus getting the best deal.

A transparent process also builds trust and will see suppliers and providers return since they view the organization as being fair. It is also a chance to show citizens the city is indeed operating fairly and impartially—in addition to assuring them the city is pursuing the best value for its tax dollars. "It's a powerful platform to be able to say and demonstrate that your operation is fair and equal," Maas said. ▶

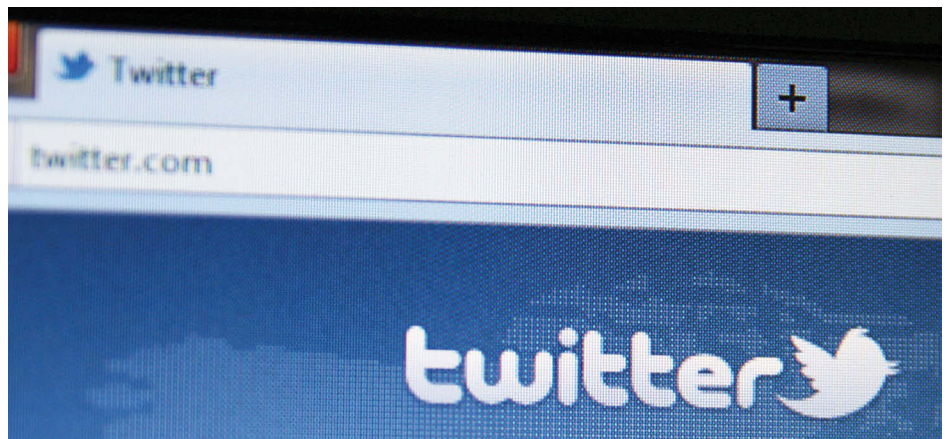
Sometimes, the lowest bid submitted is not always the one awarded the contract, and a clearly outlined process — including specific rules or requirements — and transparency can show each step of the process and why the lowest bid wasn't selected since it did not completely meet laid out requirements. Having each step documented with paperwork then allows the city to answer complainants by explaining "this is why we did this, and this is how this came about."

"People feel much more comfortable and trusting of the process," Maas said, adding, "They don't come away with the sense that they are having to fight city hall."

Don't have to go it alone

Cooperative purchasing can be another route, as Maas noted, "You don't have to go it alone. All small and mid-size cities can benefit from working together."

This could mean timing road improvement projects, or other similar projects, to coincide with each other. Or perhaps piggybacking



While Twitter might be a good supplemental means to get requests for proposals out to suppliers, it should not be your only means of broadcasting your contracts. (Annette Shaff/Shutterstock.com)

on another nearby agency's contract for fire equipment. In some cases, different agencies are also consolidating support services. Maas said pooling together to create contracts makes the opportunity more attractive

to potential bidders — allowing agencies to get the best value back.

"It's not shrinking," Maas added of cooperative purchasing. "We are continuing to see growth." ■

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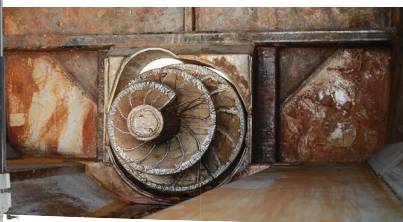


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Pollinators find support among cities

By **BARB SIEMINSKI** | The Municipal



To bee or not to bee?

With apologies to The Bard of Avon, more and more municipalities are saying yes to bee ... raising bees.



The town of Carrboro, N.C., with a population of about 19,582, for example, has been enjoying the buzz — and reaping the sweet honeyed rewards — that comes with its enviable 2014 Bee City USA designation. It proudly became the third city to earn the Bee City USA designation, with its commitments to food for pollinators.

“We are very proud of that commitment,” said Marty Hanks, a local bee farmer/activist at the Carrboro Farmers Market.

“It shows that our community gets the ‘big picture’ of our interaction with and effects on our ecology. My work with honeybees is meant to start conversations about all pollinators,” said Hanks. “The U.S. currently has over 5,000 known bee species so this dedication is taking that conversation to a larger platform. We need to all understand our roles in urban development and how they affect

Pictured is a Carrboro Bee City USA banner. (Photo provided by Carrboro, N.C.)

our ecology. Concrete strip malls and forests cleared for expansive human parks mean we just eradicated homes and forage for beneficial insects. Ironically, the very insects that provide us with over 90 percent of the food we eat.”

Bee City USA is a nonprofit program based in Asheville, N.C., that educates cities on pollinator conservation in an effort to stop global declines from habitat loss, poor nutrition and pesticides by raising awareness, enhancing habitats and celebrating achievements.

“A single tree can hold a year’s worth of food for pollinators,” said Hanks. “Cutting without thought and planning can have long-term negative consequences. Many of our pollinators are trying to tell us they are struggling and dying. We just need to be able to see and ‘hear’ it. Bee City USA is a vital tool and educational trigger to have that important conversation.”

For many cities, purchasing choices are affected to some extent, namely selecting chemicals that are pollinator friendly. Randy Dodd, Carrboro environmental planner, noted that in Carrboro the impact was relatively minor when it came to purchasing decisions, from products to services.

“Enrollment in Bee City USA has had a minor impact on purchasing. Since enrolling,



Carrboro, N.C., Fire Station No. 1 dons an appropriate mural for a Bee City USA. Artist Matthew Willey painted it. (Photo provided by Carrboro, N.C.)



Decatur, Ga., one of the newest Bee City USA members, showcased bees during Earth Day. (Photo provided by Decatur, Ga.)

the principal new decisions that probably wouldn't have been made if we hadn't enrolled are buying the rights to screen two movies and contracting with a mural artist. The mural artist is being paid through the Tourism Development Authority and the hotel use occupancy tax," said Dodd, adding that otherwise there were no real fiscal impacts.

"The public has been receptive, with a few examples being the turnout and interest at the first Pollinator Day, the local high school adopting bee hives in cooperation with a beekeeper, and the buzz surrounding the honeybee fresco on Fire Station No.1. We hired artist Matthew Willey, who started a global initiative, For the Good of the Hive, to paint the mural."

The two national/international movies Carrboro has been involved with are "More than Honey" and "Queen of the Sun." And the most successful result of the city's Bee City USA title, according to Dodd, was its, "heightened awareness of the role of pollinators both ecologically and for the support they provide humans"

According to John Rintoul, president of Orange County Beekeepers Association and local beekeeper, the OCBA has maintained demonstration hives in Carrboro for several years.

"Historically, our members have used these hives as a community teaching tool," said Rintoul. "We educate students of all ages, Scout groups, garden clubs and other community groups with an interest in pollinators, beekeeping and the environment."

Rintoul added, "Our original apiary site was problematic, lacking sufficient parking for large groups and often muddy and inaccessible. It had very limited public visibility. For those reasons we contacted Carrboro High School in January 2016 with a proposal to relocate our demonstration hives to the CHS campus. We received an overwhelmingly positive response. The CHS faculty, the principal and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools District office staff could not have been more supportive."

The OCBA selected the CHS location based on the enthusiasm of the faculty and staff, according to Rintoul. "But equally important to OCBA's community education mission was the location of the hives in terms of parking, accessibility and visibility." He added, "We want the community to see that beekeeping can be done safely in an urban context. The hives at CHS meet this open to the community criteria. They are easily visible to the surrounding neighborhood, passing vehicles, students and visitors to the campus."

As to why it was important for the city to get on board, Sharon Patrick, a member of the Carrboro Environmental Advisory Board, said, "Because pollinators are responsible for one-third of the food we eat,

we are committed to creating and maintaining sustainable habitats for pollinators through education and example."

Durham, N.C.; Clarkson, Ky.; Hendersonville, N.C.; Wilmington, N.C.; and Lake City, S.C., are just a few of the increasing number of certified Bee City USA locales.

Decatur, Ga., with population of about 20,148, is another — a very new one, said Stephanie Van Parys, executive director, Wylde Center, adding that they were still getting themselves organized.

