

# THE ADMINISTRATOR

## NEED A MENTOR? OR WANT TO MENTOR?

NCCCMA program is open to those seeking mentors or seeking to BE one.

**Are you looking for a mentor or coach in local government?** The Mentor Network is an exclusive online one-on-one mentoring and coaching program for North Carolina City and County Management Association (NCCCMA) members. This program offers long-term mentoring and short-term coaching opportunities to help you grow and excel in your career. The program uses algorithms to match mentors/coaches with mentees/coachees based on areas of expertise, community characteristics, and geographic location.

The Mentor Network provides resources to assist users, such as how-to videos, a best practices library, a knowledge base, a meeting scheduler, and an online journal system to keep track of mentoring/coaching session activities, notes and goals. Or maybe you are interested in sharing your knowledge as a mentor or coach in local government? Mentors and coaches are experienced managers, deputy managers, and assistant managers who are NCCCMA members and are dedicated to guiding you through your professional journey.

The ICMA credentialing program allows mentors who are ICMA-credentialed managers to count time spent in formal mentoring activities toward a maximum of 10 hours of the 40-hour annual professional development requirement. ICMA allows mentees up to 20 hours of the 40-

hour annual professional development requirement in formal mentoring activities.

NCCCMA members interested in serving as mentors or coaches, or those seeking to be mentored or coached, follow these steps:

- Visit **[ncmanagers.org](http://ncmanagers.org)** and log in.
- Click on the Mentor Network link at the top of the page.
- Register as a mentor, coach, mentee, or coachee and create a profile. Once registered, members can add or change their status at any time.

Members seeking a mentor or coach select the desired mentor/coach criteria and are presented with potential matches and their profiles. The mentee/coachee selects a potential mentor/coach or refines their search to find a better match. Once a mentor/coach is selected, the prospective mentor/coach receives an invitation. If the mentor/coach accepts the invitation, both parties will receive a notification to begin the mentoring/coaching process.

This program will launch on March 31, 2025. For more information, contact Rob Shepherd, NCCCMA Executive Director, at [shepherd@sog.unc.edu](mailto:shepherd@sog.unc.edu). But be on the lookout for more information to come via email.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: ERSKINE SMITH

*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 **Erskine Smith, a Senior Advisor.***



Birthplace?  **Mooresville.**

Any siblings? **No siblings. I’m an only child!**

Favorite food? **Chicken and Dumplings.**

Favorite vacation spot? **Ocean Isle Beach.**

Favorite hobby or pastime? **Golf.**

Childhood dream job? **Professional golfer.**

Favorite Movie? **“The Godfather:” or “Patton.”**

First local government job? **Zoning Administrator.**

Western or Eastern BBQ? **Eastern.**

Mountains, beach or Piedmont? **Mountains.**

Favorite Role Model? **I’ve been fortunate to have many during various career moves: Ray Boone when I was a buyer at Belk; Homer Faulk when I worked for the Chamber and Mooresville Economic Development Office; and Rick McLean at the Town of Mooresville.**



Favorite local government heroes? **Phil Green and Jake Wicker.**

Describe your town/city/county in 10 words or less. **A place of opportunity and growth.**

What is one thing most people KNOW about you or would say about you? **Hopefully that I am supportive and listen before I act.**

What is one thing most people would be surprised to learn about you? **I’m a melomaniac.**



# MEET AN EMERGING MANAGER

## Spotlight on Pat Madej.

*This month's "Emerging Manager Spotlight" highlights Pat Madej, Strategic Initiatives Manager for Durham County.*

**Birthplace:** Long Island, NY

**Current job and location:** Strategic Initiatives Manager for Durham County

**Favorite hobby:** I spend a good chunk of my free time with my bass guitars, whether writing and playing music with bands or at church, or tinkering and modding pickups and electronics. I have made a lot of my closest friends through playing music over the years, and the possibilities as a creative outlet are literally endless.

**What is your go-to book recommendation and why?**

The Very Bumpy Bus Ride is an obscure children's book from the 80s that I recently discovered and have read to my toddler probably twenty times in the last few months. It's a tale of a group of residents and animals trying to get to their local fair and running into trouble when their bus breaks down. I'd recommend it because it's a classic story of how collaboration and perseverance can get the job done, but mostly because it's great at making my son laugh.

**Why did you join the Association?** In my ~13 year public service career I've gotten to work in some great capacities including managing high profile community engagement projects, program evaluation, budgeting, and strategic planning. City/County Management is where all of these come together and the magic happens, so joining NCCCMA and attending the winter conference has been a great way to further

explore the field. I have also worked for some amazing City/County Managers around the Triangle, both past and present, and NCCCMA has been a great opportunity to get a closer and more practical look into what they do and the challenges they face.

