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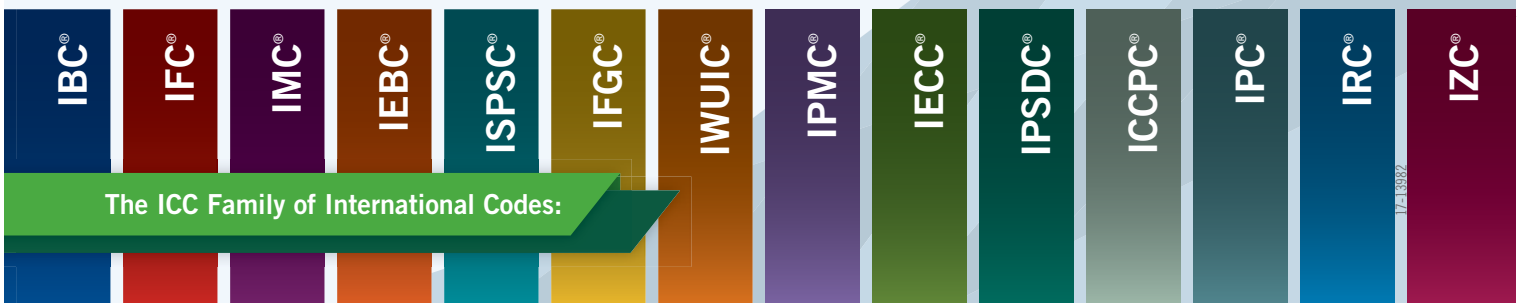


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**ON THE COVER**

Telematics is playing an important role in the expansion of smart cities while also shaping city fleets and addressing the challenges faced by them. The vehicle and driver data being collected through telematics is being used to improve fuel efficiency, resource allocation and route optimization. Learn more about the impacts of telematics on city fleet operations on page 10.



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*editor-in-chief*  
**JERI SEELY**  
 jseely@the-papers.com



*editor*  
**SARAH WRIGHT**  
 swright@the-papers.com



*publication manager*  
**CHRIS SMITH**  
 chris@themunicipal.com



*senior account executive*  
**REES WOODCOCK**  
 rees@themunicipal.com



*inside sales representative*  
**NANCY BUCHER**  
 nancy@themunicipal.com



*graphic designer*  
**MARY LESTER**  
 mlester@the-papers.com



*business manager*  
**COLLETTE KNEPP**  
 CKnepp@the-papers.com

*director of marketing*  
**KIP SCHUMM**  
 kschumm@the-papers.com

*mail manager*  
**KHOEUN KHOEUTH**

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PO Box 188 • 206 S. Main St., Milford, IN 46542  
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# Push to green municipal fleets



**Sarah Wright** | Editor

**I**N THE PUSH TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE gas emissions and also save money, alternative fuel vehicles are hitting the roadways in greater numbers, with states and cities playing a sizable role in this growth — in part due to the implementation of lucrative incentives for residents and businesses alike and through the continued construction of alternative fuel infrastructure, whether electric vehicle charging stations, CNG stations or so on.

The state of Georgia almost has 5,000 charging stations for electric vehicles in place, many of which are located within the Atlanta-Metro region, according to FleetCarma. In fact, the financial incentives in the area, support from dealerships and Atlanta's streamlined permitting for EV equipment that is needed by residents installing charging stations at their homes were all reasons FleetCarma rated the city as No. 4 on its 2017 list of the best cities to own an electric vehicle in — the full list is viewable on page 60.

But states and local governments aren't just encouraging residents

to get on board and stopping there — no, they are opting to welcome alternative fuels into their own fleets.

The U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities Now's winter newsletter highlighted Cobb County, Ga., which "has made it its mission to utilize six different alternative fuels, based on mission needs, with the goal of saving money, reducing its environmental impact, and increasing employees' satisfaction." Its fuel sources include electric, E85, biodiesel, propane and compressed natural gas.

In particular, electric vehicles are getting a lot more attention, with cities across the U.S. — though predominantly on the West Coast — weaving them into their fleets each month. Roanoke, Va., recently committed to such a move with the aim of replacing its fuel-guzzling SUVs and sedans. Should its pilot program prove successful as many as 20 EVs could be added to its fleet. Writer Catey Traylor is sharing Roanoke's experiences both before and after welcoming EVs in addition to Savannah, Ga.'s.

Adapting to environmentally friendly goals is just one challenge being faced by fleet professionals. With 2017 seeing record hurricanes and wildfires, fleet managers must also be prepared for the worst,

have a plan for it and ensure that needed resources are readily available should it come to pass. Fuel is a necessity as first responders need to get where they're going and debris must be cleared to allow for recovery. Writer Denise Fedorow relays the experiences of three fleet managers who faced natural disasters. They share how they have prepared their fuel management policies, and — in the case of Plano, Texas, post-Hurricane Harvey — adjusted those policies and plans.

Both topics will likely be on fleet professionals' minds in March and April, particularly as they attend the Work Truck Show and Green Truck Summit, March 6-9, or the NAFA Institute & Expo, April 24-27. With educational sessions highlighting alternative fuels and the latest fleet technologies, plus the emergence of autonomous vehicles, fleet managers will be walking away with a lot of information.

And if attending a conference is on your radar, be sure to network. Odds are if you are faced with a challenge, someone has the answer. **M**



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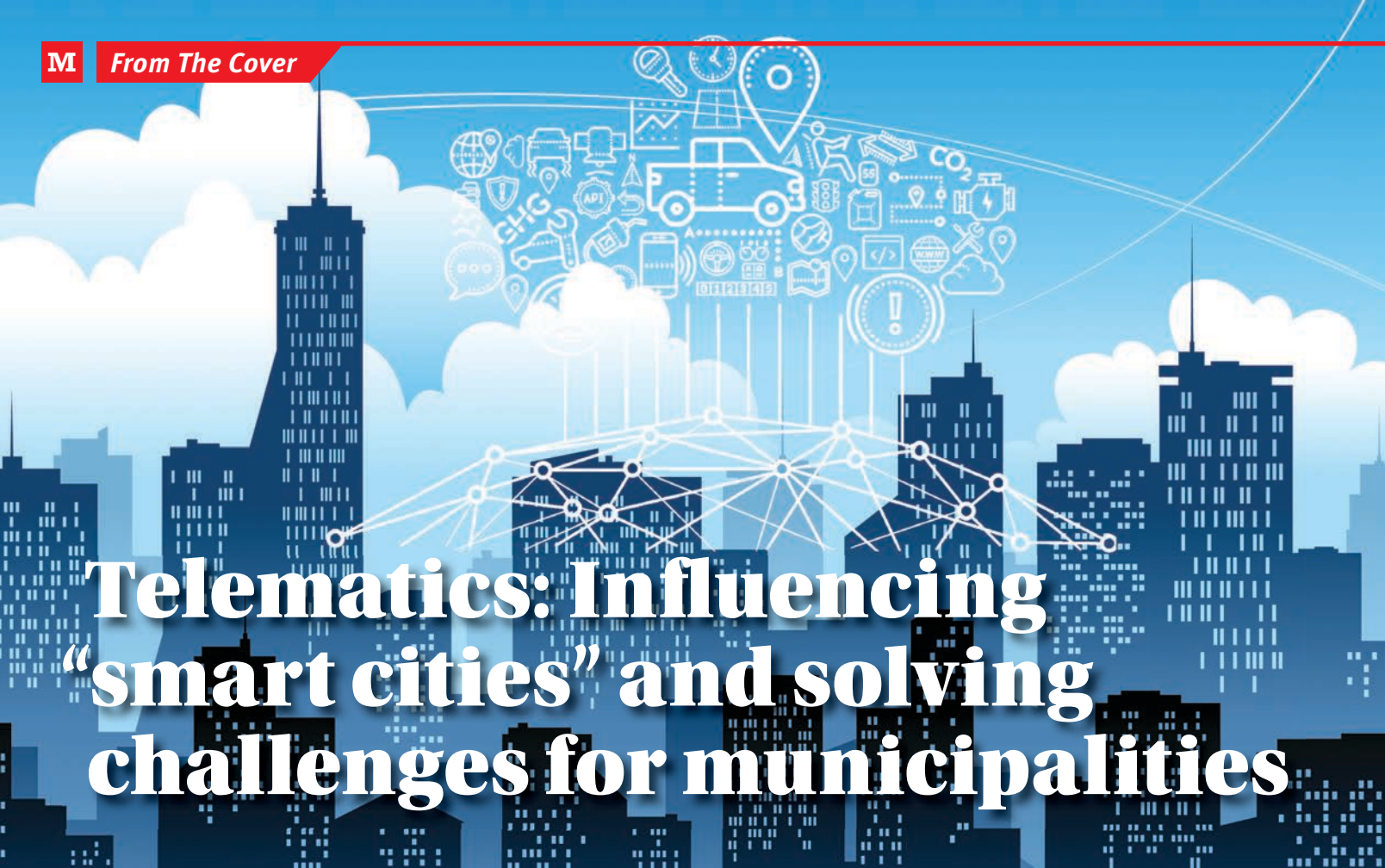
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17-1073



# Telematics: Influencing “smart cities” and solving challenges for municipalities

by **JENNY SHINER** | GPS Insight Marketing Communications Manager

**Technology has taken us leaps and bounds ahead of where we were as a society a few decades ago. From the rise of smart homes, drones that deliver packages to our front doorsteps within hours of purchase, to self-driving cars being spotted around the city, our expectations have been forever changed.**

For municipalities, the rise of the “smart city” infrastructure has been a significant influence in the adoption of fleet, transportation, energy and other technologies across their operations. The trailblazers of “smart government” recognize the possibilities of a technology-based infrastructure to optimize the efficiency of city operations and services to connect with their citizens and solve over-lying issues.

One development in the field of smart cities is the increased use of telematics, providing new insight to developing the smart city through vehicle and driver data collected. This includes collecting carbon measurements, fuel usage and other metrics that can be used to support better urban sustainability. As telematics continues to play a role in

the expansion of smart cities, the technology is being used by municipalities to solve many other challenges facing their fleet operations. It provides the information needed to improve fuel efficiency, resource allocation and route optimization.

## Measuring fuel use

Measuring fuel use is one of the most important ways telematics is impacting smart cities while providing municipalities the most additional benefit. Not only does improving fuel efficiency limit the harmful effects of excessive greenhouse gas emissions, it can significantly reduce costs. While fuel is a consistent overhead cost that is likely to fluctuate, how much we use is certainly within our control.



Jenny Shiner

An important fact worth noting about fuel is the worst mileage a vehicle can get is zero miles per gallon, which occurs when a vehicle is idling. Reducing excessive idle time is the fastest way to improve fuel economy with telematics. Vehicle idling can be reduced by tracking idle metrics through reports/alerts and taking action as soon as vehicles surpass acceptable idle time thresholds.

Another method municipalities are implementing to scale back on unnecessary fuel



*Telematics can be used to rightsize municipal fleets by pinpointing under-utilized vehicles that fleet managers might want to eliminate. (Photo provided)*

*Fuel use can be monitored using telematics, with its data often being used to reduce idling and correcting other inefficient driving habits. (Photo provided)*

use is correcting inefficient driving. In addition to the safety implications of monitoring driver behavior, municipalities use telematics to review fuel use attributed to inefficient driving. This data allows for coaching opportunities to improve behavior while reducing excessive fuel use in the process. The technology can also send alerts directly to drivers when their vehicles are speeding, idling, harshly breaking or rapidly accelerating to proactively correct these behaviors as they occur.

### **Fleet rightsizing**

Improving sustainability is a highly important aspect of smart cities, and municipalities are using telematics to take immediate action on lessening their environmental impact. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, fleet rightsizing is a management practice that can help fleet managers build and maintain sustainable, fuel-efficient fleets.

Examining resource allocation is an important focus for fleet management, and it often leads to fleet rightsizing to ensure the maximum use of municipal vehicles. Monitoring fleet utilization reports allow fleet managers to identify if vehicles are being under-utilized or over-utilized. If vehicles are used less frequently, fleet managers can

decide if they should eliminate these assets altogether.

Along with contributing to environmental impact, maintaining more vehicles in a fleet than necessary increases fuel, maintenance and several other expenses. Evaluating fleet utilization is a great method for municipalities to ensure the best use of the city's or state's budget. It's important to constituents that municipalities spend their tax dollars wisely, and identifying areas to eliminate unnecessary spending helps positively affect the public opinion.

### **Increasing route optimization**

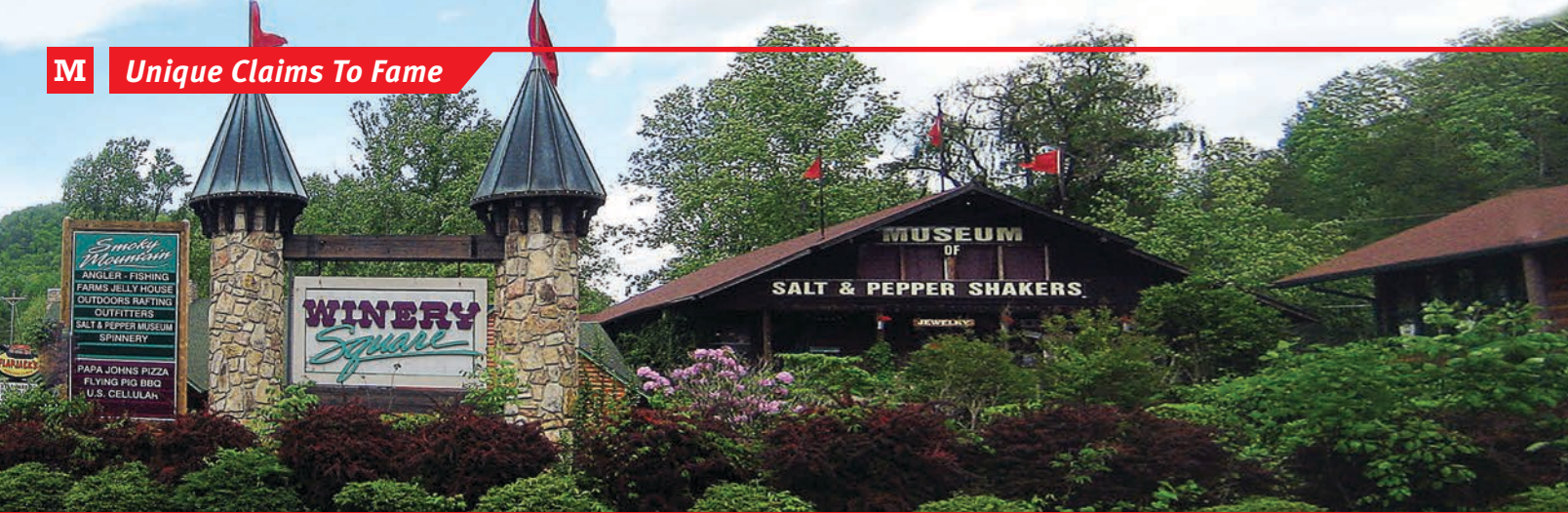
While smart cities aim to solve traffic congestion in urban areas in the long term, it still proves to be an efficiency issue today for municipal vehicles providing public services. Municipalities are using telematics to ensure that their drivers take the most efficient routes to provide better service to citizens and ultimately decreases miles driven.