"We started last February and received the distinction of the first city in Georgia to become a Bee City USA last July," she said. "The mayor and the city leadership were supportive from the outset and the city of Decatur is already recognized as a Tree City USA municipality."

Asked what city department was put in charge of this endeavor, Van Parys said the Wylde Center and Decatur residents worked hand in hand with the landscape infrastructure coordinator, who is part of the public works department.

"Many residents have gardens that are home to diverse planting that support pollinators," said Van Parys. "There are also a number of beekeepers across the city. The Wylde Center maintains two public gardens in Decatur and each is pollinator-certified. One of the projects of Bee City USA is to survey the residents to see how many yards are pollinator-certified by the National Wildlife Federation and how many people keep bees."

Weather doesn't usually present a problem, said Van Parys. No ice days in Georgia; however, the state is in a stage two drought right now, which is actually a challenge for pollinators, as they require water.

"Also, we've not had any cost associated with the project at this time," said Van Parys, "nor has it affected any of our purchasing decisions." **M**

Interested in Bee City USA candidacy? Visit www.becityusa.org for information.



On the Web

Visit the Carrboro's 2016 Bee City USA annual report at <http://nc-carrboro.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/Home/View/3935>. Also, stop by the "Pollinator Habitat" page — nc-carrboro.civicplus.com/986/Pollinator-habitat — for lists and the benefits of native/honeybeefriendliness.



Oakwood, Ga.:

More than 30 P3s and counting

By BARB SIEMINSKI | The Municipal

Oakwood, Ga., City Manager Stan Brown, who has been with the city for 13 years, has accomplished a great deal in the area of public-private partnerships within the last five to 10 years. More than 30 such partnerships have been developed under his leadership for delivery of urban services, which is impressive, especially in a municipality with a population — as of the 2014 census — that registers at only 4,163.

A public-private partnership, also called a PPP or P3, is a contract between government and a private company where a private company finances, builds and operates some element of a public service; and the private company gets remunerated over several years, either through charges paid by users, or by payments from the public authority or a combination of both. These partnerships are globally encouraged by worldwide organizations, including the United Nations.

Such partnerships are used in transportation projects, water and wastewater systems, delivery of social services, building schools and many other endeavors. But the most rapidly growing platform for P3s is urban economic development. When asked about the catalyst that started him

on his partnership journey, Brown reached deep into his municipality's past for the answer.

"Oakwood has a long history of partnerships beginning with a public/public partnership with the city of Gainesville to bring sewer service to our SR 53/Mundy Mill Road corridor back in the 1980s," said Brown.

"What once was a two-lane, farm-to-market road is now a multi-lane parkway that serves as the commercial center of our city. The partnership has since expanded to public/public and public/private partnerships ranging from fire, sewer and water services to economic development joint ventures and outsourcing agreements for IT and building inspection services. As a result, we have a staff of only 22 full-time employees for a



*Stan Brown, Oakwood, Ga., city manager
(Photo provided by city of Oakwood, Ga.)*

population of 4,163. Of the 22, 16 are in the police department."

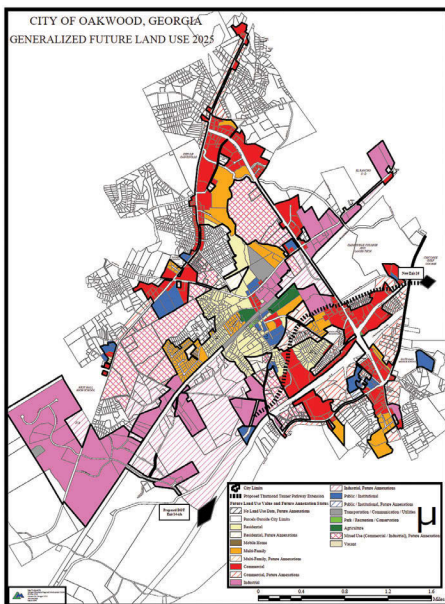
Other P3 cities in Georgia include Sandy Springs, Johns Creek and Peachtree Corners; many more are dotted all over the nation.

The D.C.-based Urban Land Institute published a pdf — located at http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/2005/01/TP_Partnerships.pdf — titled "Ten Principles for Successful Public/Private Partnership" that shows how critical strength and resources of both the public and private sectors combined can thrive. However, another entity — Public Services International, which is a

More about P3s

For more about P3 endeavors, visit the Specialist Centre on PPP in Smart and Sustainable Cities at www.pppcities.org. PPP for Cities is a research, innovation and advisory center that focuses on providing public administrations throughout the world with support in the organization, management and development of projects involving collaboration between the public and private sectors in the Smart Cities arena.

Additionally, if your city is a proponent of P3s and you're proud of what your P3 municipality has accomplished, share it with other professionals by registering your P3 city to upcoming events, such as the 2017 Partnerships Awards, partnershipawards.partnershipsevents.com, which is May 11. The Partnership Awards are the largest affair to recognize the best in PPP and are open to projects and companies around the world.



Oakwood, Ga., has a long history of partnerships, both public/public and public/private. Such partnerships have been a key to the city's development. Pictured is Oakwood's land development plan. (Photo provided by city of Oakwood, Ga.)

global union federation of 669 public services trade unions – takes an opposite view, with David Hall's "Why Public-Private Partnerships Don't Work: The many advantages of the public alternative," which is accessible at www.world-psi.org/sites/default/files/rapport_eng_56pages_a4_lr.pdf. In particular, Hall highlights reasons why certain global P3s might not work; examples include expense, inefficiency, cheating, diverting government spending from other public services, concealing public borrowing, corruptions, lies and secrets, to name just a few.

Brown himself was not aware of any dissonance connected with P3s but said it depended on one's political environment and the partners involved.

"The key to success for us has been a strong political will to partner for services; seeking partnership with common vision and values as the city; and when it comes to public/public partnership, ensuring a win-win without the complications of competition," said Brown.

"We're especially pleased with our sewer service public/public partnership with the city of Gainesville, city of Flowery Branch



A public/public partnership with the city of Gainesville, city of Flowery Branch and the town of Braselton in regards to sewer service has been particularly beneficial for Oakwood, Ga. (Photo provided by city of Oakwood, Ga.)

and the town of Braselton," he added. "Through this partnership, the city provided sewer without owning a wastewater plant. We also are proud of our economic development partnerships with Pattillo (Industrial Real Estate) and Tanner's Creek Business Park. These partnerships have led us to a position where we now have more employment than population and a tax base with 86 percent value as commercial/industrial. In other words, based on our high ratio of commercial/industrial tax base (86 percent) compared to residential, which is 14 percent, we serve as an employment center in South Hall County. We have more than 6,000 jobs in Oakwood compared to our population of 4,163."

Oakwood's economic development strategy is comprised of land planning/standards; land investment; infrastructure investment, such as transportation and sewer; and partnerships. These partnerships are with cities, county and state agencies, including Lanier Technical College and the University of North Georgia; Greater Hall Chamber Economic Development Council; South Hall Business Coalition; Lake Lanier Convention and Visitors Bureau; and members of the private sector like Pattillo Industrial Real Estate, Tanner's Creek Business Park and others.



A P3 partnership between Pattillo Industrial Real Estate and Oakwood, Ga., has helped the growth of Oakwood South Industrial Park, which has been an economic boost to the community. (Photo provided by city of Oakwood, Ga.)

"By partnering, we've avoided staffing and overhead for providing the service and been able to streamline our role to that of contract administrator," said Brown. "Without the carrying cost of running a utility, we've been able to multitask on other initiatives and projects."

If any mayors or other city powers that be are contemplating a P3 relationship for their cities, Brown has a bit of advice: "Seek partners with the same values. It is also important to seek 'win-win' solutions."

Here's to even more municipalities and P3 partnerships building enviable and sustainable cities together. **M**

Municipalities bring light to ‘dark store’ strategy

By DENISE FEDOROW | The Municipal

It’s a trend that seems to be sweeping the nation — Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Texas, Alabama and Florida are among the many states that have found themselves in a battle with the “big-box stores” over property tax revenue — and until recently it’s been a losing battle.

