

March 2021 eNews Corrected

Mester's Message



As I write this March article we are nearing end of Black History Month, have kicked off the Lunar New Year and about to commemorate Women's History Month. What if we celebrated these events out of respect for our differences, where everyone is valued, respected and included, versus the necessity to cause a change within our culture and society? What is our role in achieving that goal? Are we committed to engaging in our history? It is certainly not an easy undertaking but just as the daffodil bulbs that are already coming out of the ground, while covered in snow and ice, we can break through this barrier. It is from understanding these and other designated commemorations that as local government professionals we can facilitate not just "a change in material conditions but a sense of dignity for people and communities, a bond between those who had once seemed far apart." [attribution: A Promised Land, Barack Obama, 2020, Page 11]

What do these events stand for.....?

Lunar New Year: ancient Chinese and Asian spring festival occurs with the **lunar calendar** first new moon and ends 15 days later on the first full moon. 2021 is Year of the Ox.

Black History Month: a commemoration, begun in 1926 as Negro history week and then in 1976 as Black history month, to enable adults and children to gain a broader understanding of Black histories, going beyond racism and slavery to spotlight achievements;

Women's History Month: a commemorating and encouraging the study, observance and celebration of the vital role of women in American history begun in 1911.

This month I want to focus at the macro level, versus specific tenets, on our vision, mission and core beliefs. These are the underpinning of our ethical principles and help us facilitate community building where everyone one is valued, respected and included. We can achieve this outcome, just like the Ox, as we are known for diligence, dependability, strength and determination. Or as Rebecca Ryan, noted during her recent conference presentation, the Ox is committed to perseverance; looking forward, not back to the new normal.

The ICMA Vision is to be the leading association of local government professionals dedicated to creating and sustaining thriving communities throughout the world. This vision is built upon the core beliefs of public service and stewards of democratic principles, ethics, council-manager form of government, equity and inclusion, continuous pursuit of excellence, stewardship in balancing resources and leadership capacity building.

As an ICMA affiliate, we are partners in supporting ICMA's mission to advance professional local government through leadership, management, innovation, and ethics. Consistent with these values and ideals VLGMA's mission is about "supporting local government managers build great communities through inclusion, innovation and leadership". This requires our continual focus on **V**ision, **V**alues, **L**eadership, **G**overnance, **M**anagement and **A**ction. The Winter Conference, "Leading in Challenging Times: Local Impacts of Civil Unrest and A Global Pandemic", provided us an opportunity to refuel and recommit to our vision, mission and core values. As the "Race, Equity and Inclusion Lessons Learned" panel members noted for us to be part of the societal change and live these values we must continually Assume, Assess and Act, the 3As:

- Assume there is institutional bias and that there are practices, policies, and procedures that are unintentionally benefitting certain groups over others;
- Assess the policies and procedures by looking closely at data and outcomes disaggregated by race and other demographic factors; and
- Act to create a plan to address the disparities revealed in the data.

As we commemorate Black History, Women's History and the Lunar New Year, I found myself thinking about leaders who have impacted societal change moving toward inclusive, respectful, compassionate as well as equitable communities and society. Join me in pondering their impact with a partial list of leaders that have had national, state, regional and local impact. What do you know about these leaders and their role in creating a world where

everyone is valued, respected and included? Who in your life and community do you know? Are you willing to join this group of human beings?

Frederick Douglass	Dorothy Vaughan	Dolly Parton	Bonnie Syrczek
Abraham Lincoln	Miriam Daniel Mann	Barbara Bush	Becky Dickson
Ulysses S. Grant	Kathryn Peddrew	Ruth Bader Ginsburg	Mattie Gundry
Thurgood Marshall	Christine Darden	Elizabeth Warren	Harriet Foote Turner
Harriet Tubman	Annie Easley	May Niyar	Betsy Read
Sojourner Truth	Kamala Harris	Kalpana Chawla	Joseph Tinner
Margaret Thatcher	Bobby Jindal	Amanda Gorman	Edwin B. Henderson
Martin Luther King	Patsy Mink	Douglas Wilder	Carol de Long
Mary Jackson	George Ariyoshi	Mark Keam	Dan Sze
Katherine Johnson	Yuri Kochiyama	Marc Ott	<i>and so many others...</i>