Telematics systems automatically determine the fastest routes, taking current traffic and roadwork into account, to dispatch drivers more efficiently. Route inefficiencies can also be addressed through route replay technology, allowing fleet and dispatch managers to review the routes for multiple vehicles at one time. A frequent outcome

is identifying overlapping routes, which are easily identified and fixed through the technology. Eliminating overlapping routes improves fleet efficiency and reduces fuel costs, not to mention it leads to fewer vehicles in congested areas.

As we stand on the verge of a future dominated by technology, universally networked devices, and smart vehicles and transportation, the quality of life for all citizens will be improved in countless ways. Technology like telematics is already being incorporated by municipalities to influence their smart cities infrastructure while solving a variety of other issues in the process. This trend will continue in the coming years as telematics provides solutions to the issues facing municipalities and contributes fundamental data to the future of urban sustainability and efficiency. **M**

**Jenny Shiner is the marketing communications manager for GPS Insight. She graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Communication and is responsible for external marketing communication for all business segments that GPS Insight targets. Contact GPS Insight, [www.gpsinsight.com](http://www.gpsinsight.com), for more information on telematics.**



# Salt and Pepper Shaker Museum Gatlinburg, Tenn.

by RAY BALOGH | The Municipal

**Nestled serenely among the picturesque Smoky Mountains lies Gatlinburg, Tenn., its 4,200 residents and the largest collection of salt and pepper shakers in the world.**

The collection started about three decades ago with a single pepper mill.

“We did not have a pepper mill at home that worked,” wrote the late Andrea Ludden, who cofounded the Salt and Pepper Shaker Museum with her husband, Rolf, in 2002, on the museum’s website.

“So off we went on a quest to find the right one. At first we found one or two, then three or four, until it became an entertainment.

“Soon we found the world of shakers, where the shapes, themes and colors are endless.”

Andrea’s background as an archaeologist enticed her to study the history and cultural significance of the shakers.

A few years later, when Andrea’s son, Alex, gave her a digital camera for Christmas, she commenced taking photos of her already sizable and steadily growing collection of salt and peppers shakers, which were sprinkled around the family home and stored in boxes beneath the house.

She took measurements and compiled meticulous notes about each of the thousands of sets.

She undertook the challenge of categorizing each set, a task perhaps rivaling that of lexicographer Peter Mark Roget compiling his first thesaurus. In fact, the museum boasts 20,000 sets of salt and pepper shakers and 1,500 pepper mills, significantly more than the 15,000 words categorized in Roget’s inaugural volume published in 1852.

Rolf, a jewelry designer by trade, was attracted by the creative artistry of the various shakers, which the Luddens collected from around the globe.



*The late Andrea Ludden, cofounder and curator of the Salt and Pepper Shaker Museum, displays one of the more than 20,000 unique sets of salt and pepper shakers at her museum in Gatlinburg, Tenn. (Photo provided)*

The museum’s welcome sign encapsulates the fascinating array of neatly arranged items on 10 levels of glass-encased shelves: “Inside you will see an amazing variety of salt and pepper shakers from the smallest to the largest, made from anything and everything you can imagine, including sea shells, light bulbs, gourds, eggs, antlers, walnut shells, bone, plastic, grass, stone, gold, silver and aluminum.”

Designs depict the factual and fictional, from U.S. presidents and Amish farmers to Winnie the Pooh and Mickey and Minnie Mouse.

Some shakers commemorate natural wonders, such as Niagara Falls and Mount St. Helens. Others depict manmade achievements like Mount Rushmore and the space program.

Also represented are thousands of species of flora and fauna from around the world.

Categories of shakers are further divided into color schemes.

**LEFT:** *The Salt and Pepper Shaker Museum in Gatlinburg, Tenn., situated near the town's entrance to the Smoky Mountains National Park, opened in 2002 and hosts more than 200 visitors a day during the summer months. (Photo provided)*

**RIGHT:** *Replicas of foodstuff from around the globe are a staple of the displays at the Salt and Pepper Shaker Museum in Gatlinburg, Tenn. (Photo provided)*

Even after the opening of the first museum in 2002, the Luddens assiduously augmented their collection, necessitating the move to its present larger location in 2004. Arranging the display at the current location took Andrea 45 days. The Luddens opened a sister museum in Spain in 2010 with a similarly sized inventory.

The website touts the primary purposes of the museums:

- “To show the changes in a society that can be found represented in shakers. As you walk through the museum you can see the changes from ancient times to the 1500s, 1800s, 1920s, 1940s, 1960s all the way to the present time.”
- “To show the variety and the creativity that can be found in salt and pepper shakers. Who were the people and artists creative enough to come up with all these amazing different shapes?”
- “To bring people together. We are all connected to salt and pepper shaker collectors ... and everyone has a memory about a salt and pepper shaker, either from their childhood or later in life.”

The museum has hosted tens of thousands of visitors since it opened near the Gatlinburg entrance to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited national park in the United States. During the summer, upwards of 200 people a day walk the display halls, which are painted black to highlight the collection.

The museum contains a gift shop where the \$3 admission — children 12 and under are free — is applied to the purchase of any salt and pepper shaker set.

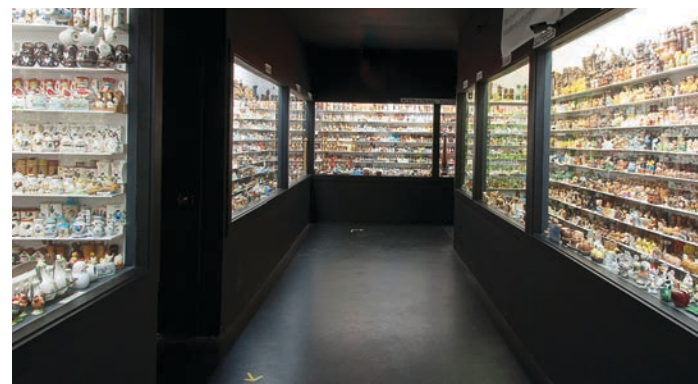
The museum's website is educational, with articles on salt, pepper and related topics. Among the interesting facts gleaned from the site:

- There are 14,000 commercial applications for salt.
- Canada is the world's largest consumer of salt. Road salt accounts for much of the total.
- Pepper is actually a berry and is grown in India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brazil.
- Peppercorns can be black, white or green, depending upon their ripeness when harvested.
- Many factors determine which shaker in a set has more holes. For example, in cultures wary of excessive salt consumption or where salt is rare, the pepper shaker has more holes.

The museum is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday with occasional weather-related closings during the winter.

The museum is located at 461 Brookside Village Way, Gatlinburg, Tenn. 

For more information, visit [www.thesaltandpeppershakermuseum.com](http://www.thesaltandpeppershakermuseum.com) or [www.facebook.com/spmuseum](http://www.facebook.com/spmuseum) or call (865) 430-5515.



*The museum's walls are painted black and its floors dotted with directional arrows to allow visitors to maximize their viewing experience. (Photo provided)*



*The Dollywood butterfly wing salt and pepper shakers, autographed by Dolly Parton, are among the variety of celebrity-inspired sets on display at the museum. (Photo provided)*



## Hiawatha, Iowa

Not every town has its greeting conveniently baked into its name.

But the founders of Hiawatha, Iowa, population 7,212, took advantage of the city's first syllable and crafted it into the city seal.

"Hi" hallmarks the spirit of the friendly town 6 miles north of Cedar Rapids.

Hiawatha is a relative newcomer to municipalities, having been incorporated in 1950, four years after founder Fay Clark "looked out onto farm fields and had a vision of houses and a highway running through a new city."

Clark, a Wisconsin transplant who had lived for two years as a teenager with Chief Red Cloud and the Winnebago Indians, had graduated from the University of Wisconsin with an architectural engineering degree.

Once he experienced his epiphany, he said, "nothing could stop me and I knew I would be a part of it."

He certainly was. Clark was instrumental in getting 45 other signatures on a petition to become Linn County's 17th incorporated municipality, named after his Hiawatha Trailer Company, which he started in a Quonset building on an 11-acre parcel just west of today's downtown area.

His 20-acre trailer court across the road housed some of the first residents of the new town.

He and his first wife, Adeline, who died in 1961, assisted veterans in obtaining homes after World War II.

Clark helped establish the Linn County Fire Association to provide fire protection to nearby rural communities; served as Hiawatha's first mayor from 1950 to 1958 and later from 1961 to 1963; and served for a time as the local justice of the peace.

Scrupulously humble throughout his life, Clark "did not take credit for this city," said former mayor and council member Tom Theis, "but I don't know who else the credit would go to."

Theis also said Clark did not want his two sons to spotlight his role in founding and building Hiawatha.

Clark was "a quiet person and a good listener," said Bev Daws, a Hiawatha resident since 1951 who maintained Clark's docket during his tenure on the bench.

He had an unconventional side to him as well. He wrote three books on astral projection and parapsychology and photographed people's auras as a hobby.

Clark died in 1991 at the age of 84, but his legacy lives on in the friendly and attentive spirit of Hiawatha.

For more information, visit [www.hiawatha-iowa.com](http://www.hiawatha-iowa.com).



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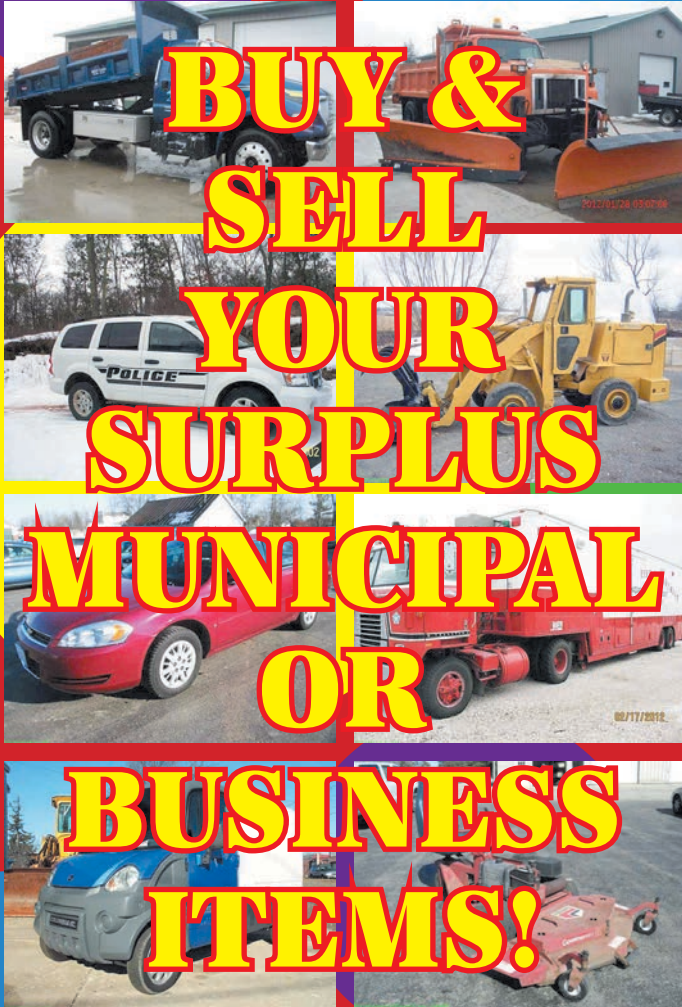
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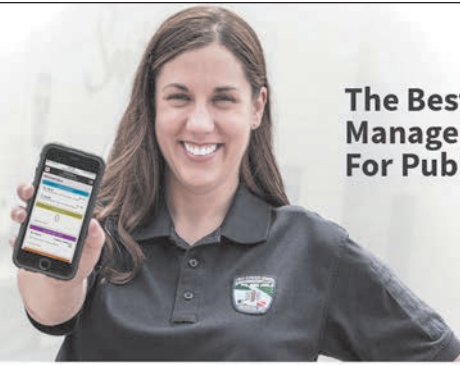
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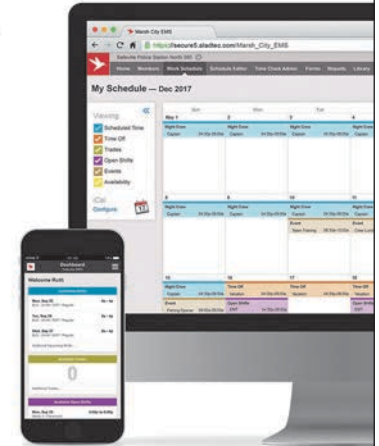


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By integrating electric vehicles into its fleet, Roanoke, Va., is estimated to have saved this amount in vehicle replacement and fuel costs.



Read more about Roanoke's and Savannah, Ga.'s experiences with electric vehicles on page 18.

**13**

In 2017, 13 K-9s died after being left in hot vehicles.

Learn how police fleets are saving lives on page 28.

**\$50,000,000**

The amount of inventory that Alabama's Department of Economic and Community Affairs' Surplus Property Division has on hand. Some of this property is sold at a fraction of its value to public entities and eligible nonprofit organizations while some items are sold at public auctions about three times a year.



Learn more about how governments are using auctions to buy and sell on page 24.

**226**

A local business owner has agreed to perform emission testing for free on all of West Haven, Conn.'s, municipal fleet of 226.

Source: patch.com/connecticut/westhaven/garage-owner-donates-emission-testing-west-haven-vehicles

**114,000**

The number of electric cars that a group of 30 U.S. cities asked automakers to create cost and feasibility estimates for in 2017. The cars would then be split among those cities. The deal is estimated to be worth \$10 billion.



Source: www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-03-14/cities-shop-for-10-billion-of-electric-vehicles

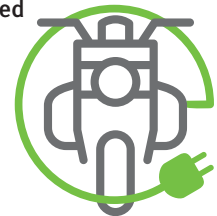
**28%**

Roughly this percentage of energy is consumed by transportation in the U.S.

Source: www.afdc.energy.gov/uploads/publication/ccn\_20\_2.pdf

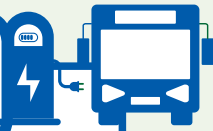
**189 miles**

Cobb County, Ga., purchased two Zero all-electric motorcycles for its police department. Used for patrols and active searches, these motorcycles have a top speed of 98 miles per hour and a range of 189 miles.