However, with the success of Indiana changing its legislature to stop this attempt by chain stores to lower their assessments, dubbed the ‘dark store strategy’ by the appraising community, other states like Wisconsin and Michigan are following Indiana’s lead with the hopes of the same outcome.

The big-box retailers like Walgreens, CVS, Lowe’s, Target and Meijer have contested their assessments, arguing that the market value of their properties should not be assessed by its current status as an operating business or the cost to build new, but instead according to the sale of a similar sized vacant building — a “dark store.”

Laws regarding property tax values and assessments do vary from state to state, and generally speaking, appraisers look at several factors to determine the taxable value of a property, including the sale price of comparable properties, current cost to build minus depreciation and income generated by rent charged to tenants.

Reportedly, appraisers can apply a mix of those methods or rely on just one to arrive at a property value assessment.

Francis “Francee” Foster, a licensed real estate broker with At Home Realty who has operated for 32 years in Michigan and Indiana, said, “It can be very hard to find a comparable market for the big-box stores for appraisals. In the state of Michigan, we are supposed to be a Fair Market Value state.”

Foster explained that Fair Market Value is an appraisal based on the value of like land in a given area, and when that’s hard to do, the appraisers do use a variety of other means. Foster is not an appraiser but has worked with both residential and commercial properties.

She said, “Property taxes are complex” and nobody wants to pay more than they have to. “Big-box stores do keep our people employed, which to me is an asset to a community. They should pay their fair share, but I don’t think they should be over-assessed either.”

The big-box stores have argued successfully that using cost to build artificially inflates the value of the property and that method is called value-in-use versus value-in-exchange — what the value would be on the market.

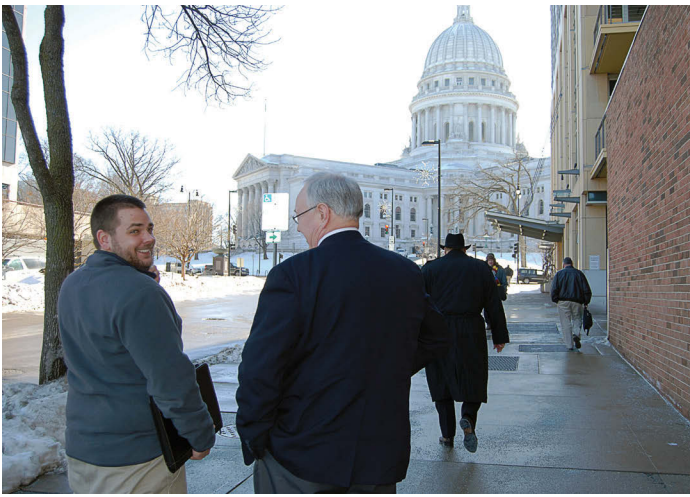


Once the legislative session resumes at the Capitol in Madison in January, representatives from the Leagues of Wisconsin Municipalities will be there to introduce legislature to put a halt to the dark store strategy being employed by chain store retailers in the state. (Photo provided)

For local governments the dark store strategy doesn’t stand up. Municipalities say when appraising a residential property, they look at currently occupied homes not at foreclosed homes because the value isn’t the same.

Still, big-box stores have been having success in appealing their property taxes ever since the recession, often to the woe of local governments’ coffers. According to a 2015 MLive article by Chastity Pratt Dawsey called “Lawmakers seek a halt to ‘dark stores’ tax-cutting strategy,” the city of Escanaba, Mich. — after Menards won a property tax appeal — has been required to refund the company \$121,000. Dawsey noted, “That’s about the cost of what the Upper Peninsula community of 12,000 on Little Bay de Noc budgeted for major street repairs next year.”

Escanaba is not alone. Marquette Township, also in Michigan, is required to give Lowe’s a \$755,000 tax refund, with the home improvement and appliance chain also successfully reducing its tax assessment from \$5.2 million to less than \$2 million in a 2012 challenge — even though it would cost \$10 million to build just the store now. The township tried unsuccessfully to appeal. This has created a 22 percent fall in tax revenue in just a few years.



Port Washington, Wis., Mayor Mike Vandersteen, right, heads to the Capitol in Madison, Wis., with Wisconsin Municipal League lobby members to meet with legislators to discuss, among other things, the dark store strategy. (Photo provided)



The sign welcoming visitors to the state of Michigan doesn't give any indication of the woes some townships and counties have experienced due to the so-called "dark store strategy." (Photo provided)

Marion County, Ind., had to pay Meijer \$2.4 million in nine years back taxes after the store won an appeal in 2014, reducing its assessment from \$83 per square foot to \$30 per square foot. Meanwhile, the city of Oshkosh, Wis., also had to pay \$69,549 back to Walgreens when it won its contested assessment.

These types of cases result in reduced services and increased burden to residential property owners. As these appeals move across a state by numerous chains, the revenue loss can be devastating. A tax tribunal judge said there is no bias on the tribunal's part and the reason the property owners are winning is because they have a better legal team.

Light at the end of the dark store

Based on the success of an albeit watered-down law passed by the Indiana General Assembly recently, other states are following suit. Alabama passed a law giving counties more legal resources, and Michigan has written, although hasn't yet passed, House Bill 5578 authored by Rep. David Maturen, which addresses how the Michigan Tax Tribunal hears assessment challenges.

Curt Witynski, assistant director of the League of Municipalities in Wisconsin and self-proclaimed "white hat lobbyist," said of the dark store strategy, "I'm excited that we laid the groundwork at our last legislative meeting. We'll resume in January, and we're making it a special point. We're introducing a bill after what Indiana got passed in 2016. We anticipate introducing it at our first session."

Witynski said in 2015 Indiana passed a law with technology that assessors couldn't use so "the first version of the law didn't work. But in 2016 the law was rewritten using the term 'market segment' — that's the key." Witynski explained, "Market segment is defined as same age, same or similar type of business, size and location. This would shut down the big-box attorneys who've said to only use the secondary market to value the properties."

Witynski said the big-box stores have likely been successful to date in winning these contested cases because they are "using very sophisticated attorneys who have the resources and know how to present an

argument to judges who don't often deal with tax issues and they've been convinced by those arguments."

The case in Oshkosh, Wis., with Walgreens was a little different in that big-box drug stores typically lease the property and because of a "weird twist in Wisconsin law, Oshkosh had to shoulder the full burden," whereas ordinarily a town or city would be able to go to the school system and the library who share in the property tax revenue to help pay back its share.

"It puts communities in a difficult situation if it hasn't budgeted for that expense. Wisconsin has a very strict levy," he said, adding later that there are no local taxes as in other states so all the municipalities' revenue comes from property taxes and the state does have a property tax cap.

Over time if this goes unchecked, according to Witynski, the main effect of this strategy will result in commercial property owners paying less, which means somebody else has to pay more and that's homeowners. Homeowners in Wisconsin already pay 70 percent of property taxes, he said.

"Because manufacturing, industry, agricultures and now retailers have all been able to reduce taxes, the responsibility falls way more on the shoulders of the homeowners," Witynski said.

"Our No. 1 reason as an association in shutting this down is to avoid having even more of the tax burden shifted from the commercial to the residential," he said.

Some businesses in Michigan are employing a bright store strategy, publicly stating that they are willing to pay their fair share of taxes to support their local communities. But many of these same business owners and some local officials say they don't blame the big-box stores — they're not doing anything illegal and that the fault lies in the legislature.

If your state or county hasn't experienced this dark store strategy yet, it very likely may be coming as more chain stores are successfully contesting their cases and are even admitting to using test cases in certain areas. **M**



Municipalities using GPS system monitoring for fleet management

By NICHOLETTE HODGSON | The Municipal

One of the most important parts of running any business is assessing the risks and finding ways to manage said risks. When it comes to managing an entire fleet this can become even more difficult. Many cities have begun to utilize GPS fleet management systems in a variety of ways to aid in tracking certain aspects of their fleets. These systems are a great asset to risk management because they help save both time and money. They also promote safe driving habits and driver awareness as well as aids fleet managers in operating their municipal fleets in the most successful way possible.