While staying safe inside due to snow and COVID-19, I recently re-watched the Disney movie *Mulan*. The movie is about an ancient Confucius tale, told for more than 1,500 years, of a brave warrior woman whose message continues to fit the changing context of our world. The Confucius virtues of LOYAL, BRAVE, TRUE & DEVOTION TO FAMILY [aka community] still ring true today for our local government profession's commitment to build great communities through inclusion, equity, respect, innovation, leadership and Action.

Please join me in welcoming our newest VLGMA members: Barrett Warner, Bedford Town Manager; Stephanie Gains, Fairfax County Senior Project Manager; Samuel Warner, Student and Havilah Wingfield, Student.

A BIG thank you to our winter conference Co-Chairs Richard and Valmarie as well as the Professional Development Committee for a great virtual conference which was rich in educational and networking opportunities. They certainly provided us a chance to refuel so we can be "brave enough to *see it*" and to be "brave enough to *be it*" [Attribution: Amanda Gorman, Youth Poet Laureate, January 20, 2021]

Stay safe, healthy and remain strong, Cindy

PS- the first ten readers who send me a brief description for the above leaders roles and key impacts will receive a special VLGMA thank you.

[Contact Cindy Mester](#)

Join VLGMA Today



Join VLGMA Today

By Tim Fitzgerald, VLGMA Second Vice President

As local government managers continue to work through the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and endure the uncertainty and unforeseen issues that we simply have never faced before, it is more important than ever to be a part of the VLGMA family.

If you are currently a VLGMA member, thank you for your continued support. If your membership has lapsed, please consider rejoining. And, certainly, if you know a colleague that could benefit from a VLGMA membership, please let them know of the many benefits that VLGMA provides. These benefits are what brought me to VLGMA. I have found over the years that having access to career support through senior advisors and career coaching programs has proven priceless when I am in need of some sound advice and direction. The excellent professional development programs at our annual summer and winter conferences and our Deputies, Assistants, and Others programs have provided me with great timely content, but also the opportunity to network with fellow managers from across the state as well. I would encourage you to join today!

[Contact Tim Fitzgerald](#)

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Focus on the Future – A Look at VLGMA's Strategic Plan



Focus on the Future – A Look at VLGMA's Strategic Plan

By Craig Meadows, VLGMA President-Elect

It was great to spend time together, albeit virtually, at our VLGMA winter conference a few weeks ago. The speakers and programs were outstanding, and it is always nice to devote time focusing on how we can strengthen ourselves as leaders in our communities. However, I greatly miss the opportunity to network in person with our colleagues and friends – hopefully we will be able to all meet in one place together in the not-to-distant future!

I appreciate the opportunity to continue to review with you VLGMA's Strategic Plan. As noted in the Plan's

introduction, "... a successful strategic plan helps VLGMA focus its work on what is truly important to the membership and on tasks in which VLGMA can make a significant contribution to the profession for Virginia local government managers and the next generation of managers." As I continue this series with you, I encourage you to think about that statement, and I ask that you let me (or any officer of VLGMA) know if you feel we are truly focused on the areas that make a difference in your service.

[Contact Craig Meadows](#)

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Community Conversations



Lessons Learned from Implementing Equity and Empowerment Focus into the Budget

Paul Workman, Budget Manager, City of Roanoke

"If you want to see what a government values just look at the way they prepare their budget," said Roanoke City Manager Bob Cowell recently, to engage our new Equity and Empowerment teams. We were branching off into uncharted territory by exploring new ways to look at how we develop and examine our budget, by examining everything through an equity lens.

The City of Roanoke is no stranger to developing its budget in new and creative ways. In my 14 years in the Division of Management and Budget, not once have we developed it the same way. This year is exceptionally different from many of our prior iterations. The focus is not on exploring 'incremental increases' or 'performance' or 'tiers' or the dreaded and all too common 'reduction scenarios'. Instead, this year is about something novel, as Equity and Empowerment take center stage.