Source: www.afdc.energy.gov/uploads/publication/ccn\_20\_2.pdf

**45**



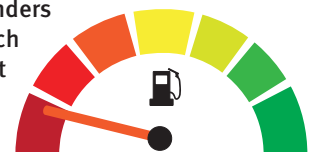
Chicago, Ill., opened up for proposals in January for 45 new electric buses in addition to the design and construction of charging systems along the bus routes.

Source: midwestenergynews.com/2018/01/04/chicago-seeks-to-expand-its-electric-bus-fleet/

**1.2 million gallons**

Texas after Hurricane Harvey led to the city's first responders having to travel to neighboring communities for fuel, which has led the city to retool its emergency fuel management plans.

Three cities share their fuel management plans on page 20.



# Cities giving fleets a zap with addition of electric vehicles



by CATEY TRAYLOR | The Municipal

**In a world that's always looking for better, faster and smarter solutions, another must-have has been added to the checklist: environmentally conscientious.**

From encouragement to recycle or compost food waste to porch lights on timers, awareness of water waste and trends like Meatless Mondays, the nation has taken note of the impact of its carbon footprint for long-term sustainability and has responded.

The nationwide shift in mindset has not been lost on municipalities. For years, city officials in Roanoke, Va., have been researching greenhouse gas emissions with citywide reductions in mind. Small changes, like switching bulbs in municipal buildings and

**LEFT:** With 12 electric cars currently in use, the city of Roanoke, Va., has installed charging stations to keep them going. If the program continues to show promise, the city may increase the number of electric vehicles to as many as 20. (Photo provided)

traffic lights to LED, have been enacted while larger changes are in the works.

"Back in 2007, we started looking at different ways to do things," Sustainable Outreach Coordinator Nell Boyle said. "We've experimented with biodiesel, bought a few hybrid and electric vehicles for various city needs and small things of that nature."

In early 2018, Roanoke officials committed to adding electric vehicles to the city's fleet to replace gas-guzzling SUVs and sedans.

"This is our first real big push to move toward a cleaner alternative fuel," Boyle said.

In the initial phase of the pilot program, the city worked with a local car dealership to buy low-mileage, used Nissan Leafs to add to a pool of vehicles shared by city employees for official business.

"We looked at all the cars that needed to be replaced in 2018 and particularly those that had very low usage and noticed they were mostly larger vehicles or SUVs," Boyle said. "It occurred to us this might be a good opportunity to invest in electric cars."

There are 12 cars currently in use in the pool. According to Boyle, 10 of the vehicles cost \$92,325 total while the two other cars, dedicated to individual staffers, cost the city \$14,300 each. Both were almost-new demonstration cars with less than 300 miles.

The switch is estimated to save the city \$150,000 in vehicle replacement and fuel costs while also reducing energy and maintenance spending by 80 percent, Boyle said.

If all goes well, the city may increase the number of electric vehicles to as many as 20.

"We're always looking for ways to reduce cost," Boyle said. "But if we can do that and lower our environmental footprint at the same time, that's even better. It's exciting to find ways to create efficiency and not only save money but do the right thing to save the environment."

In Savannah, Ga., Sustainability Director Nick Deffley, MPP, is working with partners across the city to plan the eventual implementation of electric fleet vehicles and solar



*Roanoke, Va., has invested in low-mileage, used Nissan Leafs as part of its efforts to replace gas-guzzling SUVs and sedans. The switch to electric is expected to save the city \$150,000 in vehicle replacement and fuel costs while also reducing energy and maintenance spending by 80 percent. (Photo provided)*

charging stations. The city has committed to having 15 percent of the city's fleet powered by alternative fuels or hybrid technology by 2023.

"We had to figure out which of our fleet vehicles are appropriate for conversion," Deffley said. "This year, we've dove into strategy for determining which vehicles would be good candidates and are trying to hone in on specifics. We'll be completing that process in the next few months."

Deffley said factors such as mileage, use pattern and overnight parking location have been researched, and they've identified about eight vehicles that could be the first to convert.

"We will be implementing a program in the city where we'll have a few electric vehicles to use in a variety of capacities to get a sense of how this would work logistically for us as well as what the savings would look like for both fuel and maintenance," he said.

The city will likely lease vehicles so as to be able to easily stay on top of shifts in technology as electric cars become more popular and improve year after year.

"As technologies and battery life improve in electric fleet vehicles, we want to keep on top of that," Deffley said. "Leasing gives us the flexibility to do so."

In addition to the shift in fleet vehicles, another major implementation within the city will be solar charging stations available for both public and fleet-only use.

**RIGHT:** Savannah, Ga., is also welcoming electric vehicles, with a commitment to have 15 percent of the city's fleet powered by alternative fuels or hybrid technology by 2023. (Photo provided)

"We're really buckling down into infrastructure and what it will actually take to make the charging stations a reality," Deffley said. "We want to provide both simple stations used just for fleet vehicles as well as larger stations that collect more data and are open to the public. We're figuring out what that mix will look like for us."

While the shift to electric cars sounds like a no-brainer, any sort of large-scale change requires some coaxing, according to Boyle.

"Getting everybody comfortable with the switch is a challenge," she said. "We've done a lot of homework to make this a seamless transition, but we're still seeing how this will work for everyone. We're trying to be flexible and understand the pitfalls. That's why we're doing this incrementally, so we can tweak and adjust as needed."

In all, Boyle said the behind-the-scenes work that goes into a shift of this magnitude is worth it.

"You're putting a small dent in a big problem of pollution right there in your own community," she said. "That's a big deal." **M**



# Got gas? *Managing fuel in emergencies*



*Red beach cleaners and a blue beach trash truck comb a Ocean City, Md., beach. The city has a fuel depot with four underground storage tanks and several contingency plans ready should a disaster — whether manmade or natural — disrupt fuel from reaching the island. (Photo provided)*

By DENISE FEDOROW | The Municipal

## **When disaster strikes your city, one thing that could compound the problem is not having enough fuel for emergency responders and public works vehicles. Police, fire and emergency medical personnel have to get to victims quickly and roads need to be cleared of debris so that they can.**

Last year the hurricane season was especially devastating with a greater number of consecutive hurricanes and three of the worst — Harvey, Irma and Maria — making landfall in the U.S. Fleet managers of three different communities shared how their cities weather those types of storms.

### **Plano, Texas**

When Hurricane Harvey hit land in Texas on Aug. 25, news that Gulf Coast oil production was halted created widespread panic that not only affected the hurricane-ravaged cities of Rockport, Dickinson, Beaumont, League City, Houston and other surrounding areas, but also spread hundreds of miles north.

David Garza, fleet administrative supervisor for the city of Plano, Texas, admitted the fuel shortage caught them by surprise.

“We are in the process of changing everything because of Hurricane Harvey,” he said.

The panic had everyone running for gas on the same day, creating a fuel supply line shortage even in Plano, which is approximately 260 miles north of Houston. Garza said the police chief and the fire chief were “irritated with fleet” because they couldn’t get fuel and were sent to neighboring cities to fill up.

“Three years ago the city of Plano got out of the fuel dispensing business,” said Garza, explaining that the decision was a financial one. He said some of the tanks were older and rather than replace them and deal with the

regulations required when owning fuel tanks, city officials decided to go with a fleet fuel card for city vehicles instead. The fleet fuel cards were used at local gas stations, helping local businesses.

“It was win-win,” Garza said. “Garbage trucks alone use 30 to 40 gallons a day, and the guys would go in and buy chips and drinks, too. They (the local vendors) were loving me!”

Plano has 900 vehicles in its fleet and purchases 1.2 million gallons of fuel annually.

Fleet supervisors were able to track mileage through the cards and everything was working fantastic. Until it didn’t.

Despite the standard operating procedures in place with the vendors to supply the city, when “everyone decided to get gas on the same day” and fuel ran out, fleet officials realized they needed to do something different in the future.

“There was such a huge panic, (and) once the mad rush was over, it didn’t matter what (agreements) we had,” Garza said, noting that there was no fuel.



**LEFT:** Emergency vehicles, like this Plano, Texas, fire rescue truck, were put in a bind when widespread panic about fuel shortages created a fuel shortage in Plano, Texas, resulting in fire personnel traveling to a neighboring community for fuel. (Photo provided)

### **Ocean City, Md.**

Ocean City, Md., is a barrier island and has had its share of hurricane hits, but it also gets snowstorm emergencies, too.

Catrice Parsons, procurement manager for Ocean City, is in charge of fleet management. She said the responsibility is shared, with public works handling the actual maintenance of the fleet.

Ocean City uses a fleet management system that assigns every employee a reference identification number, and every asset or vehicle also has its own identification number. Employees are given a chip key card that enables them to get fuel from the depot while the card monitors consumption.

The fuel depot has its own emergency fuel management system, and in the event of an electrical shutdown, the system can be overridden and manually pumped.

Parsons said if the fuel depot were inoperable for some reason, the city “has relationships with suppliers set up where they would track the fuel for us and we would pay by invoice.”

If the island is affected to the point where employees have to leave it to get fuel, she said they have worked out a system with the state of Maryland where the city would get charged state rates for fuel. There are certain sites where employees would go to get the state rates; the city has had to use this plan in the past.

The fuel depot has four underground storage tanks, each 10,000 gallons. There are also diesel tanks, low sulphur diesel and unleaded fuel. The eight pumps then allow the city to service the 500-600 vehicles in its fleet. Parsons said there’s a threshold established of when to order more fuel.

“We try not to get too low — we’re very cautious — especially in the summer when we’re fueling every day or every other day,” she said.

But Ocean City also got hit hard in an early January snowstorm. “We were shut down on Jan. 4, and there were limited resources on the island. We had limited operations on Jan. 5 and through the next week, which is unusual for Ocean City.”

The city is also susceptible to flooding because of the low water table, and Parsons noted, “In today’s age, acts of terrorism and violence are also a threat to the fuel supply.”

Ocean City owns a 1,000-gallon fuel truck that it takes out to top off generators and other city-owned facilities when a storm is on the way.

Her advice is to reach out to others and discuss what they do in an emergency. “I always say you don’t know what you don’t know — don’t rely on your own knowledge alone.”

### **Miramar, Fla.**

The city of Miramar in south Florida, just north of Miami and west of Fort Lauderdale, has an emergency fuel management plan in place.

Assistant Director of Public Works Kirk Hobson-Garcia said the city has three emergency tanks that employees fill up at the start of hurricane season, June 1, and empty at the end of the season, Nov. 30. All are 10,000-gallon tanks — one for diesel and two for unleaded. ▶

Garza said the hurricane itself had no effect on the city, but they hadn’t calculated on the panic it would trigger.

“We learned that we have to have a stockpile of fuel for our first responders — at least one tank somewhere in the city.

He recalled that when the city was taking its last tank out of the ground, someone had asked ‘Are you sure?’ However, the mindset at that time was if the gas stations can’t get gas, the city wouldn’t be able to either.

Garza said that refuse collection alone uses 7,000 gallons of fuel each week. The lesson learned is an expensive one. He said those few days of having to send first responders to another community were costly. He also anticipates it could cost millions to get back into the fuel dispensing business by the time they get the approvals from the Environmental Protection Agency and other costs.

To Plano’s advantage the city is doing well fiscally right now. Garza said it is the most densely populated city in the state of Texas.

“If I was a mayor of a small town somewhere, I’d sure want to have a supply of fuel in reserves,” Garza said.

However, he pointed out that, because of low sulphur and alcohol content in the gas, the fuel can go bad so it’s not like it can sit there for years waiting for that catastrophic tornado or ice storm to hit. If a community has a reserve fuel supply, it has to use the fuel during non-emergencies to rotate it and keep it from going bad.

The city of Plano is being given a “hot off the presses proposal to get a fuel tank and a fuel tanker truck” — this would give the city more options. In the situation that happened in August, employees could’ve driven the fuel tanker truck somewhere else to fill it up and then bring it back to dispense to emergency responders.

Garza said that is a good suggestion for other municipalities as well. “They wouldn’t need to have storage tanks, just have a tanker truck sitting empty and in the event of an emergency go fill it up and dispense right from the truck. Then there’d be no worry about rotating fuel.”

Part of the proposal calls for the continued use of the fleet fuel cards at local vendors, too.

“We did learn that things can happen that you’re not prepared for,” Garza said. “This was completely off our radar having this widespread panic.”

Extra fuel is ordered during the hurricane season to make sure the tanks stay filled.

Aside from the emergency tanks, Hobson-Garcia said, “We have sufficient fuel in each tank to last for several weeks.”

The unleaded tank has a 10-day capacity and the diesel a 14-day capacity. The fuel depot has 14 dispensers. The city also has its own fuel truck that can hold 2,000 gallons of unleaded gasoline and 1,000 gallons of diesel. In case of disruption of fuel delivery to Miramar, they can send the truck out to other communities to bring fuel back.

Hobson-Garcia said they have a standard operating procedure when they hear news of a potential storm approaching.

“Typically what we do is have all the staff come in and fill up all the vehicles then we order fuel to top off the tanks,” he said. “Then we use our fuel truck to deliver fuel around to all our facilities to fill generators and fuel tanks.”

Hobson-Garcia and another assistant director, Tenelle Decoste, said when Hurricane Wilma hit in 2005, it was an eye-opener. During that hurricane, the city realized “we weren’t as prepared as we could’ve been,” and afterwards, it invested in the emergency tanks for hurricane season.

The cost to install the three emergency tanks, including engineering and permitting, was \$193,254.08.

The approximate annual cost to maintain the city’s fuel depot is about \$40,600 and an additional \$4,000 a year for permits and licensing. To maintain the building with the emergency tanks and generators costs the city about \$59,000 a year with an additional \$6,300 in licenses and permits from the state and county. The cost to purchase the tanker truck was approximately \$135,000.

The fuel depot is on a backup generator system in case of a power outage. Hobson-Garcia said the fuel tanks are on a wireless system so measurements can be taken from the office rather than going out and doing it manually. During Hurricane Irma, every shift change brought incident command updates on fuel levels.

The city was without power for a week or so during Hurricane Irma. Local gas stations were out of fuel for a couple of days, so city employees were given a ration of fuel for their personal vehicles to get back and forth to work. They were working 12-hour shifts for about two weeks and in between needed to check on their families and homes.

Hobson-Garcia said employees cleaned up 362,000 yards of debris after the hurricane. Personnel also kept in contact with other



Miramar, Fla., has its own fuel depot that has 14 dispensers. Having the capacity to keep city vehicles running is critical during an emergency situation. (Photo provided)

local suppliers in case something happened at Port Everglades and fuel couldn’t get to them.

Hobson-Garcia advised that municipalities “should look at the quantity needed if there were a catastrophe and ask, ‘Do we have sufficient infrastructure to support us for at least a week without getting help from outside?’”

Miramar chose 10 days as a minimum, and he said, “So far it’s been working — we’ve never run out of fuel.” The lowest the city has gotten is 50 percent, and he said, though people were worried, things were up and running again in another day or two.