Verizon published an e-book on why using a GPS fleet management system not only aids in managing fleets but also helps to reduce risks associated with operating them. In the e-book it explains how the use of a GPS fleet management system can greatly improve safety by measuring the speed and location of every fleet vehicle at all times. A GPS management system can help limit the amount of unnecessary driving since fewer miles means a fleet is exposed to fewer risks.

The ability of the fleet monitoring system to track locations can also help protect any fleet vehicles against theft and aid in

retrieving the stolen vehicles. One of the most effective ways the system can assist fleet managers is by reducing vehicle breakdowns since it is both easier and more cost effective for municipalities to keep fleets well maintained. These management tracking systems also protect the driver of a fleet vehicle against false claims by utilizing a variety of features available.

Augusta, Ga.

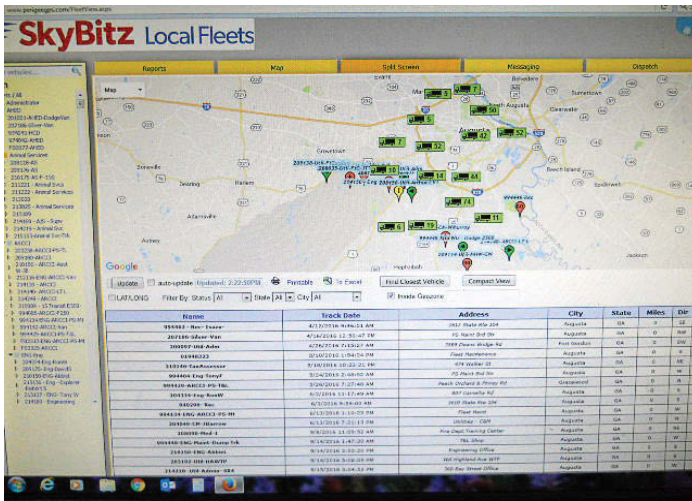
Ron Crowden, fleet manager, stated that Augusta has integrated GPS tracking into its fleet management practices as a safety

initiative. The municipality's primary purpose in using these systems is to monitor speeds on service vehicles in order to reduce driving accidents. According to Crowden, "This system will send speed alerts to various supervisor and management personnel within the appropriate departments."

Additionally, the city uses these tracking systems to monitor the locations of fleet vehicles as both a loss prevention effort as well as to deter the unofficial use of government vehicles. The tracking system can also generate reports that support both drivers and civilians. As stated in Verizon's e-book, the system can provide evidence from various applications if a complaint is made. However, the system can also aid in supporting civilian claims against government vehicles.

Norfolk, Va.

One of Norfolk's fleet managers, Facundo Tassara, stated the municipality is currently using the FASTER Web 6.2 fleet management system, and is "very pleased with its real-time dashboard capabilities, which provided key KPIs (key performance indicators)." The



Pictured are some of the vehicles in the Augusta, Ga., fleet that are monitored using a GPS system. The fleet uses this monitoring system on the majority of its local government vehicles, including those in construction management and facilities management as well as in parking violations; public service; code; development; public health; and construction and design departments. (Photo provided)

A map shows a group of vehicles used by a fleet manager with the name of the vehicle, location, date, miles, direction and city. (Photo provided)

system includes several reports that allow fleet managers to better manage their operations, particularly with such a diverse fleet.

The fleet management system monitors everything from regular sedans to complex off road construction equipment. The city maintains a monthly report generated by the system and reviews 20 specific key performance indicators, including “expenses at vendors, miles driven, fuel consumed, equipment downtime, scheduled versus unscheduled maintenance, department preventative maintenance compliance and more.”

Columbus, Ohio

For Kelly Reagan, fleet administrator with Columbus, the fleet plays an integral role in risk management for the city. The Columbus fleet uses AssetWorks and Networkfleet as its GPS provider for its fleet managing system and is also looking into collision avoidance hardware and software in the hopes of mitigating future accidents. The GPS monitoring has a direct interface with the fleet management information system, which helps prevent more expensive repairs by alerting managers if a vehicle is “throwing a code” or has service requests. Fleet managers use this monitoring system on the majority of their local government vehicles, including those in construction management and facilities management as well as in parking violations, public service, code, development, public health and construction and design departments.

Reagan believes this level of monitoring is “critical for all units as we (the city) ensure that all city workers have the necessary tools to complete their daily missions. So, email alerts for all data coming from the vehicles that may be problematic and/or behavioral get sent to their supervisor as well as the division of fleet for a response.”

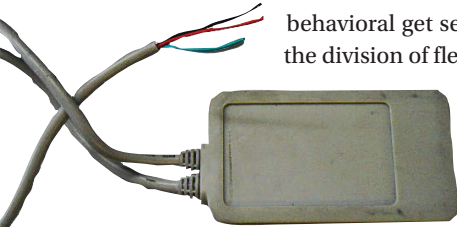
The use of this management system has changed the way fleet managers work. For Reagan, “this has meant a lot more data coming at (the fleet managers) more quickly. The big questions for (the fleet managers) are how do we harness all this data, manage it all then use it to make sound business decisions for our businesses?”

When it comes to using GPS systems to monitor municipal vehicles, Reagan said, “The bottom line is that it saves money by reducing unnecessary repairs for vehicles, keeps the general public informed of our activities like snowplowing and trash pickup, reduces overall fuel consumption and makes our operations much more accountable in all that we do on a daily basis.”

Money savings

One of the largest money-saving opportunities available to municipalities by using GPS fleet tracking is helping to reduce fuel costs. Jenny Malcolm, content marketing specialist with GPS Insight, listed a few ways GPS fleet tracking can help by limiting speeding and wasteful idling, detecting rapid acceleration, optimizing routes, eliminating unauthorized usage, reducing run time and verifying fuel card expenses. It can also assist in a government fleet’s focus on sustainability by helping to reduce GHG emissions by decreasing the number of miles driven and staying up to date on maintenance.

Malcolm states that “when government fleets are using a GPS fleet tracking system for fuel management, increased accountability among employees, sustainability and improved safety, using tracking for non-emergency vehicles, is a highly beneficial practice.” The primary objective seems to be consistency within the fleet, as Malcolm added, “Having consistent visibility over all vehicle types is recommended to receive the most value.”



Here is a GPS unit used to monitor a fleet prior to installation. Many are installed in the dash to prevent tampering. The unit is approximately the size of a driver’s license and ½ inch thick. (Photo provided)

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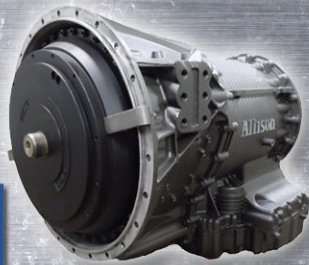
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Amanda Edmonds, mayor and food systems champion

By ANNE MEYER BYLER | The Municipal



WHILE AMANDA EDMONDS might be mayor of Ypsilanti, Mich., she is also the full-time executive director of the nonprofit Growing Hope, which came out of her work on beginning an educational garden at Ypsi's Perry Child Development Center in 1999. Growing Hope is now working in schools where it helps youth grow food and cook; running an urban farm; coordinating farmer's markets; and running a downtown retail shop. Additionally, it hosts food business support training workshops. Now as mayor, Edmonds can be a policymaker as well as a policy advocate. Her focus in all this is local and regional food systems that work. The Ypsilanti Food Co-Op — as well as newer experiments like the Hope Clinic's free produce store for the underprivileged — is just one example of the new agricultural faces emerging in Ypsilanti.

One part of this effort is to work with urban agriculture so that people understand that a city farm, like a small farm in the country, should have the same infrastructure for distribution, etc.; they are both part of the same regional food system. City planners need to



Hoop houses allow Ypsilanti, Mich., to continue to produce a variety of plants even during its long winters, helping keep its farmer's markets open year-round. (Photo by Amanda Maria Edmonds)

see food as one of their areas of oversight, like roads, sewers and park districts. One good resource for this work is Michigan State University's Center for Regional Food Systems. The center is involved in academic and community work.

