

THE ADMINISTRATOR

‘HERE WHEN YOU NEED US’

Summer seminar underscores the need for good government – perhaps now more than ever.

The 2025 N.C. City & County Management Association (NCCCMA) Summer Seminar took place June 19-21 at the Beaufort Hotel in Beaufort and offered another opportunity for local government leaders from across the state to come together and do what they do best: serve their communities. That’s why 175 attendees and another 54 sponsor representatives were there.

But the Summer Seminar is a time for both looking back and ahead.

Outgoing NCCCMA President Mary Furtado addressed the audience in a reflective mood.

“The past year whizzed by in a blink,” she said.

Furtado then took a brief moment to sum up her year as President ... in haiku form. In it, she succinctly and delightfully conveyed the breadth and depth of this proud profession with phrases such as

Helene came and went.

Scarring more than just the Earth.

Strong folks move forward.

and

Office hours, and grants.

Technical help, mental health.

Here when you need us.

Furtado closed her poetic address with one of the most accurate – and brief – descriptions of what it means to be a local government manager:

Serving the servants

Most humbling of all my roles

Grateful for your trust.

The gavel was passed from Furtado to new President Lloyd Payne.

“You are the strength of our Association,” Payne told the attendees, also offering up a thank you to the other partners that are so closely tied together: the School of Government, the N.C. League of Municipalities, the N.C. Association of County Commissioners, Civic Credit Union, and “so many other groups including our devoted sponsors.”

Payne talked about his path – Lake Waccamaw, Elkin, Concord.

“Regardless of your path, we must all work together to strengthen and grow the local government manager profession,” he said. “In a politically volatile time, we and our organizations are faced with extreme incivility. We are and must continue to be the rock of our organizations and our profession. Being a leader means realizing we don’t have a patent on knowledge and must share what we know with others to build a strong team and sustain our honorable professional as local government practitioners.”

Vacancies in the profession and the stresses of an already-stressful occupation make local government a tough sell sometimes – and sometimes the hardest sell is to elected officials. Payne also discussed being cognizant of the mental health concerns of the stress of the profession can develop – but to also look for others for aid.

But in the end, ours is a noble calling – one that is truly for the greater good.

“I realize we are all busy and have more demands on our time than ever before. However, I do feel we carry the responsibility of ensuring we have sustainable and sound local government professionals to lead our towns/cities/counties.

“Ask yourself this simple question – if not us, then who?”

Serving the servants, indeed.

2025-2026 NCCCMA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Congratulations to those elected to the 2025-26 N.C. City & County Management Association Executive Committee, most of whom were sworn in during the 2025 Summer Seminar in Beaufort.

President	Lloyd Payne, City Manager – City of Concord
Immediate Past President	Mary Furtado, County Manager – Catawba County
First Vice President	Eddie Smith, Deputy City Manager – City of Kannapolis
Second Vice President	Jodi Miller, Town Manager – Town of Garner
Secretary/Treasurer	Bo Ferguson, City Manager – City of Durham

Directors — Terms Expire 2026

Will Doerfer, Assistant Town Manager – Town of Youngsville
Todd Herms, Town Manager – Town of Valdese
Duane Holder, Deputy County Manager – Wake County

Directors — Terms Expire 2027

Paige Dowling, Town Manager – Town of Sylva
Reagan Parsons, Town Manager – Town of Southern Pines
Jeff Repp, Town Manager – Town of St. James



Pictured (left to right): Michael Peoples, City Manager of Gastonia, administering the oath; Lloyd Payne, President and City Manager of Concord; Eddie Smith, 1st VP and Deputy Manager of Kannapolis; Jodi Miller, 2nd VP and Town Manager of Garner; Paige Dowling, director and Town Manager of Sylva; Bo Ferguson, Secretary/Treasurer and City Manager of Durham; Duane Holder, Director and Deputy Manager of Wake County; Mary Furtado, Past President and County Manager of Catawba County; and Reagan Parsons, Director and Town Manager of Southern Pines.

Secretary/Treasurer and City Manager of Durham; Duane Holder, Director and Deputy Manager of Wake County; Mary Furtado, Past President and County Manager of Catawba County; and Reagan Parsons, Director and Town Manager of Southern Pines.

REFRESHED AND REFUELED

Summer Seminar offers a chance to be revived.

The 2025 N.C. City & County Management

Association (NCCCMA) Summer Seminar always provides the chance for attendees to enjoy that delicate balance of networking and, well, working. The 2025 edition of this was no different. Here are some of the highlights of the time in Beaufort:

FORE!