He recommended having a fuel depot. “If you do lose power, you can still dispatch to emergency responders,” he said, adding that every city has to determine its comfort level of being able to keep vehicles on the road.

“You don’t even have to have a full depot,” Hobson-Garcia said. “If you’re getting good market value prices, one storage tank with a dispenser might be good enough, and the size of the tank determines how long you want to be self-sufficient.”

The fleet managers of these three communities have all had to face emergencies — natural and man-made — while still getting first responders to victims and clearing roads of debris.

Their advice can be summed up in the words of Decoste: “Be prepared for the worst.” **M**

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## **Sold! Auctions popular with cities looking to buy and sell fleet vehicles**

By LAUREN CAGGIANO | The Municipal





**LEFT:** Pictured is a fire apparatus that was recently featured in a Wisconsin Surplus auction. If a city is aiming to purchase a used vehicle in an auction, it should always look at it before placing a bid. (Photo provided)

## **Auctions can be a viable means for cash-strapped municipal governments to buy and sell used equipment. On the selling side, an auction is a good way to turn idle, surplus assets into revenue. And the purchasing side bears its own fruits.**

“It’s a good way to look for equipment you don’t use a lot,” said William Faltz, manager of Wisconsin Surplus Online Auctions. “You can find awfully good used equipment (at auctions).”

Wisconsin Surplus is a family-run, full-service auction company based in Mount Horeb, Wis., that has been in operations since 2004. The company specializes in selling items/property for state and local municipalities via online auction. It also offers onsite auctions or use of its auction sales lot/warehouses.

Faltz has seen his share of equipment in his time with the company. He said previously owned equipment can be a diamond in the rough “because municipals are good about maintaining equipment. So, you’re in good hands there. There’s a lot of stuff out there waiting to be had.”

No two auctions are the same. Each auction has its own set of terms and conditions—you must read them before bidding. By bidding, you are agreeing to the all the terms and conditions for the respective auction.

Of course, with any significant investment comes the need for due diligence. For this reason, Faltz recommends purchasing agents do their homework. That means test driving whenever possible. “Always look at it before purchasing,” he said. Ask as many questions as possible in advance and have a clear idea of what you want before you enter into a transaction, he added. That includes a budget or at least a ballpark figure of how much you can spend.

The dealer’s qualifications and reputation should enter the equation as well. That means compliance with government regulation, if applicable. Most states, but not all, require that an auctioneer have a license, and even some municipalities require a license.

Word-of-mouth reputation and online reviews can be telling. Faltz recommends asking for references from other agencies. Speaking of reputation, Faltz said that, on the balance, municipalities on the selling end do not raise concerns. “In most cases, we rely on the municipality to be honest,” he said.

The company also facilitates the transaction by taking care of things like safety inspections and listings. It can even handle the payment

logistics side if needed. Faltz said they have auctioned off everything from fire trucks to Zamboni machines. Some items are in better condition than others. Oftentimes, they are mechanically sound but need some exterior work. “We’ve sold squad cars that ran into concrete tunnels,” he said.

It’s a matter of supply and demand. And in most cases, Faltz said they can move equipment in two weeks or less. Sometimes purchasing managers are looking for something very specific not found on the traditional market. For this reason, Faltz said keeping an open mind is key. “Because there’s someone out there willing to buy,” he said.

Government agencies around the country are turning to auctions for liquidating and/or acquiring inventory. For instance, Middletown, Ohio, reported a success story with online auctions as shared in *The Municipal*, which can be read at [www.themunicipal.com/2012/11/surplus-equipment-sales-help-cities-stretch-budgets/](http://www.themunicipal.com/2012/11/surplus-equipment-sales-help-cities-stretch-budgets/). The town made \$1 million in revenue from the sale of surplus items after it used an auction site in 2005.

Alabama’s Department of Economic and Community Affairs consistently relies on auctions for turning inventory into income. ADECA’s Surplus Property Division is responsible for the sale of all property declared excess by state agencies that participate in the surplus property program. The department handles the transfer of all federal surplus property allocated to the state from both military bases and federal agencies. According to its website, at any given the department has about \$50,000,000 in inventory on hand. This program is a boon for the state because it saves Alabama taxpayers millions of dollars annually by selling this property for a fraction of its value to public entities and eligible nonprofit organizations. ADECA conducts public auctions about three times a year, but surplus items are available at any time to municipal and county governments, state agencies and qualified nonprofit organizations.

Many other cities have also begun to add upcoming auctions to their websites as a means of drawing more potential bidders. With a variety of auction companies available to choose from, municipalities are likely to find a partnership that is right for them and lucrative. **M**

# Downsizing apparatuses and other fire department fleet trends



By **BARB SIEMINSKI** | The Municipal

**It is human nature when buying a new car to wish for all the bells and whistles, the more with which to impress your next-door neighbor. And don't forget after-factory add-ons like a booming stereo, GPS navigation system and maybe even an in-dash video.**

Fire departments have faced similar decisions when a new apparatus was needed, pouring through the catalogs looking for all the latest, biggest and most technological gear for their fleets, even if they are “only” considering a previously owned heavy-duty rescue truck.

The tide appears to be changing in some fire departments over the country. Where fire department fleets once were made up of large, heavily outfitted trucks, some are now downsizing to rapid response vehicles.

Part of this may be due to (1) a decrease in the number of available personnel; (2) career personnel who leave a smaller department for a larger department with better pay; (3) those career personnel who retire; and (4) departments achieving the same end with

smaller apparatuses because keeping a larger vehicle is cost-prohibitive.

Battalion Chief Robert Avsec, retired, not only served with the Chesterfield, Va., Fire and EMS Department for 26 years, but he has also been an instructor for fire, EMS and hazardous materials at the local, state and federal levels, including more than 10 years with the National Fire Academy.

Though retired, Avsec, a freelance writer, keeps in close touch with the fire career arena overall and offered some thoughts when asked about the trend toward downsizing

“I believe that rapid response vehicles are an increasingly attractive apparatus replacement option for many fire departments, especially volunteer-staffed departments,” said Avsec.



*Robert Avsec, Battalion Chief, retired, of Chesterfield, Va.*

“It’s very difficult for smaller departments to train drivers/operators and for those folks to maintain a high level of competency operating today’s massive fire apparatus.”

Additional advantages of a smaller chassis include more maneuverability; more economical benefits where cost, fuel and insurance are concerned; and increased safety when operating it, with Avsec noting that a fully equipped fire engine/pumper can weigh 25 tons whereas an average mid-sized car’s curb weight only tips the scales at 3.4 tons.

**LEFT:** Rapid response vehicles are not only offering better maneuverability, but also savings in costs when it comes to fuel and insurance. Pictured is 2006 F-550 4x4 that had been sold for Somers, Conn.; it is now serving in Warwick, Mass. (Photo provided by Fire Tec)

**RIGHT:** This 1995 F-450 4x4 was owned by Pine Village Volunteer Fire Department of Indiana before being sold to Ryland Heights Fire Department in Kentucky. Many rural volunteer fire departments are finding rapid response vehicles to be handy, especially if they are contending with more difficult terrain. (Photo provided by Fire Tec)



*This 2005 F-550 — sold for Smithton Volunteer Fire Department of Pennsylvania — now serves with Patoka Township Fire Department, located in Indiana. (Photo provided by Fire Tec)*

Barb Bauman of Fire Tec is one of the company's Fire Truck Ladies who is in charge of selling used fire trucks and apparatuses, including ambulances, wildland/brush vehicles, tankers, aerials and more. Fire Tec does not own any apparatus, per se, but acts as a broker among fire departments across the country. Though she has not noticed the downsizing trend too much in her business, she offered some comments.

"Rapid response vehicles have always been good sellers, partly due to the fact that they are usually 4x4, can go places (that) can be a challenge to Type 1 engines and they can still offer good storage space for rescue tools," said Bauman.

"Also, these units are easy to drive and have the ability to reach rural areas in small communities; a majority of our buyers are small volunteer fire departments, which often means that they are dealing with dirt roads and hills. Some of these smaller fire departments have very large service areas, and many need to fight brushfires. The 4x4 'mini

pumper' can be an essential piece, but we have not heard our customers express that they are switching to these units for the purpose of downsizing fleets; they still need full-size tankers and pumpers in order to bring water to the scene in rural America, where there are no hydrants."

The mini-pumper, as Avsec pointed out, was the original terminology used to describe today's rapid response vehicle, and with technological changes, this leaner and still fully capable truck has become an acceptable option to the larger full-size fire apparatus.

"Improvements in fire suppression technology enable fire apparatus manufacturers to put 'the big fire apparatus capabilities' into these smaller vehicles," said Avsec. "I'm speaking of PTO pumps and integrated hydraulic technology."

Bauman said she went through her "last 20-30 recent sales, and they were not selling to downsize, but we always have fire departments in need of good used apparatus, and there don't seem to be enough units to fill the demand."

Fire Chief Steven M. Wanczyk, BCO of the borough of Bridgeport, Pa., Fire Department, noted that his department is one of two independently chartered fire companies.

"Currently Bridgeport doesn't have a rescue vehicle, so we have agreements with the boroughs of Norristown and Upper Merion Township," said Wanczyk, "and they both have rescue vehicles and have mutual aid agreements for any vehicle and residential rescue vehicles.

"We don't actually use their trucks; they are dispatched along with our department and bring their own personnel."

Last June, the Bridgeport Fire Department planned on downsizing its fleet with its three Class A pumpers being reduced to two and one of the two utility vehicles will be sold, according to Wanczyk. That department of two chartered fire companies — Bridgeport Fire Co. No. 1 and Good Will Fire Co. — uses equipment-sharing with a fleet of one quint, two engines, one utility truck and a command unit. **M**



# Saving dogs that save lives

By ELISA WALKER | The Municipal

**Due to being left in hot vehicles, there were a total of 13 K-9 deaths in 2017. Their preventable deaths weren't only a blow to hearts everywhere, but also a blow to the departments' reputation and finances. The technology for heat alarm systems has been available for years, and while systems can malfunction, it's another step in the right direction to protect life-saving dogs.**

## Technology and tactics

With a wide variety of systems available, it can be difficult to decide which one would be the best fit while staying within a budget. The reviews on the systems will be the ultimate deciding factor as officers pull together to share information that will help others. The Canfield Police Department, Canfield, Ohio, has invested in the AceK9 HOT-N-POP PRO system since 2004, after reading the positive reviews.

"We looked at the reviews and this system seemed most up-to-date with the best ratings," explained Chad Debar, K-9 officer. "They all recommended it by saying it has the best

warranty, safety and overall system. We've had no issues with it. With today's technology, no dogs should die in cars. It should be mandatory for any police department with a dog to have a system in the cruisers."

The system is wired through the cruiser with heat dual sensors installed in the back of the cage to monitor heat temperatures. On a pager-like monitor, a warning will appear and vibrate if the car has exceeded the set temperature in the vehicle. Meanwhile, the alarm system will set off the cruiser's siren and flashing lights, dropping the windows down to release the hot air while catching the attention of passersby.

*ABOVE: K-9s and their handlers form a bond based on trust, loyalty and understanding. While it's easy to understand that relaxing is on a handler's mind after a long shift, they should remember that their partner would like to relax with them and not be forgotten. (Shutterstock.com)*

An additional feature is a button on the center console and monitor that will pop the back passenger door open, letting the canine out to assist the handler when necessary—a helpful feature if the handler finds themselves with their hands full and in need of backup. The system can be programmed to work either when the car is running or turned off. When it's set to "manually turned off," it can result in a dead battery if forgotten. Debar commented that during the hot summer months, he programs the system to be manually turned off since that's the most worrisome time for K-9s.

"What's really going to kill the canine is if they're stuck in the back in heat. The heat is what you have to be aware of and pay attention


to with your dog,” Debar elaborated. “We form a bond with these dogs. They’re our partner and part of the family. It doesn’t look good for your department if that poor animal dies because of your ignorance and laziness on not checking on them. Even with the system, I still check on my dog in the heat every 20 minutes to ease my own mind in making sure he has water.

“If I’m on station and it’s really hot outside, I’ll bring my dog. I have a crate where I can put him so I know he’s okay. Your cruiser malfunctioning is what mostly happens when you hear about these stories of officers finding their dogs suffocated. They left their vehicle for a long period of time and they had these systems, but the car could turn off and the system may not detect that. Don’t think, ‘I have this system so he’s okay.’ They’re not 100 percent reliable. The only thing that’s 100 percent reliable is you checking on your dog. Don’t be complacent. Go check on them.”

Heat alarm systems are more common in K-9 cruisers, but deaths still occur due to a malfunction in the system, vehicle or both. If the system is set to turn off when the vehicle does and the engine malfunctions, that leaves the dog vulnerable without the handler ever knowing. Handlers will often rely heavily on the system and not check on their partner for hours.

“The HOT-N-POP PRO system has been instrumental in saving dog’s lives, and even if they’re safe with mechanical systems and alarms, the dog needs to be checked on regularly,” said John Brannon, master trainer and owner of Shallow Creek Kennels Inc., Sharpville, Pa. “The biggest thing is leaving the back windows down halfway, even on the hottest days. That allows the car to breathe even if the engine or alarm were to fail, then the dog isn’t locked in a sealed car. Another big thing is being diligent and check on the dog every 15-20 minutes during extreme temperatures.”

Brannon added that departments should spend money on a quality product as the benefits and cost analysis throughout the years will not only save money, but the dog’s life as well. Funding may be difficult to come by, but local organizations have been known to donate money to keep dogs safe and healthy. When knowing the cause will benefit an animal, several dog lovers won’t hesitate to give as much as they can at the moment. There are also grants available that can assist the unit.

“Research these systems,” advised Debar. “There’s always newer stuff coming out. Some police departments may not have big budgets and may not get a lot of donations, but the last thing a department wants to do is be cheap on this equipment when it can save a dog’s life. People love animals, and when we show them how the dogs work, what they can do and where they came from, they’re almost always willing to donate toward K-9s.” 