Edmonds said, "What has happened is that our food system became globalized and people got disconnected from their food sources and

now people are re-localizing. There is value in farms where people are growing any kind of plant on smaller spaces — though along the way, this is changing the face of agriculture. Urban areas have deficits like vacant land and space, but this has given rise to new opportunities. Empty buildings could have food production on the roof and inside. Cut out the cost of transportation and storage."

Cultivating urban agriculture

What are some start-up suggestions for city managers or mayors who would like to move more in the direction of encouraging agricultural elements in their cities?

- See whether zoning supports or prohibits agricultural work. The American Planning Association has a food system planning guide, which is a great resource. It is accessible at www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm.
- See if there is local college or university that you could partner with to do a food community system assessment. What elements of a local food system are available and what is still needed? Students can be excited to be involved in assessing what makes sense in their locality.
- Think about food in the way you think about roads, water and schools. This needs to be a chapter in the master plan of the city. Look locally and regionally for food policy councils and networks of people deep into this field; consult with them.



Ypsilanti, Mich., Mayor Amanda Edmonds is interested in reconnecting citizens to their food sources through year-round farmer's markets to policies that allow agriculture to thrive in urban settings. (Photo by Amanda Maria Edmonds)



Beyond reconnecting citizens with locally grown foods, farmer's markets can revitalize a downtown area. (Photo by Amanda Maria Edmonds)

Despite Ypsilanti's long winter, the Michigan Farm Bureau states, "Michigan produces more than 300 commodities, making us the state with the second most diverse agriculture industry in the nation just behind California."

One problem smaller local farms have is how to get from the local farm to the local consumer. Community-supported agriculture is one response. A gap, however, arises as the local school is trying to figure out how to get the volume needed for the school cafeteria. What is lacking is the aggregation and distribution piece. Food hubs are efforts to fill these gaps by people creating smaller distribution systems, matchmaking systems and online ordering systems. These can help connect the farmer who has the cantaloupe with the school needing fruit for students. A facility can fill the gap by preparing the cantaloupe.

"Right now," Edmonds said, "we have the product and people to buy but steps still need to be taken to fill that preparation gap."

Edmonds' work first focused on gardens: school and neighborhood gardens. Since then, it has shifted to be about healthy food and how to get that to the community. The town of Ypsilanti is 4.3 square miles. One quarter of that land is composed of the University of Michigan-Ypsilanti. There are also gardens, patches of gardens and small urban farms. The small food manufacturers and facilities are growing in town as a next

step. Breweries are one of the local events in food generation.

As mentioned before, processing is a big gap between smaller farms and the user. Commercial kitchens can enable entrepreneurs to get started. Farmers, for example, can be making salsa out of their tomatoes. This kind of kitchen is called a "kitchen incubator." For them to exist, there needs to be planning, zoning and policies at the local level. Ypsilanti passed urban chicken and bee ordinances and an ordinance that allowed for urban garden farm hoop houses and mobile food trucks.

Planning can be a barrier. "We need to move the needle on these policies," Edmonds said. "Some neighborhoods that are food deserts may have people growing small farms or gardens, but they aren't allowed to sell food to their neighbor from their farm. This could come from a fear of daily garage sales, but there are ways to not allow that ... How do you zone for an indoor fish farm? In many ways urban planning is making allowance for agriculture-related activities in urban areas with ordinances. Municipalities can proactively create policies to allow that. Growing Hope does consulting with cities for what makes sense for agriculture within the city. They work particularly around farmer's markets, deciding if that would work and helping with the overall planning on how to make it work."

In Ypsilanti, Growing Hope's farmer's markets are outdoor and indoor year-round facilities. There is also a large hoop house, growing spinach throughout the year — this is heated by the sun's "greenhouse effect" solely, no solar cells involved. Such hoop houses can revitalize a downtown and enable farmer's markets to go year-round.

"We are developing a site for November and December, and maybe throughout the winter as well," Edmonds said. "Part of an indoor farmer's market will have micro-kitchen incubators. These are some of the new forms of agriculture that make sense in a city, and it can look differently than what you've thought in the past as 'agricultural country.'" With Edmonds' leadership, Ypsilanti is on the fast track for new forms of agriculture, compatible with the city. **M**



On the Web

Here are useful resources on community and regional food systems and planning:

- growinghope.net
- foodsystems.msu.edu
- foodsystems.msu.edu/resources
- planning.org/resources/onthedarad/food





Fleets hit the streets with biodiesel blends

Biodiesel blends continue to gain in popularity with municipal fleets for a variety reasons, from their lessened environmental impact to their winter performance. (Shutterstock.com)

By JULIE YOUNG | The Municipal

It is the renewable, clean-burning fuel alternative that is reducing the nation's reliance on foreign oil while also producing new jobs and creating a better environment for all of us. It is made from a wide range of base products including vegetable oil, soybean oil and animal fats. It has the EPA's seal of approval and is the go-to source when it comes to keeping fleet trucks on the streets in the winter. It is biodiesel, and it is changing everything.

Biodiesels are a best bet

According to the U.S. Department of Energy's Alternative Fuels Data Center, biodiesel blends are a community's best bet when it comes to finding a fuel source that can get the job done without damaging the planet in the process. They have the ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They improve fuel lubricity and raise the cetane number of the fuel itself. Biodiesel blends also cause less damage to the environment if they are spilled, and they are less combustible than traditional petroleum products.

"There are a lot of reasons why people are turning to it," said William Davis, director of the National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium in Morgantown, W.Va. "It doesn't have the same makeup as petroleum diesel or the same kinds of issues. There are a number of environmental benefits, and it's significantly better."

Just as there are different blends of gasoline, there are also different levels of biodiesel blends. Low-level blends — such as B5, which contain 5 percent biodiesel and 95 percent petroleum diesel, and B20 (20

percent biodiesel to 80 percent petroleum) — tend to be the easiest to use in fleet vehicles while high-level blends such as B100 typically require some engine modifications in order to be effective. These also tend to gel in cold temperatures and can create storage issues. Davis said there are additives that can be added to the fuel to keep it from congealing, but the most common type of biodiesel that fleets tend to use and get the best performance from is B20.

The reason B20 is so popular among the biodiesel blends is the fact that it offers a good balance of cost, emissions, cold weather performance, materials compatibility and the ability to act as a solvent. It can be purchased through traditional diesel fuel distributors or through biodiesel marketers, and according to the AFDC, fleets that use a biodiesel blend of B20 or higher qualify for biodiesel fuel credits under the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

"It has a lot going for it, and we are seeing communities use it more and more," Davis said. "With B20, you don't see the black soot on the vehicles, and the air quality in the community is a lot better."



Sevierville, Tenn., first switched its fleet to B5 before going to B20. The city has not looked back. The ability to maintain mileage, quieter engines and solid performance during the winter months have all been perks experienced by the city. (Photo by Blinutne/Wikimediacommons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sevierville_City_Hall.JPG)



Ann Arbor, Mich.'s entire fleet runs on B20 during the winter months and B50 during the summer. Biodiesel has allowed the city to meet its goal of a 10 percent reduction in fuel consumption by 2014. (Pentawing/Wikimediacommons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AA_Downtown.JPG <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>)

Winter's warrior

When James Dennison, fleet manager for the public works department in Sevierville, Tenn., started using biodiesel 12 years ago, he used B5 on anything that would take it, including garbage trucks, fire trucks and street vacuums. Seven years ago, he converted to B20, and he's never looked back.

"I am really proud of what we have done here," he said. "Biodiesel smells like regular diesel, it allows us to maintain the mileage we've always had, gives us cleaner oil and quieter engines. It really makes a difference."