To discuss this concept further or ask questions contact Paul (Paul.Workman@roanokeva.gov)

Have a topic for a future Community Conversations article to suggest?; please contact Cindy Mester (cmester@fallschurchva.gov)

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A DAO in the Life



A DAO in the Life

Valmarie Turner, Loudoun Assistant County Administrator

It is March 2021! Will Spring ever get here??? As a native Floridian, I have yet to acclimate to the weather – the very long winters (this is not up for debate)! I do, however, love Virginia and Loudoun County.

I recently celebrated my three-year anniversary with Loudoun County. I am excited about, both, where Loudoun County is headed and the people that I am honored to serve with in this community. Loudoun remains one of the fastest-growing counties in the United States – even amid the pandemic. I currently serve as the Assistant County Administrator for Community Development – which includes, Housing, Planning and Zoning, Building and Development, and Economic Development. While we have moved to providing many of our services in a virtual format, the workload has not diminished. Loudoun has several "big" land use development projects – affordable housing developments, data centers, and science museums – that are happening simultaneously with "big" policy documents – Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan, Zoning Ordinance Rewrite, and the Energov System. Loudoun County, like most local governments, is currently operating as a dual entity – Emergency Operations and the Local Government. Simply put – staff is resilient and dedicated!

[Contact Valmarie Turner](#)

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Civic Engagement Survey Results



I want to say a big THANK YOU to the 16 localities that completed the recent Civic Engagement Survey conducted by the Civic Engagement Committee. We conducted the survey to be able to share with you some of the great work that other localities around the Commonwealth are doing around civic engagement.

Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we are doing all we can to engage our communities. There are more roadblocks for civic engagement in place now than in any other time in recent history. I cannot remember another time that we have shut the public out of our buildings. This has forced us to get creative and find ways to get information to our citizens

and to get input from them even though we cannot meet face to face. This is evident in the fact that 49% of you are tracking your civic engagement initiatives through social media as compared to only 22% through attendance at board/council meetings.

[Contact Michael Stallings](#)

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Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award Process Begins Soon



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By Derek Stamey, Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Committee Chair

In the past year local government management team members worked innumerable hours and took on new responsibilities and roles to help their communities with pandemic response. Each year VLGMA acknowledges the work of a deputy or assistant who has demonstrated outstanding performance, particularly with a special project or during a period of unique conditions or circumstances with the Marcia Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award. Deputies and assistants are nominated by their administrator or manager for this award.

[Contact Derek Stamey](#)

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Institute of Government Update



The VIG team has been busy working directly with local governments beyond our usual technical assistance and training programs. We recently completed an engagement with the Richmond City Council to facilitate their two-day virtual council retreat. This included identifying and prioritizing Council internal and external strategies. We look forward to similar work with the Patrick County Board of Supervisors later this month. Please contact me if you are interested in learning more about our professional services available to localities.

The following is our virtual training course calendar for March and April:

- Cybersecurity for Local Government, Part 1 - March 18, time TBA, 1.5 hours
- Cybersecurity for Local Government, Part 2 - March 25, time TBA, 1.5 hours
- Collaborative Leadership, April 8, time TBA, 4 hours*
- Conflict Resolution, April 15, time TBA, 4 hours*

[Contact Charles Hartgrove](#)

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Certificate News



The Local Government Certificate Program is in the midst of a rigorous semester. We are gearing up for the Summer semester and continuing our recruitment efforts and answering questions about the Local Government Certificate Program through a virtual webinar led by Dr. Stephanie Davis. The **Summer application deadline is May 1, 2021** with a \$25 application fee and students who work for local governments can apply for the Bob Stripling Scholarship program (more details below) for tuition assistance. For more information, please find our spring session below:

- **Thursday, March 18, 2021 12 pm – 1 pm**
Zoom: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/89307397976>
- **Thursday, April 15, 2021: 12pm-1pm**

Zoom: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/83551852911>

[Contact Stephanie Davis](#)

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ICMA Update

ICMA's newest strategic

From ICMA Executive Director, Marc Ott, “Through this partnership, the two organizations will combine their efforts to drive the participation in and advancement of members of the LGBTQIA+ community in local government leadership roles. CivicPRIDE works toward the advancement of inclusive local governments by empowering LGBTQIA+ leadership”.

