

Fall 2024 Volume 82, Issue 2

The Alabama

# MUNICIPAL

Official publication of the Alabama League of Municipalities

Journal



1994 - 2024

The CMO Program Celebrates 30 Productive Years of Educating  
and Supporting Alabama's Municipal Officials! See page 14.

## LEAGUE OFFICERS

Mark Saliba - *Mayor, Dothan, President*  
Sherry Sullivan - *Mayor, Fairhope, Vice President*  
Greg Cochran - *Executive Director*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024 - 2025

From the First Congressional District

Jim Staff - *Mayor, Atmore*  
Katherine Breeden - *Councilmember, Loxley*  
Mike McMillan - *Mayor, Spanish Fort*  
Newton Cromer - *Councilmember, Saraland*  
Ruthie Campbell - *Councilmember, Robertsdale*

From the Second Congressional District

Marché Johnson - *Councilmember, Montgomery*  
Gordon Stone - *Mayor, Pike Road*  
Dexter McLendon - *Mayor, Greenville*  
Jason Reeves - *Mayor, Troy*  
Stanley Stallworth - *Mayor, Evergreen*

From the Third Congressional District

Rusty Jessup - *Mayor, Riverside*  
Billy Pearson - *Councilmember, Lincoln*  
Ron Anders - *Mayor, Auburn*  
Michael Ellis - *Councilmember, LaFayette*  
Scott Reeves - *Mayor, Hokes Bluff*

From the Fourth Congressional District

Jennifer Williams Smith - *Councilmember, Jasper*  
Allen Dunavant - *Mayor, Glen Allen*  
Chuck Ables - *Mayor, Geraldine*  
Andrew Betterton - *Mayor, Florence*  
Mike Lockhart - *Mayor, Muscle Shoals*

From the Fifth Congressional District

Dana Henry - *Councilmember, Athens*  
Gary Livingston - *Mayor, Eva*  
Jim McCamy - *Mayor, Scottsboro*  
Tommy Perry - *Councilmember, Priceville*  
Connie Spears - *Councilmember, Madison*

From the Sixth Congressional District

Mike Oakley - *Mayor, Centreville*  
Ashley Curry - *Mayor, Vestavia Hills*  
Bobbie White - *Mayor, Brent*  
Michael Gay - *Councilmember, Millbrook*  
Theoangelo Perkins - *Mayor, Harpersville*

From the Seventh Congressional District

Bobby Scott - *Mayor, Center Point*  
James Perkins Jr. - *Mayor, Selma*  
Gwendolyn Rogers - *Mayor, Linden*  
Brian Puckett - *Mayor, Helena*  
Sheldon Day - *Mayor, Thomasville*

## EXECUTIVE

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(Active Past Presidents)

Randy Garrison - *Mayor, Hartselle (2023-24)*  
Lawrence "Tony" Haygood Jr. - *Mayor, Tuskegee (2022-23)*  
Gary Fuller - *Mayor, Opelika (2021-22)*  
Leigh Dollar - *Mayor, Guntersville (2020-21)*  
Ronnie Marks - *Mayor, Athens (2019-20)*  
Howard Rubenstein - *Mayor, Saraland (2016-18)*  
Phil Segreaves - *Mayor, Guin (2016)*  
Sadie Britt - *Councilmember, Lincoln (2015-16)*  
Walt Maddox - *Mayor, Tuscaloosa (2013-14)*  
Charles Murphy - *Mayor, Robertsdale (2010-11)*  
Lew Watson - *Mayor, Lincoln (2006-07)*  
Johnny Ford - *Councilmember, Tuskegee (1989-90)*

# About ALM:

The Alabama League of Municipalities is a nonpartisan membership association of over 450 incorporated cities and towns. Since 1935, the League has worked to strengthen municipal government through advocacy, training and the advancement of effective local leadership. As the recognized voice of Alabama's cities and towns, ALM's member municipalities benefit from a variety of member programs, services and activities that are impossible to accomplish alone.



## Go Digital!

Scan the QR code to see e-versions of *The Alabama Municipal Journal* available online. Between editions, keep up with ALM's daily activities via our social media channels. Photos from League events are also available for viewing and downloading on our Flickr page.



Follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter): @AL\_League



Follow us on Facebook: @ALALM



Follow us on Instagram: @alabamacitiesandtowns



Follow us on LinkedIn: @alabama-league-of-municipalities



Follow us on Flickr: flickr.com/photos/alabamaleagueofmunicipalities/albums

## Advertising with the League:

*The Alabama Municipal Journal is published by the Alabama League of Municipalities, 535 Adams Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104. Telephone (334) 262-2566. Website: www.almonline.org. Subscriptions are \$26.00 per year. Advertising rates and a circulation statement are available. Statements or expressions of opinions appearing within this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Alabama League of Municipalities. Publication of any advertisement should not be considered an endorsement of the product or service involved. Material from this publication may not be reprinted without permission.*

Editor: LORI JHONS Graphic Designer: KARL FRANKLIN



# The Alabama MUNICIPAL Journal

Official publication of the Alabama League of Municipalities

Fall 2024 • Volume 82, Issue 2

## In this Issue:

Executive Director's Report .....	5	Local Government Best Practices for Nonprofit Collaboration .....	30
Leadership Perspective .....	7-8	Updated Municipal Resources and Reporting Guides .....	32
Legal Viewpoint: Public Employees, Public Property and the Political Process .....	9	Make Plans to Join the League for Training in 2025! .....	33
2025 Elections Publications .....	12	Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation Celebrates 35 Years .....	36
ALM's Certified Municipal Official Program Turns 30 .....	14	Between the Ballots - Ways Elected Officials Can Make the Biggest Impact as Leaders During Their Term in Office ....	40
EDA Spotlight: From Small Town to Growing Community: How EDA Helped Shape Pike Road's Future .....	18	A Century of Strengthening Cities: National League of Cities Turns 100 .....	44
ACE Spotlight: Alabama Communities of Excellence Selects Class of 2024 .....	21		
Fleet Rotation Tips for Municipalities .....	25		
The League Welcomes New Staff Members, Assigns New Staff Roles and Bids Farewell to Departing Friends! .....	28-29		