Especially during the winter season. According to the National Biodiesel Board, the trade association representing the biodiesel industry throughout the U.S., biodiesel blends of B20 or below have been shown capable of standing up to the harshest weather conditions. With proper fuel management and a solid understanding of the fuel's cold flow characteristics, any community can have a trouble-free season.

Those cold flow characteristics can vary across the country and are impacted by a number of factors, including where the crude oil comes from, how it is refined and if it is blended to encourage peak performance during cold weather.


"We don't have a problem," Dennison said. "You have to get your system used to it a little at a time, but once you have it in there, then you really won't have any problems."

It's a sentiment that is shared by a number of communities whose fleets have made the switch to B20, including Brooklyn Park, Minn.; Cranmore Mountain Resort in North Conway, N.H.; Keene, N.H.; and the city of Ann Arbor, Mich.

Ann Arbor adopted a green fleet policy in 2004 with the hope of seeing a 10 percent reduction in fuel consumption by 2014. The city has more than met that goal, and today the community's entire fleet runs on B20 during the winter months and B50 during the summer.

"We followed the University of Michigan's lead in going to B20, which has become quite a success story here in Ann Arbor," said former Energy Coordinator Dave Konkle, who had helped initiate the program. "We made the switch because we are an environmental community concerned about global warming and air quality issues. Plus biodiesel smells better and runs quieter."

David E. Harris Jr., Harvard's director of Transit and Fleet Management, who has been honored by the EPA, firmly believes in biodiesel and said, ever since the university first began using it 11 years ago, it has never had a problem, not even during the worst winter weather.

"We were up and running providing transit service and keeping campus operations running smoothly," Harris said. "Biodiesel is the fuel that helped us do that." 

How to ensure a problem-free winter with biodiesel blends

Is your fleet ready to make the switch to biodiesel blends? Here are the keys you need to ensure a problem-free winter and to keep your vehicles rolling along.

- Make sure your fuel meets the national standard ASTM D 6751. Quality fuel is critical to a successful cold flow operation.
- Improve the quality of your fuel by blending biodiesel with kerosene (No. 1-D), which has excellent cold flow properties.
- There are a number of available additives that can improve the low temperature operability of diesel fuels, including pour point depressives, flow improvers, wax and anti-settling additives. All additives must be introduced into the diesel fuel before the fuel reaches its cloud point and must be properly blended.
- Block filter heaters and indoor vehicle storage can also help endure smooth winter operation; however, cold weather management plans should be in place well before the cold weather sets in.
- Buy fuel from a biodiesel producer who is certified under the BQ-9000 program. Visit www.bq-9000.org for participating companies.

Source: National Biodiesel Board



Medium-sized police departments grapple with costs of body camera video storage

by AJ HUGHES | The Municipal

In the aftermath of police shootings in Ferguson, Cleveland and other cities and towns in the United States, body cameras worn by officers have become more prevalent. They are a tool to protect not only the public, but also police officers. In many cases, they have shown proof against wrongdoing.

As effective as body cameras are, a significant issue is cost. The cameras themselves are relatively cheap, but the expense of video storage adds up quickly. Large police departments in cities such as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles have enough financial resources for equipment and storing of data, and smaller departments don't require much video storage. However, medium-sized law enforcement agencies — around 250 officers — can face

major challenges in paying for adequate storage for body cam videos.

"The cost is not as much for smaller departments because there's not as much data," said Lindsay Miller, deputy director of the Police Executive Research Forum's Center for Applied Research & Management. "Big police departments can buy storage in bulk, but there are cost concerns for departments that aren't as large."

"Cost is a major obstacle in starting a body camera program," said Andrea Edmiston, director of governmental affairs for the National Association of Police Organizations.

Despite the cost, though, Edmiston said that most chiefs and rank-and-file officers want the benefits that body cameras provide.

The majority of big-city police departments utilize body cameras. And for medium-sized departments? Some do, and some don't. The Altoona Police Department in Pennsylvania does not use them, per Carl Wenzel, an information technology specialist with the department.

"Not yet," said Wenzel, who sees the possibility of Altoona adding them in the future.

The reason Altoona does not use police body cams? Cost.

LEFT: While the body cameras are relatively inexpensive, storing data has many medium-sized police departments hesitating to begin a body camera program, or reconsidering the one they already have in place. Still, some departments, like Iowa City's, find the benefits outweigh the costs. (Skyward Kick Productions/Shutterstock.com)

"The cost is not in the cameras, but in storage," he said. "The cameras are high-definition, so the size of video files is large. If 10 officers wore body cameras for two hours, storing 20 hours of footage would add up to 100 gigabytes. We would want to maintain 90-day storage and would also want to be able to flag stuff for indefinite storage. Ultimately, this could require five terabytes of storage."

Cloud storage is an option, but Wenzel believes it would be less expensive in the long run for the department to store video files on its own server.

"It costs \$6,000 for a server, so it probably would be cheaper to go with our own server and replace it when needed," he said.

There are eight police departments—including Altoona—in Blair County, Pa. One cost-saving possibility could involve all eight departments pooling their resources to save money on body camera-related expenses.

"There could be a chance of that happening," said Wenzel, who clarified that nothing concrete is currently in the works toward that end.

Miller is unaware of any such collaborations.

"I have not heard of any partnerships of this type," she said. "Partnering could present its own set of challenges, such as overlapping of data."

Edmiston echoed Miller in not knowing of any current body camera sharing programs.

"I've not heard of any such efforts," she said.

Scaling up

It's one thing for a medium-sized police department to start a body camera program from the ground up—this would require much expense and an intense labor effort. According to Miller, some of the most successful body camera programs in medium-sized departments started with the basics and grew.

"Most places start small and scale up," she said.

An example of scaling up is the body camera program at the Iowa City Police Department in Iowa. The department only



Altoona, Pa., currently does not have a body camera program in place, though one may come about in the future. The police department's main concern with implementing one is the cost of storing the videos. (Csoldner187/https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Altoona_Downtown_from_Brush_Mountain.jpg; https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en

started using body cameras in summer 2015, yet this came after more than 10 years of utilizing dashboard cameras inside police cruisers.

"We started the process quite a while ago," said Scott Garde, sergeant for planning and research with the Iowa City police. "It's been a benefit to a lot of people—it shows that there's nothing to hide."

"All of our officers have body cameras, which are on at all times," he said. "They have helped immensely—there's nothing to lose."

Iowa City Police Department body camera videos are encrypted and transferred to an onsite hard drive, where they are stored for three years. When asked about expenses associated with such efforts, Garde replied that the benefits from video are worth the cost and the city is committed to this effort.

Benefits aren't always worth the expense

For some medium-sized police departments, the benefits often don't outweigh the cost. Clarksville, Ind., located just north of Louisville, Ky., started using body cameras four years ago for its 75 officers. That lasted until

June 2016, when Clarksville's chief of police decided to end the program after a new state law was put in place requiring video to be stored for 190 days. Prior, video was stored for 30 days and cost the department between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per year. Chief Mark Palmer told the Associated Press that the new requirement would have increased expenses to between \$50,000 and \$100,000 annually. Nearby Jeffersonville, Ind., also halted its body camera program in 2016 for the same reason.

An effective tool, with limits

Regardless of cost, police body cameras don't solve everything. They are located at chest level so don't pick up everything, and noise, dark and excessive light can cause external "noise."

"Dash cams don't tell the whole story, and neither do body cams," said Edmiston. "It's a tool, but not an end-all be-all."

But they often tell enough of the story. Edmiston cited a case in which a body camera showed what was thought to be an unprovoked shooting by an officer was, in fact, not. **M**



Ambassador program is a win-win scenario for residents and the bottom line

by LAUREN CAGGIANO | The Municipal

THE NAPLES, FLA., AMBASSADOR PROGRAM WAS CREATED to provide citizens an opportunity to volunteer in several different departments throughout the city. According to Deputy Director Mike Leslie, the program was created in December 2005, in response to a specific need. At that time, the Naples Preserve had just opened to the public and plans called for volunteer staffing. Leslie and his staff began to build a steady volunteer base, and it wasn't long before he had a "nice group to pull from."