## Safety Tactics

- Getting into the routine of always checking the back seat at the end of the shift
- Routine maintenance checks over the system equipment
- Checking on the dog frequently during shift
- Get trained by mechanics over the basic system inspections



*The HOT-N-POP PRO system is highly regarded, but there are other systems available as well. Reading reviews and thoroughly comparing systems will lead the department to select the right one for them. (Acek9.com)*



*The thought of their dog dying in the back of a cruiser is unbearable for several handlers, which should only push them to continue to constantly check on their dog’s condition and safety so they can continue their partnership. (Shutterstock.com)*



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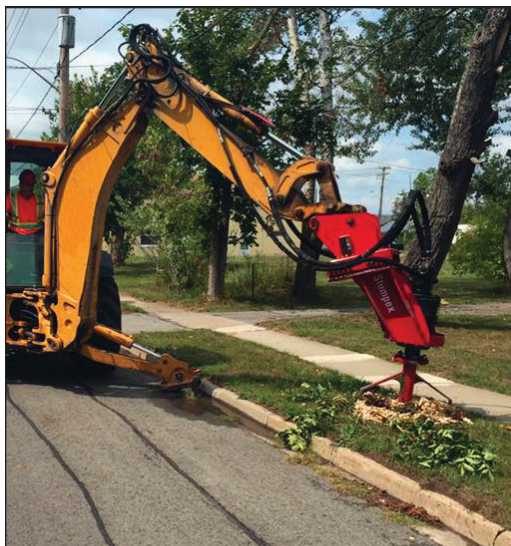


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-----Nicholas Mancuso, Service Manager, Municipal Repairs Town of Kent



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# Truck Diagnostic and Beyond

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# Communicating vital is key to handling abandoned utilities

By ELISA WALKER | The Municipal

**T**HE POTENTIAL DANGERS THAT LIE JUST BENEATH THE ground can no longer be ignored. As facilities have turned to implementing more and more underground utilities, they've begun to encounter not only abandoned utilities but unmarked ones, as well — leading to the danger of mistaking an unmarked line as abandoned when it could very much be alive. The unfortunate part of this situation is that there is still a great lack of awareness and concern over how it can impact construction workers and nearby residents.

## The problem isn't just abandoned utilities

Lack of communication creates gaps in imperative information and unnecessary confusion. The best methods for handling abandoned utilities relies heavily on solid communication of accurate information from all parties, which includes line descriptions or adding abandoned utilities into mapping systems. Without communication there's room for small mistakes, resulting in construction project delays and perilous mistakes, which could fatally harm contractors and local residents.

Nonprofit organizations in several states are working to bring awareness and help to the issue of abandoned utilities. These organizations strive to prevent utility damage while bridging the gap in communication. One call and 811 systems are available in several states to inform people about the laws on digging and caution everyone to contact them or a locator before digging. 811s exist specifically to assist with utility locating, information, marking and more. Places like the National Utility Locating Contractors Association in Kansas City, Mo., also have experts with over 20 decades of experience in the industry. These kinds of organizations network

**ABOVE:** With utility lines being intertwined and jumbled together, the underground network can already be messy and confusing. It's important to record all the correct information to avoid that confusion, which could lead to larger problems. (Shutterstock.com)

together with the American Public Works Association to stay on top of this growing issue.

"When you're dealing with abandoned utilities from the perspective of encountering them, it would be best to have effective communication with the locators," commented Ron Peterson, executive director of NULCA. "Information is power in damage prevention so the more information we can give to the person who's digging, the better off we are.

"Unfortunately, some utility clients don't want to provide key information, such as the live facility being a 4-inch polyethylene line. They just put a paint mark on the ground, which doesn't give much information. If you can get more information before you start your excavation, as far as what the construct and size of the utility is, that'll help you ahead of time."

Having been involved in the industry for a while, Peterson has witnessed quite a lot in his time. He recalled a situation years ago when a contractor had a locate request in an urban area. After the locators had marked the lines, the contractor began digging only to discover there weren't just two lines of gas and water but a third unknown line. All three were of similar size and make, which resulted in confusion in trying to tell them apart.



Ron Peterson,  
executive director  
of NULCA



# information



**ABOVE:** Marking utility lines above ground isn't always enough. Sometimes the different lines can be of the same build, which doesn't help the contractor. Every available piece of information should be accessible to avoid any delays or other issues. (Shutterstock.com)

**RIGHT:** Abandoned utilities reduce the available underground space, hinder live facilities and may contaminate the soil if they aren't properly taken care of. (Shutterstock.com)

The contractor connected with the gas and water companies to discover which of the lines were live and which one wasn't. Unfortunately, they were given bad information that resulted in them cutting through a live gas line. While no one was hurt, it showed the potential danger of what could've happened due to the companies not taking the initiative to work with the contractor.

"I think part of the problem we come into in this society is that everybody is so litigious and afraid of litigation that they're not willing to step up and make the judgement or do the research to verify whether a line is live or not," Peterson explained. "They're afraid something's going to come back on them when it should be more about working together. They don't want to step out there and say they don't know which line is live and which isn't, which results in protecting all the lines. That poses as a problem if that line is going through the path of a proposed sewer line, which has to have a very specific location. It's all communication related."

He went on to elaborate as to why some lines hadn't been mapped. "There's motivation in telecommunications, for example, to not put them on the maps. A lot of times their taxes and tariffs are based on mapping. If they include a private utility on there, they may have a higher tariff or tax. So sometimes we work against what's right for the industry by putting these taxes in and making it less desirable when we should be making it more desirable to map them."



The lack of effective communication doesn't just fall on one particular party. Everyone, from the municipality to the contractor to the locators to the facilities, can be to blame for bad communication, which is why organizations like NULCA and 811 exist. Communication and working together is necessary especially when it can minimize the chances of detrimental damage.

Municipalities can work with their utility providers by listening closely and updating their mapping systems of not only known live lines but also abandoned lines, as that knowledge will be beneficial in the future. They can also become a part of one call systems, along with other organizations, to be kept in the loop of shared and up-to-date information on live and abandoned utilities.


## Looking into the future of the underground

Addressing the problem of abandoned utilities is still in its infancy. There's still an overwhelming amount of places that don't see the ▶

importance yet, which could cause even more problems in the future if actions aren't taken as soon as possible. It shouldn't take a death, explosion or property damage to realize that more facilities are going underground — meaning there will be more interaction with abandoned utilities as well as problems for new lines, systems and right of ways.

With thousands of miles of abandoned facilities that aren't accounted for, it's a strenuous challenge to locate and take care of, but it's possible. Abandoned utilities can be resolved through mapping systems, removal of the utility or the possibility of another facility taking it over.

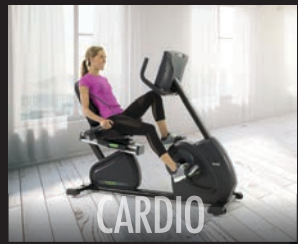
Peterson shared a particular situation where communication created a great opportunity. When a gas company decided to abandon a 4-inch steel line in an urban area, it let that information be known. Since that information was in the open, a telecommunications company was able to buy the facility and use it as a conduit. The company repurposed the gas line and made the abandoned facility active in a different way.

"In 1979, there weren't a lot of underground utilities so people just took it for granted," said Peterson. "Now we have more going into the ground with different types, like fiber optic cables and steel lines. That's going to continue to be a problem. We need to be addressing this to stay ahead in keeping our excavators and public safe." 



To avoid future issues with abandoned utilities, communicate to all parties and get in contact with the state's 811 organization to become better informed. (Shutterstock.com)

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# The good life:

## Johns Creek, Ga., named one of the nation's '50 Best Places to Live'

By JULIE YOUNG | The Municipal

**With a nationally ranked public school system, premier municipal services, a wide range of housing options and commercial enterprises as well as a diverse population of residents who call it home, it's no surprise that Johns Creek, Ga., has been named one of the "50 Best Places to live in America" for the second year in a row.**

"I wish I could take credit for that distinction in some small way, but I can't," Johns Creek Mayor Mike Bodker said. "Johns Creek is a great community with great people. I always say when you are in Johns Creek, you are in a little bit of paradise."

Located in Fulton County along the Chattahoochee River, Johns Creek was a picturesque suburb of north Georgia that enjoyed a reputation as a social and educational hub of the Atlanta region. It was the schools that encouraged families like Bodker's folks to settle in the area and was the reason Bodker choose to live next door to a brand-new elementary school when he became a parent himself.

"Everyone wants a great education for his or her kids, and the schools of Johns Creek are the best of the best," he said. "We have four high schools that are all ranked in the top 20 nationally, and two of those schools are in the top 10. We also have some of the best private schools in the state, which attracts a broad spectrum of residents to the area. Great schools bring great people and that makes for an exceptional city."



*Johns Creek, Ga., was incorporated in March 2006 and officially began operations on Dec. 1, 2006. Pictured is its city hall. (Public Domain via English Wikimedia Commons)*

In 1981, a group of graduates from the Georgia Institute of Technology purchased 1,700 acres for a mix-use/industrial park that became known as Johns Creek and home to a number of Fortune 100 companies. The space encouraged additional development in the area and the desire to incorporate as an autonomous city. After nearby Sandy Springs achieved cityhood in 2005, the grassroots effort to incorporate Johns Creek reached a fever pitch. In March 2006, the bill to incorporate passed legislation and was signed by former Gov. Sonny Perdue. The first community officials were elected in November, and on Dec. 1, 2006, the city of Johns Creek began operations.

Johns Creek was approximately 80 percent developed by the time it became a city, so it was not as if it had a blank canvas upon which to draw. However, it was allowed to start its various departments from scratch and was able to create the kind of city residents envisioned as opposed to revamping an existing system.

"That was key," Bodker said. "We were very deliberate in the kind of people we hired to put these entities into place. We wanted folks who would work tirelessly and with intention to help build the kind of city in which we could take pride."

As a result, Johns Creek is one of the safest cities in the state of Georgia, a distinction that Bodker wears with pride. When the

Johns Creek Police Department was launched, Bodker challenged each officer to model the behavior they expect from the public. No matter if they were on or off duty, he wanted the residents of Johns Creek to see their officers as the very backbone of the community.

“I want them to treat people, who may be in the middle of their worst moment, in the best possible way and to respect them as human beings even if they are not being respectful in return. Believe me, it makes a big difference in outcomes.”


The JCPD has achieved the accreditation of Excellence through the Gold Standards Process by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. According to a press release, there are approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the nation and only 3.7 percent achieve accreditation through CALEA. The prestigious Advanced Accreditation with Excellence distinction is awarded to only 10-12 percent of the accredited agencies.

“That means a lot to us,” Bodker said. “It means that our police department upholds the highest standards. If one of our officers has to draw his or her weapon, it has to be noted with an explanation as to what happened. In every incident, I am pleased to say that no weapon was ever discharged.”

Another thing that sets Johns Creek apart is the vested interest each resident feels to the community. As one of the wealthiest cities in the state, Bodker joked that Johns Creek is the Beverly Hills of Georgia, but even with its considerable resources, those in city government have to be good stewards of every penny. One of the reasons citizens wanted autonomy was in order to have a stake in the continued growth of the community so they pay considerable attention to how their taxes are administered.

“The citizens of Johns Creek are wealthy. The government is not. In fact, about half of the people who work with the government are not on the payroll. We have developed a number of private and public partnerships that are more cost effective than hiring additional employees,” he said.

Over the past few years, Johns Creek has doubled its city park system and has invested in streetscape beautification efforts that add ambiance to the area and continue to make it an enviable place to call home. Johns Creek has a different feel to it, and that feeling is very deliberate on the part of the people who love and work there.

“Naturally we are not perfect. We have our share of negative elements that affect society at large, but we are working to identify and eliminate those problems in an effective manner. One thing is certain, when the residents of Johns Creek harness their energy, they are unstoppable,” Bodker said. 

## The city of Johns Creek, Ga.

Incorporated: March 2006

Mayor: Mike Bodker

Area: 31.3 square miles

Approximate Population: 84,000

Top Employers: State Farm, Alcon, Macy's Systems and Technology, Kroger, Emory (Johns Creek Hospital)



*Residents of Johns Creek enjoy a summer concert. Since its incorporation, Johns Creek has doubled its city park system. (Photo provided)*



*Its stellar schools are just one reason people are flocking to Johns Creek, Ga. Pictured is Northview High School, which U.S. News & World Report has ranked eighth within the state of Georgia. (Public Domain via English Wikimedia Commons)*



*A vendor has set up shop with fresh vegetables at Johns Creek's farmer's market, which was held last summer at Mark Burkhalter Amphitheater at Newtown Park. (Photo provided)*



*The aviation industry can prove to be an economic boost, creating jobs and bringing in income. Cities can tap into this with a municipal airport of their own. (Shutterstock.com)*

# Municipal airports can bring soaring economic benefits

By ANDREW MENTOCK | The Municipal

**Municipal airports are often an integral part of smaller communities throughout the United States. While many of them simply contain grass runways or a single hangar, they still provide an invaluable service.**

Take Mount Pleasant Municipal Airport in Isabella County, Mich. It's small enough to be run by one full-time employee, it's manager, Bill Brickner. Yet, it's still able to provide the community with significant economic opportunities.

"The MDOT Bureau of Aeronautics did a study last year and came back with an

approximation of how much money our airport brought in," said Brickner. "That number for the surrounding community is \$8 million a year."

According to Brickner, the study was conducted by analyzing how many aircrafts arrived at the airport per year, how many jobs that created and how much

money was actually brought in due to the aircrafts.

"A large part of (it is) convenience. In Isabella County, we have probably two of the larger stainless steel restaurant manufacturers in the United States as well as two of the larger wood chipper manufacturers," Brickner said. "There are times when they need to get certain parts out real quick, and because we're here, they can get their products where they need to be in a very timely manner."

In addition to Isabella County's large manufacturers, the area includes a casino,



*Start Skydiving calls the Middletown Regional Airport in Middletown, Ohio, home. This organization brings in roughly 30,000 to 40,000 customers each year. (Photo provided)*



**ABOVE AND BELOW:** *The presence of Start Skydiving at the Middletown Regional Airport in Ohio brings customers to the city's hotels, restaurants and other businesses. (Photos provided)*

Central Michigan University and several other businesses that all utilize the airport on a regular basis.

Small municipal airports can also bring in business through skydiving. Start Skydiving, located at Middletown Regional Airport in Middletown, Ohio, brings in roughly 30,000 to 40,000 customers each year.

"Those people stay in hotels, eat food and do all kinds of things," said Gene Newsom, the manager at Middletown Regional Airport, which also has seven to eight commercial flights land per day.

Operationally, it isn't much different for a municipal airport to also contain a skydiving business. Managers like Newsome will still need to keep the buildings maintained, planes fueled and passengers taken care of.

One of the largest tasks for municipal airports is keeping runways cleared, especially in places that receive a significant amount of snowfall, such as in the state of Ohio or Isabella County, Mich.

"A runway isn't like a road," said Brickner. "We can't put salt or anything coercive on the runway. So if we get a little bit of snow, we have to get right after it and get it cleaned off."

To put this in perspective, the runway at Mount Pleasant Municipal Airport is 100 feet wide by 5,000 feet long. In a pinch, Brickner can utilize three on-call workers and a contractor with a plow truck. He also has one part-time employee, working about 20 hours per week. However, he's frequently the only person there to keep the runway clear.

Brickner's other responsibilities include maintaining over 320 lights along the runway and taxiway, mowing the grass, unloading and loading luggage, towing and fueling airplanes, testing fuel tanks and even cleaning the bathrooms.