14



21



36



44

## On the Cover:

*The Alabama League of Municipalities celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Certified Municipal Official (CMO) program on September 22, 2024. In 1994, the League launched its voluntary CMO program under the leadership of its former executive director, Perry Roquemore Jr., making it the second oldest elected municipal official training program in the country. Original design created by Karl Franklin.*

# Add Peace of Mind

The Municipal Workers Compensation Fund has been serving Alabama's Municipalities since 1976 and is the second oldest league insurance pool in the nation!



- Directed by Veteran Municipal Officials from Alabama
- Over 600 Participating Municipal Entities
- Free Safety Video Library & Online Training
- Since 1976, MWCF has returned over \$85 million to its members as Renewal Dividends.
- Free Medical Cost Containment Program
- New Member Discounts
- Loss Control Services Including:
  - Skid Car Training Courses
  - Fire Arms Training System
- Claims Analysis
- Safety Discounts Available

## Contact Us!

Quick Quotes  
available online.  
[www.almwcf.org](http://www.almwcf.org)

Richard Buttenshaw  
President, MWCF  
P.O. Box 1270  
Montgomery, AL 36102  
334-262-2566

Terry Young  
Marketing Manager, MWCF  
P.O. Box 43769  
Birmingham, AL 35243  
1-888-736-0210  
email: [tyoung@mrm-llc.com](mailto:tyoung@mrm-llc.com)

# Director's Update on Fall Committees and Board Meetings

Gregory D. Cochran • Executive Director

The ALM Standing Committees and Legislative Committee Day was held in Montgomery on October 9, 2024. The six standing committees and legislative committee serve as the genesis for our advocacy initiatives as we prepare for next year's legislative session. Several key issues were discussed and adopted by the members of the committees. These issues impact municipalities' ability to provide quality of life services for their citizens. The legislative committee recommendations included the state provide additional resources for access to mental health; school resource officers; drinking water and wastewater infrastructure; and incentives for local economic investments. I want to express our appreciation to the Alabama City/County Management Association; the Alabama Association of Municipal Attorneys; federal and state agencies; and our strategic partners for their participation as resource advisors with our standing committees.

The ALM Board of Directors held its fall meeting on October 10. During the legislative discussions, members of the board expressed their concerns over the current health care crisis in our communities. Several health care facilities, particularly in rural Alabama, have announced the closure of their facilities or discontinued services, which are vital to the communities and citizens they serve. In 2023, ALM hosted two health care summits highlighting the challenges citizens face when accessing health care; the recruitment and retention of health care professionals; and additional funding for health care facilities across Alabama. We will be focusing on these topics and more during our ALM Advocacy Day on February 12, 2025, at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel. It is imperative for all of us to express our concerns to state policymakers on the importance of having a sustainable health care infrastructure throughout our state.

The ALM team is working diligently on putting together the new Certified Municipal Official (CMO) training program platform ahead of the Alabama Municipal Training Act taking effect on January 1, 2025. We are thrilled to be partnering with the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Innovation Center in utilizing their online learning platform and their facilities across Alabama to provide in-person training for municipal officials. This will provide easier access to the regional workshops and 24/7 access to the online training materials. As we celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CMO program, we are committed to providing the most current training on laws, regulations and best practice policies needed by our officials.

This time of the year provides a great opportunity for our association to prepare for the upcoming legislative cycle. Next year will be a year of transition as we expect the 2025 municipal elections to produce a 35% to 40% turnover rate in local officials. Our legal team is already positioned to provide election advice to municipal officials and municipal clerks whenever you need it. Following the August elections, we will host four regional orientation workshops for newly elected officials to introduce them to best practices in municipal governance.

For some, the upcoming ALM Annual Convention on May 13-16, 2025, in Huntsville may be your last to attend as a municipal official. It will also be a celebration of our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary! We are making plans for this to be a very special event; so, make sure you attend!

As always, we appreciate your leadership in your community and our association. ■