The pre-conference golf tournament to support the Civic Education Projection was held at Brandywine Bay Golf Club with 56 participants. The winning team consisted of **Elton Daniels** (Rocky Mount city manager), **Scott Chase** (Holly Springs Assistant Manager), **Mark Stephens** (WithersRavenel) and **Jamie Keith** (State Employees Credit Union).

The men's longest drive was **Adam Short**, Assistant Manager of Lenoir County, and the women's longest drive was **Katherin DeMoura** with McMillan Pazdan Smith. The men's closest to the pin was **Jim Dubovec**, Pierce Group Benefits, and the women's closest to the pin was **Emily Smith**, Freese and Nichols.

Thank you and congratulations to all who participated!

FACING UNCERTAINTY & ANGST

Educational sessions are always a highlight of the Summer Seminar. This year's conference included presentations and panels on topics such as the state of cybersecurity in North Carolina local governments – and the protection against cyberattacks; identifying inequalities and disparities in our communities; and defining clear organizational structures, among others.

This year's opening session was led by Kyle Leopard, Governmental Affairs Advisor with

Strategies Consulting, and Ron Hamm, President of Hamm Consulting Group. Their topic was a poignant one: "Leading at the Local Level in the Midst of Federal Uncertainty." The duo discussed an up-to-date overview of key developments that have shaped federal policy so far in 2025 and how these developments are impacting local government, not just in North Carolina, but nationwide. The session also provided strategies to help local government leaders navigate the evolving federal landscape.

One of the most well attended sessions was Dr. Leisha DeHart Davis's session on "When Citizens Misbehave: Managerial Strategies for Addressing Incivility." DeHart Davis addressed the rise of citizen incivility and the impact it is having on local government leaders – particularly with respect to burnout and support. As promised, attendees came away with managerial tools for helping employees cope with citizen incivility.

Another popular presentation was "Refresh, Refuel and Recharge" with Dr. Melissa Furman. She touched on how local government leaders can identify skills such as adaptability, grit, and resiliency for their future success. Practical tools provided by Furman can help you identify signs of burnout and enhance those skills.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: TOM BONFIELD

*Our "Member Spotlight" offers a glimpse into the personalities and lives of you – the N.C. City & County Management Association member. Our "Member Spotlight" this month features Senior Advisor **Tom Bonfield**.*



Birthplace? **St. Petersburg, Florida.**

Any siblings? **Five sisters (four older) and a younger brother. Having four older sisters meant I was raised by five mothers!**

Favorite food? **Fried oysters.**

Favorite vacation spot? **Anywhere my family is willing to travel to be with me.**

Favorite hobby? **I don't have as many hobbies as I wish I did. Mostly enjoy watching live rock music, playing golf or being at Sunset Beach or Beech Mountain.**

Childhood dream job? **As a child wanted to be a National Park Ranger. By high school/college wanted to be in the FBI or a lawyer.**

Favorite Music Lyric? **"You are on the road, must have a code you try to live by. And so become yourself because the past is just a goodbye. Teach your children well and feed them with your dreams. The one they pick's the one you'll know by. Don't ever ask them why, if they told you, you would cry. So just look at them and sigh and know they love you."**
(Graham Nash)

First local government job? **Grant Coordinator, Gulfport, Florida.**

Western or Eastern BBQ? **Western.**

Mountains, beach or Piedmont? **Evenly split between beach and mountains.**

Favorite Role Model? **So many people influenced my life so can't choose one.**

Favorite local government hero? **Probably Perry Cookingham. Read his book "Without Fear or Favor" early in my career. Also had the good fortune of meeting him at my first ICMA conference in Kansas City, Missouri, in the early 1980s.**

Describe your town in 10 words or less. **Sunset Beach: Beach/golf haven of retirees invaded by tourists in the summer.**

What is one thing most people KNOW about you or would say about you? **Not hesitant to take on a challenge!**

What is one thing most people would be surprised to learn about you? **Hmmm? The first time I flew on an airplane was on my 21st birthday.**



SPECIAL OFFER FOR NEW & FIRST-TIME ICMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

Want to attend for your first time? Don't miss out on this deal.

The 2025 International City/County Management Association Annual Conference will take place October 25-29 in Tampa/Hillsborough County, Fla. And if you've never attended ICMA, now's your chance at a great deal – in a couple of ways.

Registration for the ICMA Annual Conference opened on June 25. If you are NOT a current ICMA member, the organization is offering a Join, Go, SAVE promotion. Use the promo code CONF25 (case sensitive) and receive half-off your first year's dues.

Once the payment is processed the new member can register for the conference and receive the ICMA member registration rate.

But that's not all.

In partnership with ICMA, the NCCCMA is offering scholarships for first-time attendees from small jurisdictions. The specifics are below, and we encourage anyone that has not attended previously to apply. Hotels fill up fast so if you are interested it's in your best interest to apply early.