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ICMA Local Government Excellence Awards Program

ICMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

ICMA recognizes the many achievements of its members with award programs that highlight extraordinary accomplishments as well as dedicated service to the profession. Please visit icma.org/awards for more information on the program, and to see how to submit a nomination. Submissions accepted through **March 12, 2021**.

QUICK FACTS

PROGRAM AWARDS ARE CONFERRED BY JURISDICTION SIZE.

15 PROGRAM AND 5 PROFESSIONAL AWARDS.

PROGRAM MUST HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BY JAN 31, 2020.

NON-MEMBERS CAN NOMINATE BUT CAO MUST BE A MEMBER.

3 REASONS TO APPLY

- 1** YOUR COMMUNITY OR COLLEAGUE WILL RECEIVE YEAR-ROUND PUBLIC RECOGNITION WITHIN VARIOUS PLATFORMS.
- 2** YOUR COMMUNITY WILL BE PART OF AN IMPACTFUL AND WIDE REACHING IDEA EXCHANGE.
- 3** YOUR COMMUNITY OR COLLEAGUE WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED ON A GLOBAL PLATFORM IN FRONT OF PEERS.

There are a little over three weeks left to submit a nomination for the Local Government Excellence Awards. We have condensed our initial promotion packet to a quick one-pager highlighting how simple it is to submit an award. Please encourage your members to submit a nomination and highlight the amazing work they are doing in their community.

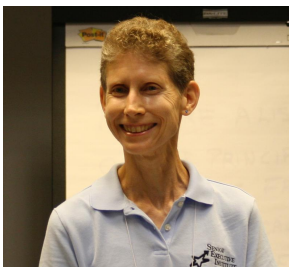
Contact [Erika Cooper](#) for more info.

4 EASY WAYS TO SUBMIT A NOMINATION

- 1** Login to your ICMA account. Don't have an account? It's easy, create one [here](#).
- 2** Click on Awards. Select Apply for Professional or Program Excellence Awards.
- 3** Select the award type you are nominating for then Apply Online.
- 4** Complete the form and upload the narrative document. Visit the [website](#) for details and instructions.

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Mel's Poetry Corner



Leprechaun Mischief

On St. Patrick's Day be sure to wear green
or by a Leprechaun, you may be seen.

They love to play a trick on you,
perhaps your glasses or keys, remove.

A four leaf clover is a bargaining chip in fact
for getting all your missing items back.

A shamrock provides you with added protection
from their devious and surreptitious intention.

If lucky you might catch a fortuitous glance
of a Leprechaun doing a celebratory dance.

Your whole being will joyously respond
at this serendipitous and rare sighting of a Leprechaun.

Leprechauns, four leaf clovers, March madness, wearing green,
what is real and what is a dream?
Maybe this world is not what it seems.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)



Position Changes And Other Events

February 2021

- Bobbie Tassinari, King William County administrator since 2018, announced her resignation effective immediately. She previously served as deputy county administrator and director of finance.
- Rebecca Carter, Buckingham County administrator since 1997, has announced her retirement effective June 30. She has served the county continuously in various roles since 1986.
- Dr. Linda Milsaps, executive director of the George Washington Regional Commission since 2018, has been appointed as the Floyd County administrator effective March 1. She previously served as the research director of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and has held several positions in state government and the private sector.
- Larry Hughes, an executive manager with The Berkley Group, has been named King George interim county administrator. Since his retirement, he has served in interim positions in Dumfries, Lovettsville, and Sussex County.
- Aaron Gridale, Woodstock deputy town manager since 2019, has been appointed town manager there effective February 27. He previously served as the director of zoning and inspections for Winchester.
- Trenton Crewe has been appointed as the town manager of Bluefield. He has served as interim town manager since November. He previously served as the mayor of Wytheville for 28 years.

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