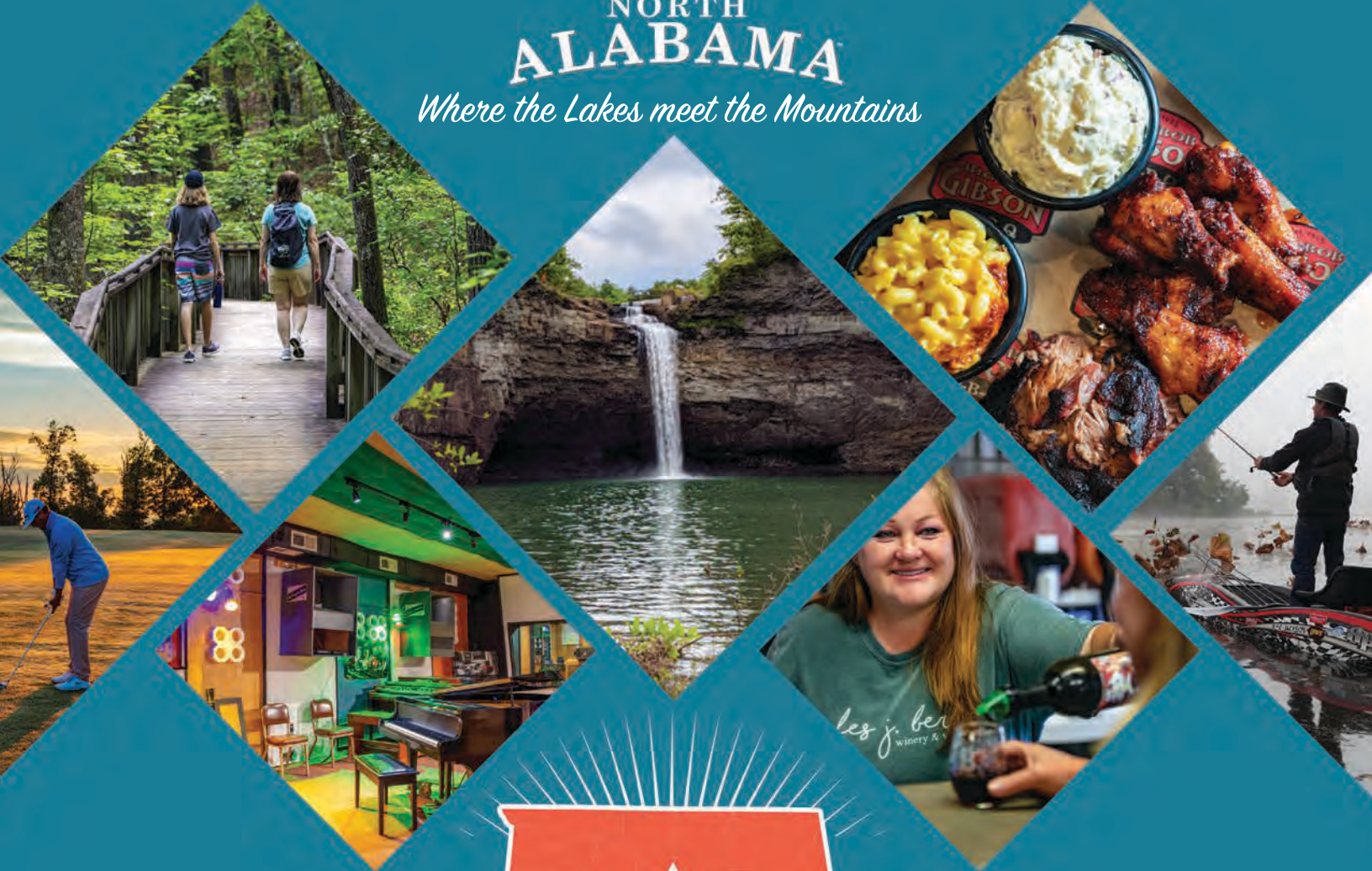
Peace be with you,

Gregory D. Cochran, CAE



NORTH  
ALABAMA

*Where the Lakes meet the Mountains*



# ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION

WWW.NORTHALABAMA.ORG  
(800) 648-5381

*Call or scan for your  
free Travel Guide!*



@VisitNorthAL

# Leadership Perspective

Mayor Mark Saliba • Dothan • ALM President



**B**enjamin Franklin once said, “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” Since 1994, the Alabama League of Municipalities has been providing informational, educational and timely programs for our membership, and the payoff is seen in the communities that we serve!

Municipal government is the level closest to the citizens and is directly responsible for the quality-of-life services they expect and demand. The Certified Municipal Official program not only allows us to invest in ourselves and our communities, but it connects councilmembers and mayors together that are facing similar challenges and opportunities.

On May 3, 2024, Gov. Kay Ivey signed into law the Alabama Municipal Official Training Act, which I believe solidifies ALM as the leading authority in training municipal officials in the state of Alabama. More importantly, it will better position local officials to understand and stay on top of core subjects necessary to maintain their operations, abide by state laws and help their communities prosper.

Invest in yourselves; it will pay dividends!

Legendary football coach, Vince Lombardi, said, “Individual commitment to a group effort — that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”

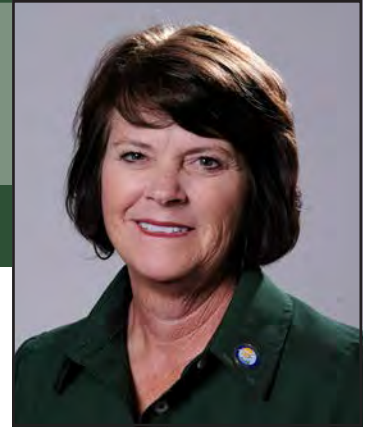
I strongly believe that if every town and city in the Alabama League of Municipalities is committed to a specific legislative effort, we can make a difference for everyone on issues that are so important to our citizens. I have met and talked with many of you and know that you deeply care for your communities. If we can commit to our staffs’ efforts in providing resources for us, we will be successful in this next legislative cycle!

Engage now in a positive and proactive manner with your legislators, and it too can pay dividends! Thank you for all you do. ■



# Leadership Perspective

Mayor Sherry Sullivan • Fairhope • ALM Vice President



It is an exciting time for the Alabama League of Municipalities and the new Live Locally Alabama campaign! President Mark Saliba and I have enjoyed going on shows like Capitol Journal and The Noon Show to discuss this initiative. We have made it a point to promote it at every ALM event we take part in, and we challenge you to do the same in your communities.

The Live Locally Alabama campaign encourages citizens to Shop Locally, Work Locally, Learn Locally, Explore Locally, Serve Locally and Live Locally!

I cannot express enough how excited I am about this initiative and how it highlights the crucial role municipal government plays in the daily lives of Alabama's citizens. Everything we do every day is about the quality of life of our citizens and so is this campaign.