**What does public service leadership mean to you?**

In my first local government internship, a seasoned executive imparted the wisdom that "we have two ears but only one mouth for a reason." I have carried that with me as a core leadership lesson, but it applies

broadly to public service as well - we need to not forget the importance of actively listening to and engaging with our communities so we can provide services that truly meet their needs and reflect their values.

**What do you think is the most pressing issue the next generation of managers will have to face?** It is becoming more important than ever to adapt to mainstream technology and cut through all of the noise and misinformation out there. We will

need to stay adept at telling the stories of the services our local governments provide and how hard working and passionate public service employees are.

**What makes your community unique and special?**

Our family chose to live in Durham because it's a community that truly has it all. Within 15 minutes you can hop from serene hikes to a vibrant downtown with a varied, yet tight-knit culture and REALLY good restaurants. What I probably admire most is that it's a place where you can be whoever you want to be.



# ETHICS: REFLECTING ON THE CODE'S VALUE

A former ICMA regional vice president's perspective on the Code of Ethics.

*By Ken Parker, ICMA-CM*

We may often forget why the ICMA Code of Ethics was so important to those first ICMA members. When you look at United States history during the early twentieth century, corruption and scandals were common at all levels of government. It was against this backdrop that those first professional city managers sought to differentiate themselves and the council-manager plan from what people saw in other local governments. The adherence to the Code outlining the profession's values became a distinguishing and defining characteristic of ICMA members. With its 13 tenets, the 1924 ICMA Code of Ethics established the ethical foundation for what it means to be a professional city and county manager. Over the years, we have built upon that strong foundation.

I was fortunate to begin my career in local government under the tutelage of Dallas city manager Scott McDonald, assistant city manager George Shrader, assistant city manager Gene Denton, and assistant to the city manager Jim Favor. Since I aspired to be a city manager, they encouraged me to join ICMA. Upon joining, I reviewed the tenets and guidelines of the Code. ... Those principles should be seen in every aspect of our life, professionally and personally.

In 1973, I accepted my first city manager position. ... I learned the importance of the Code and its application in real-life situations. There are three ethical examples that I dealt with in my career that stand out to me as I reflect:

## **1. Vendor Relations**

Soon after I arrived in my first city, I received a call from an elected county official. He wanted to introduce me to a vendor who provided the county with a number of products. The first question the vendor asked me was "What is your home address?" I asked him why and he said he wanted to send a box of cheese to my home. The Code immediately came to mind and I told him, "That is not how we do business." A few months later, I found out the man was an undercover agent. There were 75 individuals arrested and charged with accepting bribes. The county official who called me was one of those charged with accepting bribes.

## **2. Doing the Right Thing Knowing There May Be Consequences**

A few years later, I received a call from a prominent businessman who represented a number of individuals who owned properties in the downtown area of the community where I served. He said that one of his clients owned a building where the hardwood floors had buckled and believed it was the city's responsibility to fix the wooden floors since storm water had been captured under the building, causing them

## **THE ADMINISTRATOR**

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](mailto:collards12@yahoo.com).

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**2025 NCCCMA Summer Seminar**  
June 19-21, 2025  
Beaufort

## **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](http://www.ncmanagers.org/page/ManagerInTransitionReports)

to warp. I asked the city's insurance carrier and the city's consulting engineer to review the claim and determine its validity. Both came to the same conclusion: it was neglect by the property owner, not the city, that caused the floors to buckle. I called the businessman and told him that the city would not pay the claim.

A few days later, I was invited to a meeting in the rental agent's office. He wanted me to explain to the property owner, who happened to be an influential individual, why the city had denied the claim. The agent was on a speaker phone with his client when I entered the room. I explained the denial. The client asked his rental agent who was going to pay for the damage done to the building, and the agent replied that it would be the client's responsibility since the client did not carry that type of insurance on his properties.

A few days later, the mayor was in my office. He said that I made the right decision and remarked, "Remember that your ethical decisions often have consequences." The elected body stood behind my decision and did not pay the claim, and the community took notice that my ethics were not for sale. The Code had provided the guidance I needed in handling the situation.

### ***3. The Meaning of Political Neutrality***

Tenet 7 of the Code about political activity states: "Refrain from all political activities which undermine public confidence in professional administrators. Refrain from participation in the election of the members of the employing legislative body." It is interesting to compare this section of the current version of the Code to the section on political activity in the 1924 version. The 1924 version of the Code simply stated: "No City Manager should take an active part in politics."

When I came to Florida, the political landscape had begun to shift. The ethical dilemma that I wrestled with was whether to register with a specific political party. I determined that registering with one of the major political parties would hinder my effectiveness in making policy recommendations to the city council. Therefore, I decided to register as "no political affiliation (NPA)." That meant that I gave up my right to participate in party primary elections.