In order to fund maintenance and airport improvements, Mount Pleasant Municipal Airport is given a certain amount of funding per year.

"The state of Michigan is a block grant state. We're allocated \$150,000 a year to do capital improvement projects," Brickner said. "That maintains our runways and fixes cracks or pavement markings. We can even potentially repave the runway with some of that money."

In order to effectively budget the money the airport receives, Brickner is constantly looking five years ahead and trying to anticipate potential repairs and maintenance.



The airport can roll over it's \$150,000 for a total of three years, meaning it can designate up to \$450,000 toward one initiative if it needs to. However, the decision of how to spend the money isn't solely up to Brickner. The MDOT Bureau of Aeronautics and the city of Mount Pleasant also get a say.

Additional airport repair and maintenance funds can come from the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe, which owns and operates the local Soaring Eagle Casino. In order to receive these funds, the airport needs to apply for them. This extra financial support can come in handy in case there's an emergency, such as a natural disaster inflicting damage onto a building or the runway.

An incredible amount of time energy and money goes into running a municipal airport, but given all they provide for the community, it seems worth it, especially since one dedicated worker can manage a majority of airport responsibilities. **M**

# Cities remain active in discouraging pests and maintaining pest control



By NICHOLETTE CARLSON | The Municipal

**Pests, such as rodents and geese, have become problems in urban areas that municipalities have been grappling with for years. While pest control tends to fall under the parks department purview, other city agencies are also responsible for pests in the areas they oversee.**

“The city of New Haven, through individual city departments, maintains pest management contracts with local vendors to monitor and address the problem of rodents, bees and other insects, raccoons, skunks and other scavengers,” Laurence Grotheer, director of communications in New Haven, Conn., said, noting each department is responsible for controlling the pests in the areas that it oversees.

Grotheer continued, “The city’s department of parks, recreation and trees has responsibility for public safety and aesthetics in city parks and other outdoor areas. The livable city initiative has responsibility for housing code compliance. And the

health department has responsibility for health code compliance. Some pests are very likely to be seen—for instance, a bee’s nest. In other instances, there is evidence of the presence of pests—for instance, topped trash cans and strewn garbage. And yes, some pests are more active at certain times of the year and then dormant at other times.”

Currently, attention has been drawn to an increase in the rodent population. This increase is due to three primary factors. One is active road construction. According to Grotheer, “Construction often disrupts habitat and the availability of food, causing pest migration and relocation.”

Secondly, a hawk, a rodent’s natural predator, had lost its favorite tree nearby due to the tree’s disease and removal; however, the hawk has now been spotted just a few blocks away.

A third issue is that individuals are littering, thus creating an easily available food source for rodents. A common source of readily available food that many people may not consider is feeding the birds. The city plans to continue an informal education campaign regarding littering and feeding the birds for those who continue to increase the availability of food for rodents.

In order to work to decrease the rodent population, the city plans on maintaining pest control contracts, monitoring the situation and adjusting mitigation measures as necessary. Some of these mitigation measures include harsher penalties for littering, more frequent trash collection and more frequent use of pest control. These measures are used as the condition warrants. If



**LEFT:** Many parks suffer from an overabundance of geese. This is normally the result of overpopulation and a lack of natural predators in the area. Controlled hunts and destroying nests are common ways to help control the goose population. (Shutterstock.com)

**RIGHT:** Rodents tend to become a pest control issue when construction takes place or littering allows them a readily available food source. Maintaining regular pest control contracts can help to deter the issue when it arises. (Shutterstock.com)


a public health concern is present, then the health department will step in and investigate and make recommendations to solve the pest problem.

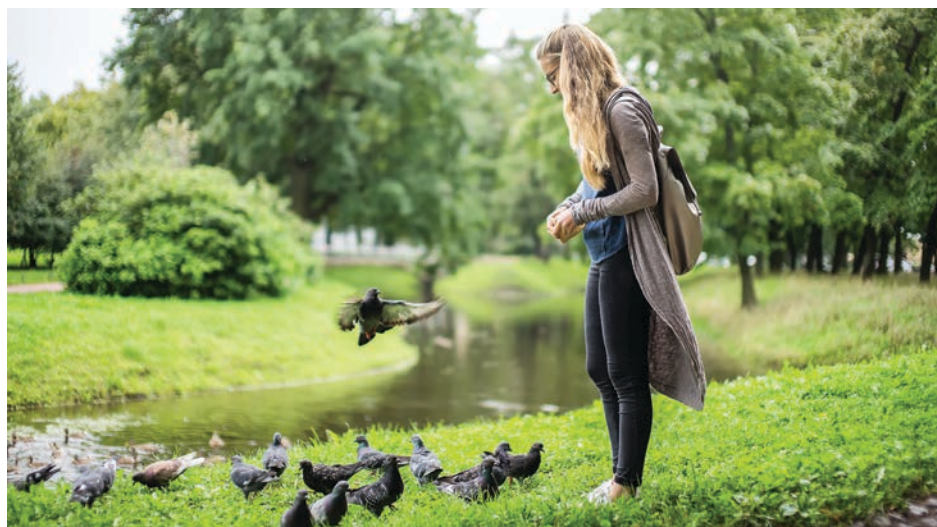
Geese are currently the primary pest plaguing Mount Vernon, Ohio, parks. Lori Watts, administrative assistant to the parks department superintendent, discussed ways in which the parks department manages the issues with geese.

“The goose issue is caused by overpopulation,” Watts explained. “This is created by a bird that multiplies rapidly and does not have enough hunters to control the population growth and no natural predators.”

The city currently practices multiples methods of keeping the goose population under control. “We are currently holding controlled hunts, doing egg addling, using dog decoys and a propane cannon to control the geese in the parks,” Watts said, adding that the city plans to continue these practices in the upcoming years and also views a goose roundup as a future possibility.

Goose hunting takes place during Ohio’s normal three open goose seasons. These three seasons take place during two weeks in September, mid-October through mid-November and a late season in January and February. The parks department requires all hunters to possess all necessary licenses, have a retrieval method and possess all required safety gear.

Mount Vernon has also had issues in the past with crows congregating and roosting in the public square. However, distress tapes, which are simply recordings of crow distress calls, were used to get rid of the birds and no further issues have presented themselves since. 



**ABOVE AND BELOW:** Feeding the birds is a simple yet highly overlooked way to attract rodents by allowing them an easy source of food. New Haven, Conn., is continuing an informal education campaign to discourage people from this. (Shutterstock.com)



Ísafjörður, Iceland, decided to get creative when it came to catching the attention of drivers with its new 3-D pedestrian crosswalk. (Shutterstock.com)



# Cities use creative and no-brainer solutions to improve pedestrian safety

by CATEY TRAYLOR | The Municipal

**According to a report released from the Governors Highway Safety Association, the number of pedestrians killed in traffic in 2016 was nearly 6,000. That's the highest number in more than two decades.**

While some of this can be attributed to pedestrian distractions like cellphones, the high number is also hypothesized to be related to a stronger economy and, therefore, more people being able to afford vehicles and being on the road. Regardless of the reason for the increase, pedestrian safety, especially in high-traffic locations, has long been a concern of municipalities.

While methods such as raised intersections, mini roundabouts and pedestrian

islands are regularly used to ensure pedestrian safety, some towns are taking a more dramatic approach.

As reported by [mymodernmet.com](http://mymodernmet.com), in the small fishing village of Ísafjörður, Iceland, a 3-D pedestrian crossing was painted in an effort to slow traffic on a narrow street. The eye-popping illusion gives the effect of walking on air as pedestrians move from one side of the street to the other.

Citylab.com tells the story of Eerbeek in the Netherlands, which rolled out a crosswalk that glows like the keys to a giant piano. The six-striped pathway, located on a village street in a shopping district, relies on energy-efficient LEDs to brightly illuminate a pedestrian crossing.

Back here in the states, a number of areas have created pedestrian safety initiatives, including one instated by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo of New York.

In June 2016, he announced that pedestrian safety improvement projects were beginning on roads across the state as part of a \$110 million multi-agency initiative to utilize engineering, education and



After a tragedy, Leonia, N.J., made a decision to turn a busy intersection into an all-red phase traffic signal. The signal stays red in all directions for 26 seconds every few minutes. (Photo provided)



Very few people have complained about Leonia, N.J.'s, all-red phase traffic signal at the intersection of Broad Avenue and Fort Lee Road. Some have suggested that the wait time of 26 seconds should be reduced; however, most agree the wait is a small price to pay for pedestrian safety. (Photo provided)

enforcement campaigns to enhance pedestrian safety across upstate New York and Long Island. The plan strove to reduce pedestrian fatalities in the state by 20 percent by 2021.

High-visibility crosswalk markings, additional signage, enhanced signalization with extended crossing times and pedestrian countdown timers were tested and installed in nearly 400 locations across the state.

And the fight for pedestrian safety doesn't end there.

A tragic story out of Leonia, N.J., of a woman being struck by a car at a busy intersection and then dragged more than 70 feet to her death led to major reform in the town. The intersection also sits near an elementary school.

"Because of where we're located, we get a lot of traffic through our municipality," Leonia Mayor Judah Ziegler said. "The level of traffic got to a point where it had increased so much and became so aggressive that we had a number of traffic/pedestrian accidents and unfortunately a tragedy. Something had to be done."

Ziegler outlined a number of instances where school crossing guards had to hurl themselves in front of vehicles to prevent children from being struck and spoke of the concerns of residents across the town.

Now, that particularly busy intersection has a solution that hasn't seen a single pedestrian-motor vehicle accident since

its implementation: an all-red phase traffic signal.

The signal stops traffic in all directions for 26 seconds every few minutes, allowing pedestrians ample time to cross without danger. According to a USA Today article, Chief Thomas Rowe of the Leonia Police Department said seniors, who can take longer to cross the road, and students benefit the most from the all-red cycle.

The solution, though not as dramatic as an art installation or new infrastructure, has done its job.

"There have not been any pedestrian accidents since implementation," Ziegler said. "And, other than new signage, we haven't really had to re-train drivers. It's been a smooth transition."

Ziegler said there hasn't been much backlash from drivers about the implementation, aside from those who suggest that 26 seconds is too lengthy.

"Our job is to legislate for all residents — drivers, bikers, walkers and everyone in between," Ziegler said. "So I tell people they'll have to get used to the 26-second wait. It's a small price to pay for everyone to use the crosswalks safely."

When talking about pedestrian safety, Ziegler said anything a municipality can do to ensure the safety of its residents is an easy choice to make.

"There's no downside to this," he said. "Obviously, you want to take a look at your



Pedestrian safety islands are another design that cities are choosing to install. Small updates can also improve safety, such as clearly painting crosswalks and checking that both street signals and walk/don't walk signs are operational. (Photo provided by National Association of City Transportation Officials)

traffic pattern and flow, but there isn't a significant reason not to look into pedestrian safety elements."

Ziegler mentioned that making sure crosswalks are painted clearly, street signals work and walk/don't walk signs are operational is also part of the overall solution.

"When people hear about suggestions like this, they think it's really simple and a no-brainer," he said. "Sometimes we overthink problems, but it's all about taking a step back and seeing what the core of the issue is. A few simple updates to crosswalks sounds like a simple solution, but sometimes the simple solutions are best." **M**



# Keeping first responders engaged and in the department

By ANDREW MENTOCK | The Municipal

**The recruitment and retention of qualified firefighters and police officers are essential to maintaining a safe and prosperous community. Unfortunately, it's becoming more and more difficult to attract and keep qualified employees in both occupations.**

This stems from several challenges, some of which aren't unique to either.

"Communities have got to recognize police officers and public safety officials like firefighters are an issue of economic community development," said W. Dwayne Orrick, the assistant executive director of the Georgia Association Chiefs of Police, who has written on and extensively

researched the subject of police officer recruitment and retention. "People aren't going to run businesses or live in communities that aren't safe."

Beyond that, there's a certain cost that goes into training and developing new officers. For instance, during the first three years of a young police officer's career, they go through the academy, additional training

*ABOVE: Law enforcement agencies are faced with an additional struggle when it comes to retention in the form of public scrutiny. Officers want to know that their departments will stand by them in circumstances that might be controversial but were ultimately beyond their control. (Shutterstock.com)*

and also need significant on-the-job supervision. In total, Orrick said this can come out to a \$100,000 investment in new hires.

That's why, if talented young officers change departments or even careers after only a few years, it wastes a lot of a department's time, energy and financial resources.



*Pictured are members of the Olivet Fire Department. One key to retention has been utilizing new volunteers on proactive projects like installing new fire and carbon monoxide alarms for free. These projects create goodwill in the community while also making volunteers feel valued. (Photo provided)*

There's a variety of reasons officers will leave a department. One is management. That's why it's important to properly develop officers for leadership positions.

"People don't leave jobs, they leave managers," Orrick said. "And you don't want a manager causing a \$100,000 investment to walk out the door."

Additionally, both police and fire departments are dealing with millennials, who have higher demands than previous generations and are also willing to frequently change jobs over the span of their working life.

"They don't see anything wrong with moving on," Orrick said. "I heard my own son say this a few months ago: 'I've got marketable skills. If (an employer isn't) willing to pay for them, somebody else is.'"

Perhaps the most significant factor in recruiting and retaining this generation is providing them with a competitive salary because millennials are willing to chase better pay, even if it requires a career change.

"With it being a market economy, the skill sets that we are looking for are problem-solving skills, confident resolutions skills and oral and written communications skills," Orrick said. "These are all the same things that the Society for Human Resource Management says that every other type of employer is looking for, as well."

While many of the recruitment and retention challenges fire and police departments face are similar, there are also many differences. For one, unlike police officers, a large portion of firefighters are volunteers.

"Here in Michigan, roughly 70 percent of our departments are paid on-call or volunteer firefighters, and roughly 30 percent are paid professional career departments," said Michael McLeieer, the second vice president of the Michigan State Firemen's Association. "So when seven out of every 10 firefighters or emergency responders are volunteers, we have to make sure that those interested in their local communities understand that they can make a difference. That they can make an impact. I think the hardest thing for the local fire department is just getting the word out — to let people know that they are seeking volunteers."

There's significantly more fire training today than there was 20 years ago. For the most part, this is a good change. It means firefighters are safer and better prepared than before, but, at the same time, it's also a much bigger time commitment and investment for volunteers.

To combat this challenge, McLeieer and the Michigan State Firemen's Association have partnered with the National Volunteer Fire Council by supporting its national initiative called Make Me A Firefighter.

"What that's allowed all of us to do throughout the country is really connect needs and resources together," McLeieer said.

Once volunteer firefighters have joined a department, it's important to make sure that they feel like they are part of the team and are utilized in a way that makes them valued.