In Fairhope, we have developed a campaign around the holidays focusing on shopping and celebrating locally. I know all of our communities have great holiday activities, and it is the perfect time to showcase these events and highlight how they impact the quality of life for our citizens.

The Live Locally Alabama campaign is a service provided to you as a member of the Alabama League of Municipalities at no additional charge. Utilize the ready-to-use marketing materials they have created to showcase what makes your community special; this includes graphics, videos, a community flyer, talking points and press releases. The Alabama League of Municipalities is here to serve you as we work together to navigate the changing climate and needs of each city and town throughout Alabama.

If you don't know where to start, please set aside some time to call the League office and see how this initiative can assist you in promoting your community and the important work we do as elected officials. ■



Live Locally  
Alabama Materials



Capitol Journal  
Interview



The Noon Show

WORK LOCALLY

SHOP LOCALLY

PLAY LOCALLY

SERVE LOCALLY



# LEGAL VIEWPOINT

By Rob Johnston, Director of Legal Services, ALM

## Public Employees, Public Property and the Political Process

**I**t has been said that “All politics is local”. Since the early days of our country, the political activity of public employees and the use of public property for political or campaign purposes has been a concern to government officials. As the 2025 municipal election season draws near, most municipalities will begin to feel the impact of political activity and encounter questions about how municipal resources can be used.

During every municipal election cycle, the League receives numerous calls asking about the political activity of public employees and the use of public property for political or campaign purposes. This article summarizes the rights and restrictions applicable to public employees participating in the political process as well as those that apply to the use of public property for political purposes.

### Political Activity of Government Employees

In Alabama, public employees were given the right to fully participate in political activities with the passage of the Equality of Citizenship Act in 1983. This act gave city employees the right to participate in county and state elections; county employees the right to participate in city and state elections; and state employees the right to participate in county and city elections. This provision was amended in 1995 to allow public employees to participate in the political process at any level of government, regardless of their employment. These provisions are now codified in Section 17-1-4, Code of Alabama 1975.

Section 17-1-4, Code of Alabama 1975, provides that no city employee, whether classified or unclassified, shall be denied the right to participate in county and state political activities to the same extent as any other citizen of the state, including the endorsing of candidates and contributing to campaigns of his or her choosing. The law also provides that all employees of any city, county or state have the right to join local political clubs and organizations and state or national political parties. Section 17-1-4(a)(4). Further, public employees have the right to publicly support issues of public welfare, circulate petitions calling for, or in support of, referendums and contribute freely to those of his

or her choosing. Section 17-1-4(a)(5). Finally, Section 17-1-4(c) provides that when off duty, out of uniform and acting as a private citizen, no law enforcement officer, firefighter or peace officer shall be prohibited from engaging in city, county or state political activity or denied the right to refrain from engaging in political activity, so long as there is compliance with this section. As such, the law is clear that public employees cannot be denied their right to engage in political activities.

Another protection public employees have is Section 17-17-5(c), Code of Alabama 1975. This provision of state law provides that it shall also be unlawful for any officer or employee to coerce or attempt to coerce any subordinate employee to work in any capacity in any political campaign or cause. Any person who violates this section shall be guilty of the crime of trading in public office, and upon conviction thereof, shall be fined or sentenced, or both, as provided by Section 13A-10-63. It goes on to provide that it is also unlawful for any officer or employee to solicit any type of political campaign contributions from other employees who work for the officer or employee in a subordinate capacity.

In addition to state law allowing public employees to engage in political activity as they choose, a public employee has a First Amendment right under the United States Constitution to be free from coercion or retaliation by a superior regardless of their participation in the political process. Supervisors and employers may not coerce employees to campaign, nor can they retaliate or discharge an employee based solely on their political beliefs and activities.

If the First Amendment protects a public



employee from discharge based on what he or she says, then it also protects them from discharge based solely on what he or she believes. See *Branti v. Finkel*, 445 U.S. 507 (1980); but see *Elrod v. Burns*, 427 U.S. 347 (1976) (a State provides a compelling interest in infringing First Amendment rights when it can show that party affiliation is an appropriate requirement for the effective performance of the public office involved). The rule that the First Amendment forbids public employers from discharging or threatening to discharge employees solely for non-support of the political party in power extends to decisions on hiring, promotion, transfer and recall after layoff. See *Rutan v. Republican Party of Illinois*, 497 U.S. 62 (1990).

### **Public Employees as Candidates**

Employees do not give up their right to participate in political activities just because they work for a municipality, but what happens when a municipal employee decides he or she wants to run for office? Section 17-1-4(b) provides the following:

Notwithstanding Section 17-17-5, any employee of a county or a city, whether in the classified or unclassified service, who qualifies to seek a political office with the governmental entity with which he or she is employed, shall be required to take an unpaid leave of absence from his or her employment or use accrued overtime leave or use accrued vacation time with the county or city from the date he or she qualifies to run for office until the date on which the election results are certified, or the employee is no longer a candidate or there are no other candidates on the ballot. For purposes of this subsection, the term “employing authority” means the county commission for county employees or the city council for city employees. Any employee who violates this subsection shall forfeit his or her employment position. In no event shall this subsection apply to elected officials.

Therefore, to be a candidate in an election in the municipality where an employee works, the employee must take an unpaid leave of absence or use personal leave or compensatory time from the date he or she files qualifying papers to run for office. For municipal elections, qualification of candidates begins on June 10, 2025, and goes through June 24, 2025. The employee/candidate’s leave of absence would begin on the date he or she formally qualifies. Keep in mind that people running for municipal office can begin campaigning long before they actually qualify to run.