The volunteers, who tend to be retirees, are as enthusiastic as they are loyal. Two of the original volunteers are still with the program in fact. Although there are limited requirements to become a volunteer, Leslie said the typical candidate is "someone with an interest or background in environmentalism, preservation or ecology." No formal education is required.

The Naples Preserve volunteers tend to be the most dedicated and are exemplary of what the program hopes to accomplish.

"They are friendly, outgoing, knowledgeable and willing to learn and be outside," Leslie said about the Naples Preserve volunteers.

ABOVE: Naples, Fla.'s ambassador program is estimated to have saved the city as much as \$3,000 a month in staffing costs, with volunteer ambassadors helping out at a variety of venues, from parks to a theatre. (WhoisJohnGalt at English Wikipedia, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>)

The preserve, located on 9 1/2 acres, is a nature lover's dream come true. The site protects two unique Florida upland habitats: Pine Flatwoods and Oak-Rosemary Scrubs. Volunteers here serve as greeters, guides, lecturers and serve in other roles as needed.

Since being met with success at the preserve, the ambassador program has expanded to other city facilities. For example, city parks and a theatre are among the current sites. To date, there are 24 active volunteers, some of whom are seasonal. There is no minimum commitment in terms of hours, but Lewis said most volunteers spend about 10-15 hours on the job a week. The city makes a point to work around the volunteers' availability. Volunteers are



Norris Center in Naples, Fla., is another location where volunteers involved in the ambassador program help out. The community center has an auditorium with a stage, two meeting rooms, a dance studio, conference room, game room, art gallery and an amphitheater. (Photo provided)

vetted the same way as traditional city employees and go through a brief training process.

While the volunteers are unpaid, the ROI is significant and quantifiable. Leslie estimates that the city saves as much as \$3,000 a month in staffing costs. The preserve is exclusively staffed by volunteers, which means the city benefits from tourism while curbing costs at the same time.

Speaking of tourism, the statistics speak for themselves. More than 1.77 million visitors stayed in hotels or other vacation rentals in Collier County in 2014. This was a 6.3 percent increase over the year before, according to a report by county consultant, Research Data Services Inc. in Tampa. And the returns have had a residential effect as the total economic boon from tourists in the county reached more than \$1.8 billion in 2014, up more than 12 percent over the year before.

Lewis is aware that his volunteers are at least somewhat responsible for this economic activity. It's not all give and no take, though. That is, volunteers benefit from being mentally and physically active as well as from the social interaction.

"There's a lot to do and know," Lewis said.

For this reason and many more, Lewis and his staff are grateful to the volunteer base. He said the biggest factor in the program's success has been their dedication over the years. What's more, Naples'



Pictured are Naples' original batch of volunteer ambassadors. The program launched in 2005 — first at the Naples Preserve — and ever since, the city has had a steady stream of volunteers, particularly among seniors. (Photo provided)

status as a sought-after retirement destination has helped the cause, too. That's because retirees tend to have more free time than younger, working professionals.

Recognizing the wins of the ambassador program over the past 11 years, Lewis has advice for municipalities hoping to replicate Naples' successes.

"It's helpful to find someone in the community who knows the local volunteer landscape — how to connect and tap those resources," he said. 

For more information about Naples' ambassador program, visit www.naplesgov.com.



Encouraging young artists while adding color to winter

by SARAH WRIGHT | The Municipal

COLORFUL SNOWPLOW BLADES — SOME SPORTING IMAGERY straight out of Dr. Seuss or the paintings of Vincent van Gogh — have been a sight on the roads of Northfield, Minn., for five years: ever since TJ Heinrich, interim streets and parks manager for the city, first approached St. Dominic School to see if he could secure some young artists to paint them. The idea came about after he read about another city's experience doing something similar with its plow blades. Heinrich approached all four of Northfield's local elementary schools; however, only St. Dominic School showed interest in participating.

"The art teacher at St. Dominic (Kelly Lynn Stanton-Nutt) has always been excited about it," Heinrich said. He noted Stanton-Nutt has really embraced the project and ran with it, guiding students in fourth, fifth, sixth and eighth grades as they create the colorful murals. Heinrich stated he is always excited to see where the children's minds will take them. "It's crazy what they dream up — that's the best part of it."

When asked how many of the plow blades she wanted that first year, Stanton-Nutt recalled she'd said, "I will take them all!" They, however, opted to start small with four blades since they were unsure how long it'd take to paint them. That number went up to 12 pieces and is at 10 this year. "The kids truly love it!"

Finished plow blades, inspired by the works of Vincent van Gogh, wait for the start of the 2016-2017 snow season. (Photo provided)

The snowplow blades show up in the fall, with students spending about a month painting them — wrapping up just in time for the snow season.

Northfield Streets, Parks & Facilities Division operates four trucks, which have two blades apiece and wings, and three front-end loaders. Each year the blades need painted, Heinrich explained, to protect them against rust, which was another reason why he had approached St. Dominic about starting the plow blade painting project. Heinrich said, "It has to be done every year, might as well let the kids have at it."

Prior to breaking out the paint, students plan out the murals: This entails researching art history and famous artists and illustrators prior to sketching a series of possible snowplow blade art for the "Mini Moving Museum."

"After students research and make color sketches of possible options, we do a short civics lesson on the election process since the students in each class vote for the pieces to be recreated each year," Stanton-Nutt said, noting this year's batch has been particularly well timed with the presidential election.

Past plow blades have included illustrations from Dr. Seuss' "The Lorax" and "Horton Hears a Who," plus works from famous artists like van Gogh, Henri Matisse, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky and others. The students go to great lengths to make sure the wings and blades



The snowplow blade project has become a part of St. Dominic School's fall art and technology research curriculum for fourth, fifth, sixth and eighth grades. (Photo provided)



In addition to teamwork, students learn about art history, color theory, different painting techniques, setting goals and how elections and primaries work. (Photo provided)

“It’s a fun, fun way to connect with the community and educate.”

match on each truck. The plows also sport the grade that completed the mural in addition to “St. Dominic School.” This year’s plows will have art inspired by van Gogh, a perennial favorite; Wayne Thiebaud; Roy Lichtenstein; Henri Matisse; Claude Monet; and Fernand Leger.

Through their unusual canvases, the children not only learn how to use different painting techniques, but how to adjust famous works of art to fit on the plow blades. It is also a huge team building exercise.

“They all work together even if theirs is not selected,” Stanton-Nutt said.

The roaming artwork is created using latex paint; Stanton-Nutt noted she gets the basic colors, which allows students to also learn about mixing colors to get the hue they want. To add lasting power, Heinrich said the murals are varnished over once complete.

“They normally last the whole (snow) season,” Heinrich said, adding by spring they are primed and ready for fall when the students will paint them again.

The project has been well received by the public, with Stanton-Nutt noting the school gets a lot of extra traffic during plow painting season. The students’ work was also featured on the local Fox 8 TV channel in 2015 with a special report by Jonathan Choe — to the students’ delight. Choe, who was wrapping up another interview, arrived later than scheduled; however, the bus company had sent a bus to take the children home afterward so no one would have to miss the interview. One of the local radio stations, plus the local newspapers, have also highlighted the annual project.

“We’ve received lots of calls,” Heinrich said of the project.

After the painting season ends, a “gallery-style” reception is held, with city employees, families of students and the student body all ▶



Northfield’s plows must be painted each year to prevent rusting. The city has used this annual need to infuse winter with color while furthering the education of local students. (Photo provided)



Students at St. Dominic School work as a team to paint Northfield, Minn.’s snowplow blades each fall. (Photo provided)

“It’s crazy what they dream up—that’s the best part of it.”



invited to see the final works. Students are also recognized for their efforts with awards, and there are plenty of treats and drinks. City plow drivers also get to meet with the artists who painted their plow blades. One year, in particular, a driver was ecstatic to see Andy Warhol's "Campbell Soup Cans" on his plow since he loves soup. "We couldn't have planned that," Stanton-Nutt said.