Scholarship Specifics

- ICMA will waive the registration fee for a first-time attendee to the ICMA Annual Conference.
- NCCMA will provide a \$1,500 travel stipend to attend the annual conference. This can be used for flights, hotel rooms, meals, and car rental. ***Note: In some instances, the cost associated with travel may be above \$1,500. Any***

amount above \$1,500 will be you or your jurisdiction's responsibility.

- **To be eligible to apply for this scholarship you must meet the following criteria:**
- Be a member of both NCCMA and ICMA by the time of scholarship assistance (*You do not need to be a member to apply, but you will need to become a member before any assistance will be provided*). If your scholarship recipient is not a member of ICMA and never has been, they can join at 50% off.
- Must be a first-time attendee to the ICMA Annual Conference.
- Must currently be an administrator, manager, or assistant manager in a Town/City/Village with a population of less than 7,500, or a County with a population of less than 50,000.
- Must provide a letter of support from either the Mayor, Board Chairman, or other appropriate elected or appointed official.
- A one-page essay explaining what you hope to gain from attending the conference, explaining your financial need, and any previous participation you have had with the NCCCMA.
- Complete and submit the "2025 North Carolina City and County Management Association Professional Development Committee Scholarship Application" by no later than July 31st.
https://ncmanagers.org/resource/resmgr/professional_dev_checklist_%202025_NCCCMA_Scholarship_App.docx

FULLER HONORED AS 'KEEPER OF THE LIGHT'

Nags Head recognizes his outstanding contributions.

At their June 11 meeting, Nags Head's Board of Commissioners proudly presented their prestigious 2025 Lightkeeper and Nags Header awards, honoring individuals who have made lasting, positive impacts on the community.

The Nags Head Lightkeeper Award honors exceptional personal and professional leadership. This year's recipient is J. Webb Fuller, former town manager and commissioner, whose vision helped shape Nags Head into the town it is today.

As town manager from 1982 to 2005, Fuller led Nags Head through a period of rapid growth, spearheading initiatives including oceanfront development ordinances, the Town's capital improvement program, occupancy tax funding, and beach nourishment. He also helped attract vital institutions such as The Outer Banks Hospital, Nags Head Elementary School, and the YMCA, to the community.

"Throughout Webb's tenure as the town manager, Nags Head was consistently viewed as an outstanding and creative local government," said Nags Head Mayor Ben Cahoon. "His role in creating the town as a municipal organization cannot be overstated. He hired great people and communicated the Town's vision, his vision, and the board's vision to them, and empowered the employees to do their jobs."

Fuller balanced growth with preservation, maintaining the town's coastal character even as it evolved. His early work on the Todd D. Krafft Septic Health Initiative helped establish a model for coastal water quality.

Additionally, he expanded public beach and sound access, reinforcing Nags Head's identity as an open and environmentally conscious community.

Fuller's leadership extended beyond town limits, including service as president of the North Carolina City and County Management Association and continued tenure on the Coastal Resources Advisory Council. After retiring, Fuller helped other local municipalities before returning to Nags Head in 2017, this time for a four-year term as an elected official.

Fuller's influence is evident in nearly every facet of town life, from infrastructure and emergency services to environmental protection and education, making him a worthy recipient of the Lightkeeper Award. He was joined at the presentation by his wife, Dorie; his daughters, Taz and Cordelia; his son, Myers; and Myers's wife, Sheena.

Fuller is a NCCCMA Life Member and served as president from 2001-02.



Webb Fuller accepting the Town of Nags Head's prestigious Lightkeeper Award, honoring his decades of dedicated service and lasting impact on the town. From left: Commissioner Bob Sanders, Mayor Ben Cahoon, Fuller, and Commissioner Megan Lambert.

KAYAKING THE CRYSTAL COAST

Thanks to McGill Associates!

Almost 40 attendees even took part in a McGill Associates-sponsored kayaking tour of nearby Bird Island during the recent 2025 NCCCMA Summer Seminar. Participants they had several encounters with the famous wild horses, not to mention the coastal beauty.



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The Administrator is a monthly newsletter of the N.C. City & County Management Association., a professional association of city and county managers and assistant managers from counties and municipalities throughout the state of North Carolina.

For comments or suggestions, please contact the editor, Matt Lail at 919-819-3979, or email collards12@yahoo.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2026 NCCCMA Winter Seminar

January 28-30, 2026
Winston-Salem

2026 NCCCMA Summer Seminar

June 25-27, 2026
Asheville

MEMBERS IN TRANSITION

If you are looking to keep up with your colleagues in the profession, be sure to check out the Members in Transition page:

www.ncmanagers.org/page/ManagerInTransitionReports