Employees running for municipal office may very well have announced they are running and begin campaigning before they are required to take a leave of absence. Again, keep in mind that they are only required to take a leave of absence if they are running for office in the municipality where they

work. For example, an employee of the city of Luverne could run for mayor or council of Luverne, but they must take a leave of absence from their job. The same would not be true if they are running for county commissioner for Crenshaw County. While they would not have to take a leave of absence from the city of Luverne to run for county commissioner, the municipal employee can only engage in political activities while on approved leave, off duty and on personal time, before or after work, and on holidays. See AGO 2005-187. Employees who violate this provision must be dismissed.

Unpaid reserve officers do not have to take a leave of absence to run for municipal office unless the council establishes a policy requiring this. AGO 1997-00034. A personnel policy that allows employees during unpaid leave to continue their health insurance coverage, provided they pay the premiums, would permit an employee taking time off to run for office to do the same. AGO 1998-00090.

### **The Hatch Act**

The Hatch Act is a federal law covering federal employees and officers and employees of a state or local agency if their principal employment is in connection with an activity which is financed in whole or in part by loans or grants made by the United States government or a federal agency. Generally, this law does not restrict activity in nonpartisan elections. Municipal elections are nonpartisan. Additional information and advisory opinions on the application of the Hatch Act may be obtained from the U.S. Office of Special Counsel.

### **Providing Employees the Opportunity to Vote**

With regard to employees and their right to vote, employers, whether public or private, must provide employees with the opportunity to vote in elections. Section 17-1-5, Code of Alabama 1975, provides that every employee in the state shall, upon reasonable notice to his or her employer, be permitted by his or her employer to take necessary time off from his or her employment to vote in any municipal, county, state or federal political party primary or election for which the employee is qualified and registered to vote on the day on which the primary or election is held. The time off cannot exceed one hour. If the employee’s work schedule commences at least two hours after the opening of the polls or ends at least one hour prior to the closing of the polls, then the employer is not required to grant time off for voting. Further, the employer may specify the hours during which the employee may be allowed off to vote.

### **Use of Public Funds or Property for Campaign Activities**

Whether they are a candidate or not, municipal employees can only engage in political activity on their own time. They are also prohibited from using any public resources. State law provides that “no person in the employment of the state of

Alabama, a county, a city, a local school board, or any other governmental agency, whether classified or unclassified, shall use any state, county, city, local school board, or other governmental agency funds, property, or time, for any political activities.” See Section 17-17-5(a), Code of Alabama 1975. Public employees may not use public property for political activities, nor may they use their official positions to influence voters. AGO 93-00108.

In addition to requiring public employees to use their own time and resources for any political activities, Alabama law also prohibits them from arranging, by salary deduction or otherwise, for any payments to a political action committee or for the payment of dues to a membership organization which uses any portion of the dues for political activity. Section 17-17-5(b)(1).

Political activity for these purposes is limited to the following:

- a. Making contributions to or contracting with any entity which engages in any form of political communication, including communications which mention the name of a political candidate.
- b. Engaging in or paying for public opinion polling.
- c. Engaging in or paying for any form of political communication, including communications which mention the name of a political candidate.
- d. Engaging in or paying for any type of political advertising in any medium.
- e. Phone calling for any political purpose.
- f. Distributing political literature of any type.
- g. Providing any type of in-kind help or support to or for a political candidate.

Section 17-17-5(b)(1), Code of Alabama 1975.

If a public employee wishes to have membership dues paid by salary deduction, they must provide to their public employer a certification from the membership organization stating that none of the membership dues will be used for political activity. Further, at the end of each calendar year, any organization which has arranged for public employees to have membership dues deducted from their salary must provide to the public employer a detailed breakdown of the expenditure of membership dues. The constitutionality of Section 17-17-5, Code of Alabama 1975 has been challenged and is currently in litigation. See *AEA v. Bentley*, CV-11-S-761-NE (N. Dist. Ala. 2011). The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama has issued an injunction enjoining the enforcement of this Section of state law. Municipalities should seek the advice of their attorney on any matter relating to the withholding of membership dues.

In addition to municipal employees, municipal officers are restricted in use of public property or funds by the Alabama Ethics Law. There have been numerous opinions of the Alabama Ethics Commission over the years relating to the use of public property and funds by public officers and employees. For example, a municipal planning commission director may run for a seat on the city school board, but he must campaign on his own time and may not use public property to aid his campaign. AO No. 96-45.

A public official may not use a public vehicle to attend a campaign function, nor may the vehicle be used in matters related to the campaign. The vehicle may be used to attend political party functions when the official is attending in its official capacity. AO 97-86.

### **Use of Public Facilities**

During the election cycle, the League gets calls asking about the use of public property and candidates regardless of whether they are also public employees. Often candidates will want to use city meeting facilities to hold a campaign forum, or they may wish to display campaign materials on public buildings, rights of way or bulletin boards. Article 4 of Chapter 12 of Title 36 of the Code of Alabama 1975 governs the use of state property for campaign activities. These statutes provide that it is unlawful for any state-owned property to be used for the advancement of any candidate for office, and political materials may not be displayed on buildings that are owned, rented or leased by the state. While there are no similar provisions for property owned by municipalities, it appears that municipalities may adopt ordinances to control the placing of political advertising on municipal property.

Based on opinions of the attorney general, common or public areas of public buildings and grounds can be used for holding press conferences or videotaping political advertising, provided that access to these areas is available to all candidates on an equal basis, subject to reasonable restrictions. Any areas in public buildings that are not open for equal access to all candidates, such as individual offices, should not be used by any candidate, including public officials and employees. AGO 1998-00211.