An effective way to do this is by involving them in proactive initiatives — not just



*Michael McLeieer, Second Vice President of the Michigan State Firemen's Association*

reacting to negative situations. McLeieer does this for his local volunteer fire department near Kalamazoo, Mich., by having new volunteers install fire and carbon monoxide alarms for free in the homes of community members.

"When people call 911, we're responding to them on the worst day of their lives," McLeieer said. "In proactive situations, we're able to get all the members of our departments engaged and show them that they are an important part of their community."

On the other hand, a unique situation police departments are dealing with is how to respond to attacks on the legitimacy of criminal justice agencies. These attacks have made it more difficult to recruit and retain officers.

To overcome this, law enforcement agencies need to keep officers engaged with the community and defend their brand image. This can be done by directly interacting with locals and through social media. Additionally, community leaders need to show support for local law enforcement while also holding officers accountable.

"They need to know that if they are put in a controversial situation, that they had no control over that their department is going to stand up for them," Orrick said. "If not, then they are going to find an organization where they feel safe." **M**



# Bike-sharing services keep bicycles rolling despite vandals

By **BARB SIEMINSKI** | The Municipal

**Cycling to work is the ultimate return to childhood's happy days. And it saves on gas and vehicle wear and tear while promoting fresh air and the carefree exhilaration you enjoyed back in the day when your bike could take you anywhere.**

Many municipalities are encouraging resident to pedal around town versus driving by welcoming bike-sharing programs. Companies like Zagster, LimeBike and Social Bike, for example, have been cropping up in cityscapes and are doing very well with their bikes and docking stations.

Bike-sharing is so popular that cities would do well to have a plan for vandalism and theft. According to Parks & Recreation Director Chris Jenkins of Hastings, Minn., his city's

bike-sharing program has been in operation since late June of 2015 and, to the best of his knowledge, hasn't experienced any outright theft.

"There have been some issues with vandalism, however," said Jenkins, who noted policies exist to handle these situations and include:

- The annual fee paid by users of the Zagster program covers the cost of all repairs and replacement if necessary.

- When an issue is reported, Zagster pulls that bike out of service and its contract manager resolves the issue and puts the bike back into service.

- Issues are typically reported directly to Zagster over the phone, though occasionally some are reported to city staff.

- On a few occasions, bikes have been found unsecured, and those have been brought to the shop until the mechanic can get to them if repairs are needed; if that is not needed, they can simply be returned.

"Overall, the experience with Zagster is very positive in this regard," said Jenkins "They work hard to get the bikes repaired and back into service as quickly as they can. Our staff involvement is pretty minimal

**LEFT:** A cyclist tries out a new Pace bike. Bike-sharing services are proving popular with both residents and cities alike across the U.S. (Photo provided)

**RIGHT:** Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum rides a Pace bike. (Photo provided)

when the system is up and running, and most of our time is spent pre-season in the marketing/awareness effort.”

If one had parked the bike-share bicycle outside a library, for instance, and returned to find the bike fenders smashed and paint strewn liberally over it, what would be the procedure for restoring it?

“In our situation, the rider would report the issue to Zagster, which would then pull that unit out of service until such time its contracted mechanic can come to the docking location and deal with the repairs/maintenance,” said Jenkins. “Our community does not have a bike shop from which Zagster can pull independent contractors so they come from communities around the metro area, and they usually work a full-time job somewhere, so their response time has limitations.”

Jenkins noted that other incidents could come from stolen bike seats, stolen bike front racks or bikes having been ridden too hard or used in a manner for which they aren’t intended, such as a young adult abusing a bike because it wasn’t personally owned.

For approximately five years, Charlotte, N.C., has been using B-cycle for its bike-sharing program, according to program Executive Director Dianna Ward, who noted that her city has had zero thefts and almost minimal vandalism.

“Occasionally we have someone slash a tire,” said Ward, adding that this happens maybe once or twice per year.

“When we need new equipment, we order it directly from either B-cycle or QBP (Quality Bicycle Products). With respect to sponsors, we are sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, and they have sponsored us three times for a total of \$4 million for 10 years from 2012-2022. We have also been sponsored by the local hospital system Carolinas HealthCare System to the tune of \$75,000 for 10 years. I would say since both of them have continued their support that they are happy.”

Kelly Goldthorpe is the director of marketing and rider experience at Motivate, the operator of Divvy Bicycle System, which is Chicago’s bike-share system.

“Like any public good, Divvy does experience some misuse of its bikes,” said Goldthorpe. “Our technology lends lots of accountability to the system, though — we know when a rider takes out a bike and when the rider returns it. They are accountable for overage and loss fees. That means that even bikes that make their way out of the system for a short time typically return home before too long. In addition, our incredible bike repair and rebalancing team work in tandem to identify bikes that need tune-up or repair, to send them back to the shop and get them back in rotation as quickly as possible so that bikes stay available where you need them and when you need them. One last point: The bikes are not easy to steal — at 44 pounds, they’re heavy and their shape and color make them iconic.”

South Bend, Ind., has also added a bike-share service for its residents since last July, according to Chris Dressel, AICP, planner and bicycle coordinator.



*A bright shade of lime green, LimeBike’s bicycles have proven to be a welcomed addition to South Bend, Ind. In less than six months, LimeBike saw 200,000 rides. (Photo provided)*

“The city of South Bend has entered an agreement with LimeBike, and they are the owner and operator of the city’s dockless bike-share system,” said Dressel.

“The success of the program here is undeniable as we’ve achieved more than 200,000 rides in less than six months, and per the agreement, it is LimeBike’s responsibility to address vandalism or theft that might be occurring through their local staff, including any cost that results. The result of this arrangement is that reports of vandalism/theft are made directly to LimeBike. At best, the city involvement is to relay these reports to LimeBike via their customer service (representative) or direct customers to do the same.”

Nathan Hasse, South Bend’s operations manager, agreed, saying, “Though we have seen some vandalism or theft in the South Bend/Notre Dame area, it will not discourage LimeBike from bringing mobility and accessibility to those who do not have easy access to it.”

Zagster just launched Pace, its new dockless service for cities and colleges, according to Jon Terbush, communications manager at Zagster. “All our Pace bikes are five-speeds, except for our adaptive bikes. And our bikes are a unisex, step-through cruiser model.” ▶



Should an act of vandalism or theft occur, LimeBike would handle the situation as per its agreement with the city of South Bend. (Photo provided)

He added, “The bikes all look the same for the most part, but the branding is tailored to each city to add local character. So for each program — Pace Tallahassee, Pace Albuquerque and so on — there are long and short banners to incorporate the name and color scheme of each city.

Zagster/Pace is the only bike-share company currently offering adaptive bicycles seamlessly integrated into its broader bike-share

networks. It features six forms of adaptive bikes: heavy-duty cruiser, trike, cargo trike, side-by-side tandem, recumbent and hand cycle.

“Regarding theft and vandalism, Pace features a two-point security system to ensure bikes lock to fixed objects — not just to themselves — to mitigate theft and abuse and preserve public right-of-way,” Terbush said.

“All other dockless bikes only lock to themselves, using a ring lock that secures the rear wheel so a bike can’t be rolled when not in use. Of course, this means bikes can still be picked and moved anywhere — thrown into bodies of water, hurled through storefronts, dumped all over residents’ lawns or abandoned in any other place you wouldn’t want a bike to end up. Pace bikes feature not only a ring lock, but also a security cable that tethers bikes to our bike racks or public bike racks when not in use. This makes our bikes much harder to steal or vandalize than our competitors’ offerings.”

Another thing Terbush noted was that in addition to the locking tech, Pace also features high-quality bikes and are a proprietary design built off the Breezer Uptown, a multi-time winner of Bicycling Magazine’s “Editor’s Choice” Award for best commuter bike.

Likely, more cities will be joining the movement, and with bike-sharing services handling the bulk of operations and maintenance, it can be a fun added service for residents without overwhelming city staff with one more task. **M**

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## MARCH

**March 5-7 MSTPA 2018 Annual Conference and Trade Show**  
Embassy Suites, Huntsville, Ala.  
[www.mstpa.org/annual-conference.html](http://www.mstpa.org/annual-conference.html)

**March 5-8 TMC Annual 2018**  
Atlanta, Ga.  
[tmcannual.trucking.org](http://tmcannual.trucking.org)

**March 5-9 International Wireless Communications Expo**  
Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla.  
[www.iwceexpo.com](http://www.iwceexpo.com)

**March 6-9 NUCA Annual Convention and Exhibit**  
San Antonio, Texas  
[www.nuca.com](http://www.nuca.com)

**March 6-9 The Work Truck Show and Green Truck Summit**  
Indianapolis, Ind.  
[www.worktruckshow.com/greentrucksummit](http://www.worktruckshow.com/greentrucksummit)

**March 11-14 NLC Congressional City Conference**  
Washington, D.C.  
[www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org)

**March 11-16 Facility Managers' Revenue Development and Management School**  
Oglebay, Wheeling, W.Va.  
[www.revenueschool.org](http://www.revenueschool.org)

**March 19-22 2018 AASHTO GIS for Transportation Symposium**  
Marriott Hotel and Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock, Ark.  
[www.gis-t.org](http://www.gis-t.org)

**March 20-22 Florida Association of Governmental Fleet Administrators Spring Event**  
Shores Resort and Spa, Daytona Beach Shore, Fla.  
[www.flagfa.org](http://www.flagfa.org)

**March 21-22 Michigan Municipal League's 2018 Capital Conference**  
Lansing Center, Lansing, Mich.  
<http://blogs.mml.org/wp/cc>

**March 22-24 Mid-America Trucking Show**  
The Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, Ky.  
[www.truckingshow.com](http://www.truckingshow.com)

**March 25-29 NASTT No-Dig Show**  
Palm Springs, Calif.  
[nodigshow.com](http://nodigshow.com)

## APRIL

**April 5-6 Labor-Management Alliance Conference**  
Denver, Colo.  
[www.iafc.org/events](http://www.iafc.org/events)

**April 11-12 New England Parking Council Annual Conference and Trade Show**  
Providence, R.I.  
[newenglandparkingcouncil.org](http://newenglandparkingcouncil.org)

**April 18-19 National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner**  
Washington Hilton and Towers, Washington, D.C.  
[www.cfsi.org/2018-dinner](http://www.cfsi.org/2018-dinner)

## APRIL

**April 22-24 Fire Department Training Network Spring Live-Fire Training Camp**  
Indianapolis, Ind.  
[www.fctraining.com](http://www.fctraining.com)

**April 23-26 WasteExpo**  
Las Vegas Convention Center, Central Halls, Las Vegas, Nev.  
[www.wasteexpo.com](http://www.wasteexpo.com)

**April 23-28 FDIC International 2018**  
Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis, Ind.  
[www.fdic.com](http://www.fdic.com)

**April 24-26 Navigator 2018**  
Las Vegas, Nev.  
[navigator.emergencydispatch.org](http://navigator.emergencydispatch.org)

**April 24-27 NAFA Institute and Expo**  
Anaheim, Calif.  
[nafainstitute.org](http://nafainstitute.org)

**April 25-27 2018 Parking Association of Georgia Conference**  
Marriott and Convention Center, Augusta, Ga.  
[parkingassociationofgeorgia.com](http://parkingassociationofgeorgia.com)

**April 26-28 The "Summit" Conference**  
Coeur D'Alene, Idaho  
[emsassociates.com](http://emsassociates.com)

**April 30-May 3 Advanced Clean Transportation Expo**  
Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, Calif.  
[www.actexpo.com](http://www.actexpo.com)

## MAY

**May 3-5 VOCS Symposium in the West**  
Phoenix, Ariz.  
[www.iafc.org/events](http://www.iafc.org/events)

**May 7-10 AWEA WindPower**  
Chicago, Ill.  
[www.windpowerexpo.org](http://www.windpowerexpo.org)

**May 6-8 NYCOM Annual Meeting and Training School**  
Gideon Putnam Hotel, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.  
[www.nycom.org](http://www.nycom.org)

**May 6-9 North American Snow Conference**  
Indianapolis, Ind.  
[www.apwa.net](http://www.apwa.net)

**May 18-20 Lancaster County Firemen's Association Annual Fire Expo**  
Pennsylvania Farm Show & Expo Center, Harrisburg, Pa.  
[www.lcfa.com](http://www.lcfa.com)

## JUNE

**June 3-6 EUFMC 2018**  
TBA  
[www.eufmc.com](http://www.eufmc.com)

**June 7-10 International Hazardous Materials Response Teams Conference**  
Baltimore, Md.  
[www.iafc.org/events](http://www.iafc.org/events)

**June 10-14 Community Transportation Expo**  
Westin Convention Center, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
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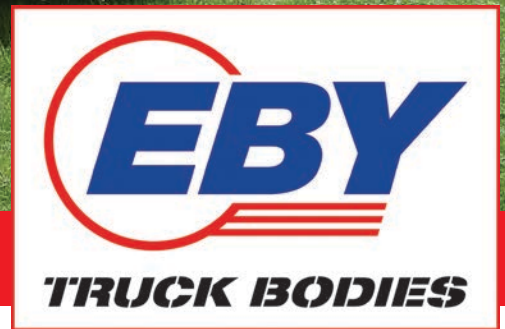
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# Redefining the truck body industry

by CHARLIE HORTON | M.H. EBY Vice President of Truck Bodies

**An iconic American-born company has been making a lot of new moves in the truck body business these days, and municipal fleet managers are really starting to take notice. M.H. EBY, a third-generation, family-owned builder of aluminum truck bodies and trailers in Lancaster County, Pa., has been known for high-quality and high-durability products for the commercial and agricultural markets since 1938.**

So what's new at EBY? Additional major investments in design and manufacturing technology have accelerated EBY's emphasis on offering customized truck bodies without the long lead time typically associated with a custom set of specs.

EBY builds all-aluminum flatbeds, dump bodies, stake bodies, service bodies and van bodies, all designed for specific work applications. Aluminum is terrifically strong and much lighter than steel, so aluminum truck bodies often allow a fleet to select a lighter gross vehicle weight and less expensive

**ABOVE:** *This all-aluminum landscape body is built with removable sides, making workers' jobs easier. (Photo provided)*

chassis than they would if they used a heavier steel body. Aluminum bodies are also less costly to maintain since they never need to be sandblasted and painted. The corrosion that attacks and eats steel bodies in many areas of the country doesn't affect aluminum bodies, meaning bodies can be moved from an old chassis to a new one for additional savings.

"We saw that municipal and commercial customers really didn't want to buy something off the shelf," explained Charlie Horton,



**LEFT:** EBY's all-aluminum flatbeds, dump bodies, stake bodies, service bodies and van bodies are lighter than steel, require less maintenance and are resistant to corrosion. Pictured is a general purpose dump body. (Photo provided)

vice president of truck bodies. "They want a truck body builder who will listen to their needs and then design a purpose-built truck body that gets their job done. A lot of our competitors are focusing on standardizing and reducing a fleet manager's options, so we wanted to go in a different direction."