The community has embraced the Mini Moving Museum, attempting to spot all of the different paintings as the plow drivers go about their jobs. "It's a fun way to connect with the community, and it's great to see the utility side of the city," Stanton-Nutt said. "It's just been a dream for me as a teacher to meet standards."

The students' works has even been noticed in other states, according to Heinrich. "We traded some of the trucks in to Iowa, and they've said they were going to bring them back to be painted again. I told them, 'You've got to talk to your own schools.'"

"I think both TJ and I would really like to see this catch on," Stanton-Nutt said, noting she'd love to see a friendly competition between cities. "It's a fun, fun way to connect with the community and educate ... It's a win, win, win — I can't find the downside." **M**

Students across the grades work on everyone's plows in order to get them done on time — making snowplow blade painting season a team effort. (Photo provided)



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JANUARY

Jan. 10-12 Northern Green Trade Show

Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minn.
northerngreen.org

Jan. 10-12 Landscape Ontario Congress

Toronto Congress Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
<https://locongress.com/>

Jan. 15-20 National Recreation and Park Association Event Management School

Oglebay Resort and Conference Center, Wheeling, W.Va.
www.nrpa.org/event-school

Jan. 16-18 Fire Department Safety Officers Association

Wyndham Orlando Resort, Orlando, Fla.
www.fdsaoa.org

Jan. 17-19 U.S. Conference of Mayors 85th Winter Meeting

Washington, D.C.
www.usmayors.org/meetings

Jan. 17-20 World of Concrete

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev.
worldofconcrete.com

Jan. 17-21 Fire Rescue East

Daytona Beach Ocean Center, Daytona Beach, Fla.
www.ffca.org/fire-rescue-east

Jan. 18-20 Indiana Parks and Recreation Association Conference & Expo

Crowne Plaza at Union Station, Indianapolis, Ind.
<http://inpra.evrconnect.com/conference>

JANUARY

Jan. 18-20 Fire Department Safety Officers Association 2017 Apparatus Symposium and Safety Forum

Wyndham Orlando Resort, Orlando, Fla.
www.fdsaoa.org

Jan. 20-21 Piedmont Fire Expo

Twin City Quarters/Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem, N.C.
www.forsythcountyfire-rescue.com/expo.php

Jan. 20-25 American Correctional Association 2017 Winter Conference

Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas
www.aca.org

Jan. 23-26 Heavy Duty Aftermarket Week 2017

The Mirage, Las Vegas, Nev.
www.hdaw.org

FEBRUARY

Jan. 31-Feb. 2 Underground Construction Technology International Conference and Exhibition

Fort Worth Convention Center, Fort Worth, Texas
uctonline.com

Jan. 31-Feb. 2 Utility Products Conference and Exposition

San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, Calif.
www.utilityproductsexpo.com/index/future-event-dates.html

Feb. 10-14 ATSSA's 47th Annual Convention & Traffic Expo

Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz.
expo.atssa.com

FEBRUARY

Feb. 13-16 11th Annual ARFF Training Alliance ARFF Chiefs & Leadership School

Rio Suites, Las Vegas, Nev.
arffwg.org

Feb. 22-25 WWETT

Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, Ind.
wwettshow.com

Feb. 23-25 EMS Today/ The JEMS Conference and Exposition

Calvin L. Rampton Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah
www.emstoday.com

MARCH

Feb. 26-March 1 Disaster Recovery Institute 2017

Golden Nugget, Las Vegas, Nev.
driconference.org

Feb. 27-March 2 Technology and Maintenance Council Annual Meeting and Transportation Technology Exhibition

Music City Center, Nashville, Tenn.
www.trucking.org

March 4-6 National Utility Contractors Association National Convention

Las Vegas, Nev.
www.nuca.com/convention

March 7-10 Missouri Park and Recreation Association Conference

Hilton Promenade at Branson Landing, Branson, Mo.
www.mopark.org

MARCH

March 11-16 Congressional City Conference 2017

Washington, D.C.
ccc.nlc.org

March 12-17 Facility Managers' Revenue Development and Management School

Oglebay Resort & Conference Center, Wheeling, W.Va.
www.revenueschool.org

March 13-15 Mid-South Transportation and Parking Association Annual Spring Conference and Trade Show

Crowne Plaza, Knoxville, Tenn.
www.mstpa.org/annual-conference.html

March 14-17 Green Truck Summit and NTEA Work Truck Show

Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, Ind.
www.worktruckshow.com

March 20-21 Tennessee Municipal League 2017 Legislative Conference

DoubleTree, Nashville, Tenn.
www.tml1.org

March 21-23 Wildland Urban Interface 2017

Peppermill Resort, Reno, Nev.
www.iafc.org

March 23-25 Mid-America Trucking Show

Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, Ky.
www.truckingshow.com

March 27-31 International Wireless Communications Expo

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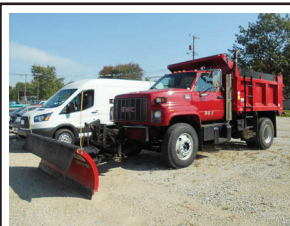
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Cities with booming incomes

In July 2016, 24/7 Wall St. shared its annual list highlighting American cities with booming incomes. In all, the site noted, “The American workforce earned 2.9 percent more income in 2014 than in the previous year. As the American economy continues to recover from the Great Recession, more people are able to find jobs. While total income has been rising nationwide, income did not rise uniformly across the country in 2014. In some U.S. metro areas, total income even declined.”

To arrive at its cities with booming incomes, 24/7 Wall St. reviewed data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, including real personal income and per capita income growth in 2014 for the nation’s 381 metropolitan statistical areas. The share of an MSA’s workforce employed by a given industry came from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2014 American Community Survey. Population growth, median household income, poverty rates and homeownership rates also came from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2014 American Community Survey. Unemployment rates came from the BLS.

Odessa, TX

01

8.1%
\$44,859

Hanford-Corcoran, CA

02

7.0%
\$32,102

Midland, TX

03

7.0%
\$87,929

Myrtle Beach
N. Myrtle Beach
Conway, SC-NC**04**

6.0%
\$33,2439

Salem, OR

05

5.8%
\$34,113

Beaumont,
Port Arthur, TX**06**

5.6%
\$40,500

Lake Charles, LA

07

5.4%
\$41,346

Yakima, WA

08

5.4%
\$36,467

Mount Vernon,
Anacortes, WA**09**

5.3%
\$40,509

Carson City, NV

10

5.3%
\$39,401

● Personal Income Growth
● Per Capita Personal Income

A

Alumitank **2**
 Andy Mohr Ford **44**

B

Bonnell Industries **Back Cover**
 Bullet Safe **9**

C

Chemspec USA, LLC **52**
 Clearspan Fabric Structures **7**
 CTECH Manufacturing **4**

E

ECM Performance **45**
 EZ Road Incorporated **9**

F

4 State Trucks **11**
 Fabco Power **5**
 Fol-da-tank **53**

G

GPS Insight **54**

H

Husky Portable Containment **11**

I

Imel Motor Sales, Incorporated **49**

L

Land Pride **Cover, 12-13**
 LKQ - Geiger Truck Parts **53**
 Lock America **33**

M

Mile-X Equipment, Incorporated **16**
 Monroe Truck Equipment **5**
 Moore Industrial Hardware **32**

N

National Construction Rentals **4**
 New Way Trucks **23**
 No Ramp Trailers **52**
 NTEA **17**

P

Par-Kan Company **32**
 Pik Rite, Incorporated **7**
 Pro-Tainer, Incorporated **11**

R

RPM Tech **55**

S

Stewart-Amos Sweepers **5**

T

Toledo Ticket **3**

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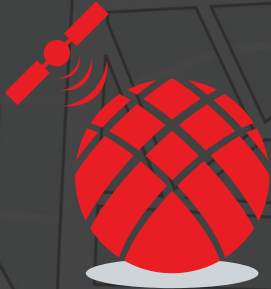
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