### **Conclusion**

It is important for public employees, public employers and candidates running for public office to be mindful during the election process of the rights and restrictions that apply to public employees and the use of public property. Hopefully, this article will help answer some of the questions that will arise between now and the 2025 municipal elections on August 26, 2025. For further information on municipal elections, please contact the Alabama League of Municipalities’ legal department at 334-262-2566. ■



# 2025 Elections Publications

Election season begins long before Election Day! To assist our municipalities in the administration of fair and free elections, the League's Legal Department has published important resources for the 2025 election cycle. They are available on the League website, on the Municipal Election Information page, [almonline.org/MunicipalElectionInformation](https://almonline.org/MunicipalElectionInformation).

- ***Procedures for Holding Elections in Mayor - Council Municipalities*** is a special report. It is a full manual of information, instruction and references to the underlying state laws concerning elections.
- ***Municipal Election Calendar*** is a quick reference guide and checklist of important dates along the path to election day and beyond.
- ***Selected Reading: Duties of the Mayor and Council*** is a primer on the relationship and responsibilities of the mayor and the council in making legal and ethical decisions for a municipality.



Procedures for Holding  
Elections in Mayor –  
Council Municipalities



Municipal  
Election Calendar



Selected Reading:  
Duties of the Mayor  
and Council



# NAFECO

**rosenbauer**

Recent Delivery

## Pine Grove Volunteer Fire Department



### ROSENBAUER COMMANDER TANKER

- 33" Cab with 11" Raised Roof, Cab Seating for Two (2)
- Cab Compartments with Slide Out Tool Boards
- Rosenbauer FX Aluminum Body
- 3000 Gallon "T" Water Tank, Hale RSD, 1250 GPM, Single Stage, Midship PTO
- Electric Rear Dump Valve with Electric Tandem Dump Valves
- Through the Tank Ladder Storage, Suction Hose Storage over Tank Rack
- Front Suction



**NAFECO.com/FireTruck**  
**info@nafeco.com • 800-628-6233**



# ALM's Certified Municipal Official Program Turns 30

Lori Jhons • Communications Director • ALM | Cindy Price • CMO/Corporate Relations Manager • ALM

**T**his year, the Alabama League of Municipalities proudly celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Certified Municipal Official (CMO) program!

Back in 1986, former executive director, Perry Roquemore Jr., noticed there were all kinds of training programs for municipal clerks, administrators, revenue officers and county administrators, but nothing for elected municipal officials. Furthermore, he saw that Georgia had created a program for municipal officials. He formed an education subcommittee of the executive committee composed of four members consisting of, at the time, Tuskegee Mayor Johnny Ford, Florence Mayor Eddie Frost, Rainbow City Mayor Sue Glidewell and Montgomery Councilmember Alice Reynolds (chair) to guide the efforts to survey members and create the program. In 1994, the League launched its voluntary CMO program, making it the second oldest elected municipal official training program in the country.

This was the start of something spectacular with a dream and mission to provide municipal education to elected officials in Alabama. The first session of the CMO program was held at the Adams Mark Hotel in Mobile on September 22, 1994. Nearly 200 officials enrolled in the program that year. The program has grown to provide training in several formats each year including in-person multiday conferences, one day regional trainings and online training to teach the fundamentals of local government and share policy updates and resources. Municipal officials have the incentive of obtaining three different levels of CMO certification after completing 40, 80 and 120 credit hours of training as well as graduating.

The CMO program spans the tenure of three executive directors who have each made their mark on the program and



|||||  
1994 - 2024





**Left:** The new tiered emeritus designations were recognized at the 2024 CMO Graduation. Pictured: ALM Executive Director Greg Cochran and Lisman Mayor Jason Ward.

**Top:** The first graduating class of the Certified Municipal Official Program in 1996.

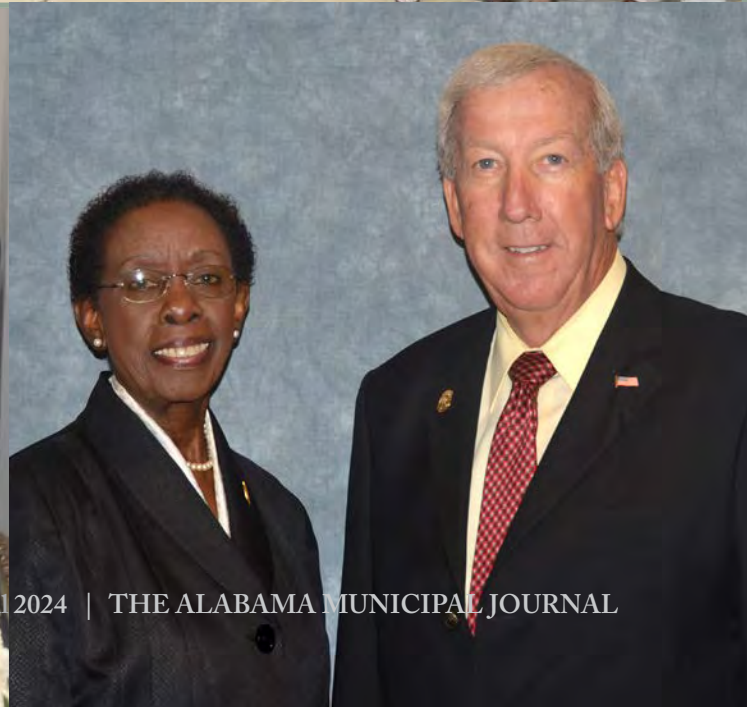
**Bottom:** Members of the 2004 Basic CMO graduating class celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program.

**Right:** Cindy Price pictured behind her CMO desk, where the eternal question is raised, "How many more hours do I need to graduate?"

contributed to advancing it. Under the leadership of Perry, ALM's third executive director, the CMO program got off to a strong start that we have built on every year since. We have proudly had 1,558 officials earn their basic designation since 1994 and 862 advanced graduates since 1998.