That flexibility in serving the municipal customer is fueled by two key EBY assets. Several years back, EBY invested in state of the art computer-aided design tools, which allow fleet managers to approve highly detailed drawings that go straight to the shop floor. Technicians on the floor then build the parts using the latest fiber lasers, CNC 5-Axis milling machines and robotic welding. Veteran assemblers pull it all together, and the result is a productive, long-lasting truck body that saves fleet managers money.

Interestingly, this focus on technology has resulted in a larger workforce, with additional training and development options open to workers on the line. EBY is now in the process of opening up a much larger plant in Ephrata, Pa., about 10 miles from its main plant in Blue Ball, Pa., 50 miles west of Philadelphia, and will offer key positions at the new plant to the technicians who have been instrumental in building the truck body product.

EBY builds all of its truck bodies in Pennsylvania and ships them to dealers and distributors all over the nation for installation. EBY facilities in West Jefferson, Ohio; Seymour, Ind.; Logansport, Ind.; Story City, Iowa; and Worthing, S.D., bolster its emphasis on high customer service. Centralized design allows for consistent design work, and a terrific distribution network gives this company a national reach.

The company is an American success story. In 1938, Menno Eby Sr. started with a single service bay and a dream to build wood and steel cattle bodies for the Pennsylvania agricultural community. In the



**ABOVE:** Workers place traffic cones from their stake body truck with a pulpit. EBY's investment in state-of-the-art technology allows it to customized available options to fit specific needs. (Photo provided)

1980s, his son made the decision to build all-aluminum truck bodies and trailers. Third generation leaders President Travis Eby and his brother Nick, EBY's vice president of engineering, are continuing to build the company 80 years later. The company now has seven facilities and 375 employees with solid plans to grow.

Attention to detail and high customer service have been EBY's key to growth during the last 80 years. Investing in technology and people is keeping them on that successful path. **M**

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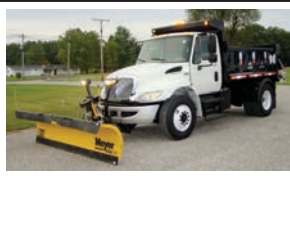
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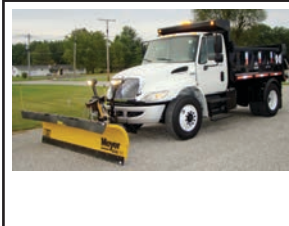
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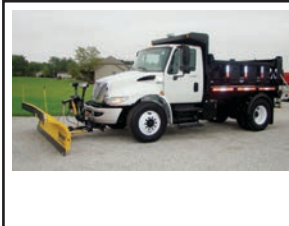
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**Fleet's "Mobility Evolution" takes center stage at NAFA's International Fleet Academy pre-conference**

**PRINCETON, N.J.** — NAFA Fleet Management Association, the vehicle fleet industry's largest trade association, today announces the return of the annual International Fleet Academy, taking place April 23, in Anaheim, Calif. The IFA precedes the association's annual conference, the NAFA Institute & Expo.

Radical change is coming in the form of vehicle sharing, greater autonomy and an explosion of technology. The IFA will provide an engaging forum to discuss questions concerning where the fleet/mobility industry will be 10 years from now and how this rapidly evolving industry will impact North American and global fleets.

"Today's fleets could very quickly be unrecognizable in tomorrow's business world. More than ever, fleet professionals need education and peer networking to stay up to date on the mobility continuum and all it entails for the industry," said NAFA CEO Phillip E. Russo, CAE. "Fleet managers who don't embrace and lead in mobility will risk obsolescence. This event was developed to give attendees the edge in what are exciting, and certainly innovative, changes to fleets all across the world."

Topics to be covered at IFA include:

- "The Continuum: Mobility from Infancy to Reality"
- "Changing Your Language: TCO to TCM (Total Cost of Mobility)"
- "Arming Yourself for the MaaS (Mobility as a Service) Revolution"
- "Electrification Trends and Practicalities"
- "Lessons Learned (Panel): Fleet Managers Discuss Their Journeys Along the Mobility Continuum"

Find out more about this and other 2018 pre-conference events and how individuals can include them with their Institute & Expo registration. For more details, visit <https://www.nafainstitute.org/Preconference-Events/IFA.aspx>.

For information about NAFA's Institute & Expo, visit the official conference website: [www.NAFAINstitute.org](http://www.NAFAINstitute.org).

**Bloomfield Township administrator elected vice president of the New Jersey Municipal Management Association**

**NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.** — The membership of the New Jersey Municipal Management Association recently elected Matthew U. Watkins, township administrator of Bloomfield, N.J., as its vice president for 2018. Watkins — and the balance of the 2018 slate of officers and executive board members — was officially installed at the organization's annual awards luncheon, which took place during the New Jersey State League of Municipalities conference in Atlantic City in November.

Matthew Watkins is 35-year professional municipal manager, with experience in seven New Jersey communities, as well as other positions in Pennsylvania and Oklahoma. He also served as the Director of Local Government Services during the administration of former New Jersey Governor James McGreevey.

Watkins holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Central State University, Oklahoma, in political science and municipal management, and a master's in public administration from Rutgers University. He has also complete various seminars and trainings in a number of municipal management functions.

The NJMMA is an industry organization representing more than 260 professional local government managers, administrators and assistants, whose goal it is to improve the quality of local government in New Jersey through outstanding professional management. **M**

News releases regarding personnel changes, other non-product-related company changes, association news and awards are printed as space allows. Priority will be given to advertisers and affiliates. Releases not printed in the magazine can be found online at [www.themunicipal.com](http://www.themunicipal.com). Call (800) 733-4111, ext. 2307, or email [swright@the-papers.com](mailto:swright@the-papers.com).

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# How the evolution of mobility will impact municipal fleets



**Bryan J. Flansburg, CAFM** | Guest columnist  
*NAFA Fleet Management Association  
 President and Chief of the  
 Longmont Emergency Unit, Longmont, Colo.*

**T**HE MOBILITY EVOLUTION WILL NOT be as visibly dramatic for municipal fleets as it will be for corporate fleets and personal use, but it will be profound in several less immediately apparent ways.

Advances in ride-sharing platforms and autonomous driving technologies will impact the composition of administrative vehicle fleets. Municipalities will still need to own their law enforcement, fire and emergency vehicles because of the nature of their utility, and the drivers of these vehicles will need to have manual control options available to them.

Even so, there will be a few truly head-turning changes. Imagine a fleet of autonomous snowplows with the capacity to clear roads in the worst of conditions with minimal downtime.

Such plows, like all self-driving vehicles, would share information with other vehicles and with the infrastructure and act in coordination with those vehicles and that

infrastructure. Not only would this improve safety, but accuracy as well. The technology to make this happen already exists, and it is highly conceivable that such vehicles could be clearing roads within a decade.

The vast majority of changes to municipal fleets will be indirect, less about how they utilize the technology and more about how they are required to meet the needs of their communities. According to a recent analysis from consulting firm Frost & Sullivan, 20 percent of all cars on the roads by 2025 will be autonomous. This is expected to climb to 50 percent by 2040 and 100 percent by 2060. How would that affect the municipal fleet?

Consider this: Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that as many as 37,461 people died in motor vehicle crashes in 2016, with the primary cause of over 90 percent of all crashes being driver error. Self-driving vehicles would virtually end distracted driving and impaired driving crashes, potentially reducing the rate of automotive-related deaths.

*The rise of ride-sharing and autonomous vehicles could very well mean communities without parking lots in the future in addition to fewer accidents. (Shutterstock.com)*



Such a reduction would decrease a community's emergency vehicle requirements significantly. Emergency services would have the ability to focus on other crises. Speaking as the chief of the Longmont Emergency Unit in Longmont, Colo., I can say this alone would be transformational.

The evolution of mobility will also affect city planning and the way we envision a city's look and functionality.

In the very near future, we could see communities without parking lots, not because there isn't room to construct them, but because there's no need to have them. Ride-sharing services — multiple passengers in the same vehicle — could reduce the number of vehicles on the roads. Vehicle-sharing services — one vehicle used by many people over the course of a day — could dramatically reduce the need for vehicles. With the click of a smartphone app, a car will come for you, take you where you want to go and never need to park long term.

In fact, a transportation model like this could become so common, it could cause individuals to give up their own vehicles, with municipalities possibly following suit with their sedan fleets. A typical personal vehicle sits unused 96 percent of the time. When autonomous technology becomes standard — and roads become safer — a manually-operated vehicle will be, by nature, riskier. The cost of insuring that vehicle will increase, and the wear and tear such a vehicle will experience will incur further expenses. Many will run that cost-benefit

analysis and realize it doesn't make sense. Others will see an opportunity in purchasing an autonomous vehicle themselves, profiting off of that 96 percent downtime by sharing the vehicle for a fee.

Something that municipalities will need to consider is that, even though there would be fewer crashes for first responders to address and less real estate needed to house vehicles that aren't in use, people and products will still move from point A to point B. Roads will still be affected by that usage. A greater emphasis will be placed on the maintenance of the infrastructure.

The mobility evolution for municipal fleets may not be as outwardly different as it will be for other fleet types and for the typical civilian driver, but the adaptation to change and the new transportation environment will be significant and, in most cases, for the better. **M**

**Bryan Flansburg, CAFM, is chief of Longmont Emergency Unit and serves as president of NAFA Fleet Management Association. He also serves as fleet manager/salesforce administrator for the "I Have A Dream" Foundation of Boulder County, Colo. Prior to being with the Longmont Emergency Unit, Flansburg was director of transportation for the University of Colorado from 1987-2015.**

**M****TOP  
10**

## Best U.S. cities to own an electric vehicle in 2017

Midway through 2017, FleetCarma released its “The 10 Best U.S. Cities to Own an Electric Vehicle in 2017” list, which highlighted cities that are going above and beyond to encourage residents to consider electric vehicle ownership. According to FleetCarma, this encouragement “includes everything from cost incentives to the charging infrastructure and consumer awareness. Many policy actions are tailored to unique local conditions, like tolls and carpool lanes.”

Cities that made the list were selected based on financial benefits and convenience given to EV owners, plus overall adoption rates. San Jose, Calif., topped the list with its 379 charge points per million residents, competitive tax break of \$2,500, dealership support and goal to have 100 percent alternative-fueled vehicles in the municipal fleet by 2020.

Most of the cities topping the list are located on the West Coast; however, FleetCarma noted that as cities seek to improve carbon emissions more will look toward EVs.

1 *San Jose, Calif.*

2 *Portland, Ore.*

3 *San Francisco, Calif.*

4 *Atlanta, Ga.*

5 *Los Angeles, Calif.*

6 *Seattle, Wash.*

7 *Washington, D.C.*

8 *San Diego, Calif.*

9 *Denver, Colo.*

10 *New York City, N.Y.*



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Source: [www.fleetcarma.com/10-best-us-cities-electric-vehicle-2017](http://www.fleetcarma.com/10-best-us-cities-electric-vehicle-2017)

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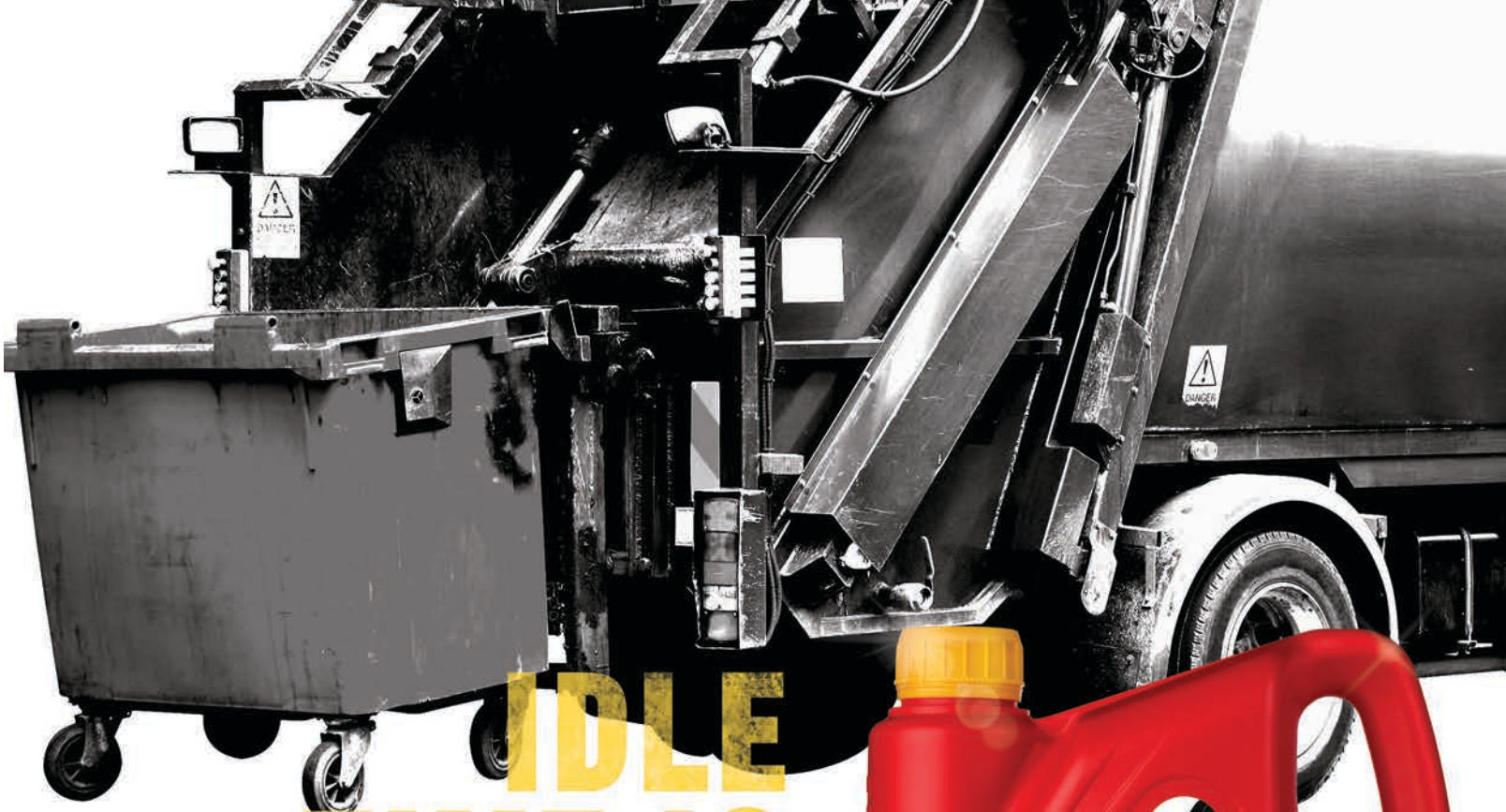
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