Many years ago, I had an elected official who stated that they knew how I voted. My response was "no, you don't!" They said that my wife was affiliated with a specific political party, but I reminded them that my wife is an independent thinker, and she preserved her right to participate in the nominating process. I reminded the elected official that I had chosen to be an NPA in order to not be tagged as a member of a specific party or political philosophy.

One of the roles that a manager plays in today's political environment is that of a bridge builder. In my career, I worked with governing bodies that were divided. Since I was viewed as nonpartisan and politically neutral, it enabled me to help them reach consensus.

### ***Conclusion***

I learned early in my career that the public does not separate our private and public life. Our public and private activities not only reflect on ourselves and our families, but also on the local government that we serve, as well as our profession. Our adherence to the Code, both personally and professionally, should be evident to our governing bodies, our fellow workers, our professional colleagues, and to the community. Throughout my career, the principles embedded in the Code have served to guide my conduct as a professional manager and as an individual.

*-Ken Parker, ICMA-CM worked in the public sector for over 43 years until his retirement, serving three cities as their city manager. He is currently an ICMA senior advisor in Florida.*

# CIVIC EDUCATION CORNER

Highlight your civic education successes each month.

We are excited to announce the launch of a new monthly article series dedicated to highlighting the various civic education programs being offered by NC local governments. This initiative aims to showcase the many innovative and impactful efforts being made by local governments to educate and engage children, youth and adults to help them better understand local government functions, understand civic processes, promote democratic values, promote civic engagement and civic responsibilities.

Please send us details about your program, including its goals, activities, and any notable achievements to Rob Shepherd, NCCCMA executive director, at [shepherd@sog.unc.edu](mailto:shepherd@sog.unc.edu)

## Inaugural Person County Civics Academy

We are excited this month to showcase the inaugural Person County Civics Academy. This eight-week public information and community engagement program is designed to offer County residents and business owners a chance to learn more about the functions of County government, how it serves the community, and how residents and business owners can get more involved in county government and its activities.



The graphic features the Person County seal on the left. To its right, the text 'PERSON COUNTY' is in a small, black, sans-serif font, and 'CIVICS ACADEMY' is in a large, bold, orange, serif font. Below this, a blue banner contains the text 'CONNECT WITH COUNTY DEPARTMENTS. LEARN HOW SERVICES ARE DELIVERED. DISCOVER WAYS TO GET MORE INVOLVED WITH YOUR COMMUNITY.' in white, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath the banner, two columns of bullet points are separated by a vertical dotted line. The left column lists: 'Eight Week Program', 'Thursdays, 6-8:30 pm', and 'Begins March 6'. The right column lists: '18 years of age or older', 'Live or work in Person County', and 'No charge to participate'. At the bottom of the graphic is a row of four photographs: a person in a floral shirt with a county seal on the back, a green combine harvester in a field, a brown dog on a leash, and a group of four people standing indoors.

**PERSON COUNTY**  
**CIVICS ACADEMY**

**CONNECT WITH COUNTY DEPARTMENTS. LEARN HOW SERVICES ARE DELIVERED. DISCOVER WAYS TO GET MORE INVOLVED WITH YOUR COMMUNITY.**

- Eight Week Program
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- 18 years of age or older
- Live or work in Person County
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**LEARN MORE AT [WWW.PERSONCOUNTYNC.GOV/CIVICS](http://WWW.PERSONCOUNTYNC.GOV/CIVICS)**

The inaugural Academy began earlier this month and will take place on Thursday nights. Weekly session topics include:

- General Government Overview
- Human Services
- County Government Administration
- Public Safety
- Environment & Transportation
- Economic & Community Development
- Culture & Recreation
- Community Partners

The Academy is open to those who live or work in Person County and be at least 18 years of age. Each Academy session is limited to 15 participants. There is no charge for this program.

# TWO DECADES OF PELA

This year's sessions will take place in July & August.

**Public Executive Leadership Academy** (PELA) program is the premier leadership experience for government professionals from the School of Government and is sponsored by NCCCMA. We are celebrating over two decades of excellence in Public Executive Leadership.

The dates are July 13-18 and August 3-8, 2025 in person at the School of Government.

The application period will close May 15, 2025.

Visit the [Public Executive Leadership Academy](#) home page for [scholarship information](#), faculty lists and alumni.

The Public Executive Leadership Academy provides municipal and county managers, assistant/deputy managers, and department directors the opportunity to learn more about themselves as leaders and to gain skills to lead and manage change in their communities. Participants will learn skills in facilitation, media relations, and emotional resiliency and will gain a deeper understanding of their leadership approach and how it affects their interaction with stakeholders, staff, and elected officials. They will choose a "real world" project that integrates lessons from PELA for leading regional, community, or organizational change and develop a plan for carrying it out, through peer consultation. Participants will also work on a personal leadership development plan that will incorporate feedback from faculty, peers, and a leadership self-assessment.