The CMO core curriculum and emeritus designation was established under the leadership of our fourth executive director, Kenneth Smith, to recognize mayors and councilmembers who have excelled beyond the requirements of the basic and advanced programs. Additionally, his administration created the Certified Municipality Achievement Awards, which recognizes cities and towns where the mayor and all councilmembers have earned the professional designation of Certified Municipal Official within the same year. We are proud to have had 124 emeritus graduates since 2015 and to have presented 63 Certified Municipality Achievement Awards since 2018.

Under the leadership of its current executive director, Greg Cochran, the League created the emeritus tiered recognition in 2024 to further highlight and honor those officials who have spent a lifetime in municipal service. During the 2024 Legislative Session, the advocacy



# New CMO Emeritus Levels Introduced



- **Emeritus, Tier I**  
120 - 199 hours and 15 points (existing pin)



- **Emeritus, Tier II**  
200 - 299 hours and 20 points (one green stone)



- **Emeritus, Tier III**  
300 - 399 hours and 30 points (two green stones)

- **Emeritus, Tier IV**  
400 + hours and 40 points (three clear stones)

team was successful in getting the Alabama Municipal Official Training Act signed into law. We sincerely appreciate Sen. Jabo Waggoner and Rep. Jim Hill for introducing the legislation to the Alabama Legislature in 2024 to expand the CMO program from a voluntary program to mandated training, making it one of the few mandated certification programs for elected municipal officials in the nation.

The act specifically requires mayors and councilmembers to complete 10 hours of training annually, provided by ALM, during their first term in office. All elected local officials will be required to receive five hours of training credits annually after receiving the 40 hours required for ALM's basic CMO certification. In preparation for the act to take effect on January 1, 2025, we are working in partnership with the Alabama Community College System to enhance our current online training offering through a new platform.

Looking ahead, the League is excited about the opportunities to continue growing the program. We believe the act will ensure all elected municipal officials have a path forward to expanding their knowledge of the fundamentals of municipal government and leadership growth thereby creating better communities.

Thank you to the more than 5,200 members that have engaged with the CMO program. We are grateful for your support, dedication and feedback on how to improve the program and the encouragement to keep it growing and evolving to meet your needs as elected officials. ALM members are the heartbeat of this program, and we appreciate all you do for ALM and your communities! ■

## ***Facing page:***

***Top:*** The 2014 CMO basic graduating class poses for a picture on the steps of city hall in Montgomery.

***Bottom, left:*** Former executive director, Perry Roquemore Jr., has delivered the CMO graduation address several times, including in 2024.

***Bottom, middle:*** Cindy Price and former executive director, Ken Smith, pose during the graduation reception for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CMO program.

***Bottom, right:*** Councilmember Sadie Britt and Mayor Wally Burns, the League's former vice president and president attended the 2014 CMO graduation reception in Montgomery City Hall.

***This page, top:*** The CMO emeritus tiers were announced at the 2024 ALM Annual Convention in Huntsville.



# From Small Town to Growing Community: How EDA Helped Shape Pike Road's Future

Caroline Carter • Communications Intern • ALM

In 1997, Pike Road was a quiet, rural Alabama town of just 200 residents nestled on the outskirts of the state's capital city of Montgomery. Today, it has grown into one of Alabama's fastest-growing municipalities, with more than 10,000 residents calling it home. This transformation reflects the town's mission: "Maintaining Our Character While Planning For Progress."

Though incorporated in 1997, Pike Road's roots date back to the early 1800s, when families such as the Meriwethers, Mathews and Marks built a farming community around a toll road. The road, where travelers paid a "pike" to pass, gave the town its name. Today, Pike Road celebrates its history while embracing growth, hosting events such as SummerFest for Independence Day and a plein air event hosted by its arts council that attract artists from across the eastern United States.

In 2005, the citizens of Pike Road participated in a visioning exercise, which created the four pillars they aim to live by: quality of life, public services, planning and education.

Education has played a central role in Pike Road's transformation. After years of strategic analysis, determined grassroots work and outcome-driven research, the Pike Road School System was established in 2010. Starting with no buildings, Pike Road Schools now boasts four campus locations, including a 6A high school. The system has scored "A's" on state report cards and houses active, award-winning extracurricular programs for music, robotics, theater, agriscience as well as high-level competition athletics programs. The town takes pride in their commitment to furthering lifelong learning, which is evidenced in the fact that 80% of the 2023-2024 high school graduates are pursuing additional higher education.

Furthermore, the town's ENHANCE Initiative promotes exercise, nutrition, health, agriculture, nature, community and education through volunteer-led projects. Developing community based trails, athletic facilities and a performing arts center are among the most notable accomplishments, further demonstrating Pike Road's commitment to enriching residents' lives.



**Left:** The Alpha Elite Academy is just one of the many successful youth programs that distinguish Pike Road's community in positive ways. The mayor and town council are always proud to celebrate accomplishments within the community. **Right:** Councilman Chris Dunn meets with engaged residents at one of six community input sessions for the 2024 comprehensive plan update.

The town's progress reflects the pride and dedication of its residents, who embrace a "Welcome Home" attitude. Known for its hospitality, faithful people, work ethic and quality of life, Pike Road has grown while preserving its small-town charm.

To support its rapid growth, Pike Road participated in the Alabama League of Municipalities' Economic Development Academy (EDA) in 2021. The program, developed in partnership with the Alabama Community College System, equips municipal officials with tools for sustainable growth and tailored economic strategies. Through collaborative sessions, leaders from across Alabama share insights and best practices.