## Acceptance into this program

**requirement:** This course requires a minimum of seven years of supervisory experience in a local government-at least five years of which must be as a municipal or county manager (CAO), assistant/deputy manager, or department director.

**Fee:** \$5,300 (includes hotel and most meals)

**Please note:** PELA is an immersive residential program where participants are together for the length of the program. Hotel

accommodations are provided as part of the tuition cost, and it is required that you stay with the group at the hotel regardless of whether you are local. There are significant benefits to this experience. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact [Kim Nelson](#) or [Miranda Day](#).

**Scholarship Information:** Scholarships are available through NCCCMA for NCCCMA members.

The 2025 NCCCMA Scholarship Application can be found [HERE](#). Scholarship questions and completed scholarship applications must be submitted to Patrick Niland, NCCCMA professional development committee chair, [Patrick.Niland@unioncountync.gov](mailto:Patrick.Niland@unioncountync.gov).

Civic Local Foundation Scholarship. Members of Civic Federal Credit Union (Civic) and Local Government Federal Credit Union (LGFCU), who are local government employees, are eligible to apply for a scholarship towards tuition for conferences, classes, and seminars offered by the School of Government. The deadline to submit applications is June 1<sup>st</sup>.

[Visit the Civic Foundation for more information and to submit an application](#)



# SUMMER SEMINAR RETURNS TO BEAUFORT

Dates are June 19-21, 2025.

**The 2025 Summer Seminar will once again** return to the Beaufort Hotel in Beaufort, NC on June 19-21, 2025.

Pre-conference Golf Tournament, to benefit NCCCMA's Civic Education Program, will be held at Brandywine Bay Golf Club in Morehead City on Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup> with a shotgun start scheduled for 11:30 am. Lunch will be provided.

Pre-conference Workshop is being planned for Thursday afternoon on "Process Improvement for Local Governments."

The Program Committee is also working to identify additional activities to offer members on Thursday.

**General session topics include the following:**

- Federal & State Political Overview,



- "Communities of Excellence" - a national learning collaborative of communities across the country, trains communities in the Baldrige-based Communities of Excellence Framework, and provides opportunities for communities to work together, share successes, challenges, ideas and best practices, and learn from each other on their performance excellence journey <https://communitiesofexcellence2026.org/who-we-are/>
- Personal Resilience – Session led by Dr. Melissa Furman with Career Potential, LLC (see attached "session detail sheet" for more information.

**Concurrent session topics include the following:**

- Citizen Incivility: Managerial Strategies for Helping Employees Cope by Dr. Leisha Dehart Davis, UNC School of Government
- Cyber Security
- Citizens Academies
- Reimagining Employee Engagement

NCLM and NCACC staff will also provide legislative updates and the NCCCMA Business Meeting will be held on the morning of Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup>.

Registration and Hotel Reservations are scheduled to begin in mid-April. Be on the lookout for announcements.

# FINANCE MANUAL NOW ONLINE

## School of Government launches online NC Local Government Finance Policy Manual.

**The School of Government at UNC Chapel Hill** is pleased to announce an updated *North Carolina Local Government Finance Policy Manual*. This new version of the manual, now available fully online, is a revamped resource for North Carolina local governments and public authorities, helping them navigate budgeting, financial management, contracting, accounting, reporting, and auditing regulations.

This manual serves as the anchor resource for North Carolina local government finance law and practice. It provides concise analyses of the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act and other finance laws and addresses frequently asked questions. It also bridges the law and practice by providing sample ordinances, policies, and other implementation tools.

The online manual was created in partnership with the Local Government Commission (LGC), which is part of the NC Department of State Treasurer, and with support from Capital Management of the Carolinas.

Manual viewers will access resources to help work with auditors, the Local Government Commission, and other regulators as they navigate the state's local finance requirements.

The first eight chapters are available now; the remaining chapters will be added over the next year.

A collaborative effort among School faculty members who specialize in local government finance—led by expert Kara Millonzi—and experienced practitioners, this manual reflects real-time statutory provisions. The resource replaces the previous LGC finance policy manual. The team worked with LGC staff and other financial

professionals to incorporate the most relevant content to support local units.

The manual offers the following special features:

- Interactive table of contents allowing navigation of content by subtopic
- Customizable sample ordinances and policies for use within your organization
- Connection of relevant blog posts, video tutorials, and other resources to specific topic areas; and
- Real-time updates to address new laws and new issues

The manual is housed on NC Finance Connect, a full-service resource for those working in local government finance across the state. In addition to the manual, the website hosts a comprehensive list of relevant finance-related courses offered by the School, resources for local governments making recovery efforts in western North Carolina, upcoming Office Hours calls, partner organization resources, and more.

To explore more about and view the manual, visit [ncfinanceconnect.com](https://ncfinanceconnect.com).