Pike Road's leadership viewed the EDA as an opportunity to refine their growth strategy while maintaining their focus on community values. Participation in the program provided officials with insights to strengthen the economic base, attract new businesses and enhance residents' quality of life.

One of the first steps in Pike Road's EDA participation was conducting a community economic vitality survey. The survey identified opportunities to expand the town's retail, professional and industrial base, aligning with its comprehensive plan. First developed in 2007 and updated in 2017, the plan provides a roadmap for growth while balancing new development with Pike Road's character.

Participation in the EDA also strengthened collaboration among Pike Road's leaders. Mayor Gordon Stone, a key advocate for Pike Road's development, has led the town's involvement in the program. "We wanted to learn from the experts in the field of economic development so we could apply their work in our town," Stone said.

Stone began his journey with Pike Road in 1997 by signing the incorporation petition back when the town had 350 residents and only spanned two square miles. Shortly after, he was elected to the town council in 2000 and then as mayor in 2004. In addition to serving as mayor, he leads Alabama's Higher Education Partnership, which advocates for public universities and their economic contributions. Stone, a former Auburn football walk-on with degrees in agricultural economics and business, has guided Pike Road's growth with a vision for balancing opportunity and community character.

Stone joined Pike Road teammates Doug Fuhrman, Robert Gilpin, Chris Myers, Liz Craig and Rob Steindorff in attending the program. Together, they refined their approach to economic planning, business recruitment and community-focused strategies. Building on the lessons learned from the EDA, Pike Road launched the ONWARD Town of Pike Road initiative in 2024. This multi-project capital improvement plan aims to sustain growth momentum while enhancing the town's infrastructure, recreation facilities and accessibility.

Key projects under ONWARD include an economic development park; a recreation facility expansion, including new tennis and pickle-ball courts and The Children's Depot for Inclusive Play; and multiple road improvements. The mayor



**Left:** In partnership with Innovate Alabama, Pike Road hosted four dynamic college interns through its Innovative Intensive Internship. **Right:** Over 1,200 Pike Road residents participate in their annual Hay, Look at Us! hay bale decorating competition! Pictured are members of The Villages of Pike Road neighborhood working on their "sweet" creation.

shared the town is also engaged in securing retail in their five town centers. These developments align with Pike Road's commitment to ensuring its growth benefits all residents and highlights how the town has integrated EDA insights into workable projects that enhance quality of life and support sustainable progress.

"Pike Road is a community that has been blessed to have wonderful engagement and active support from its citizens. The energy created by residents who enthusiastically participate in the support of local business, agriculture, arts, and education has been amazing," Stone said. "The evidence is shown through residents attending local theater productions, greeting visiting plein air artists, cheering for the Pike Road Patriot athletics and exercising on the trails."

As Pike Road continues to grow, its leaders are focused on ensuring future projects align with the town's mission. The town has hired a director of economic development to build on the EDA's momentum and oversee business recruitment and community engagement.

This strategic approach has positioned Pike Road as a model for other municipalities navigating growth. The town's comprehensive plans, informed by data and guided by community values, demonstrate how thoughtful planning can balance progress with preservation.

With a focus on education, community-driven projects and sustainable development, Pike Road has become a standard for success for other municipalities. As its leaders look to the future, they remain committed to ensuring that the town's growth benefits current and future generations alike. ■

*Dozens of Pike Road residents and local officials gathered enthusiastically for the ground breaking of the new Pike Road High School campus on May 23, 2024.*



**For more information  
about the EDA program,  
scan this QR code.**



*The Children's Depot was dedicated as part of Pike Road's Founders Day events on Oct. 24, 2024. The park is an inclusive playground, designed with every child in mind.*



# Alabama Communities of Excellence Selects Class of 2024

Daleville and Fairfield Join the ACE Program

Lori Johns • Communications Director • ALM



**T**he Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) program selected the cities of Daleville and Fairfield, on August 29, 2024, to begin the designation process of joining the historic ACE program.

ACE encouraged mayors of eligible Alabama cities, those with populations ranging from 2,000 to 18,000, to apply for the program from February to May. The ACE Advisory Board then reviewed and made their recommendations for selection to the Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM). ALM adopted the ACE program as one of its membership service programs in 2022.

“After thoroughly reviewing all applications, we are thrilled to welcome Daleville and Fairfield to the ACE family,” ALM Executive Director Greg Cochran said. “We are looking forward to assisting both communities with areas they are looking to improve and help them fulfill their visions of creating sustainable quality of life services and programs for their citizens.”

ACE was established in 2002 as a 501(c)(3) organization to provide technical assistance to select smaller communities in an effort to strengthen long-term economic success. Through a comprehensive, three-phase approach, ACE uses the collective expertise of its partner organizations - ranging from state agencies



*The Daleville Lovely Touch Garden Club places memorial flags around the Daleville municipal complex for Memorial Day and Veterans Day each year to honor local veterans who gave their all. The UH-1 on display at the Daleville Cultural and Convention Center was flown in combat during the Vietnam War. Photo Credit: Councilmember Kevin Turley*

*The city of Fairfield celebrated the opening of a new playground, located directly across from Restoration Academy, on Nov. 6, 2023. The playground features two parts, a tot-lot and an area for older children, with multiple slides, swings and climbing equipment for all ages. Photo Credit: Goodwyn Mills Cawood*

Alabama Communities of Excellence  
Announces Class of 2024

Daleville and Fairfield join  
the ACE Program!

The graphic features three circular logos: Daleville (with a 'D' and '1823'), the ACE logo (with '2002'), and Fairfield (with '1829'). The background is light blue with white stars.



and associations to banks, utilities, universities and others - to foster unique community development programs.

As participants of the 2024 ACE Class, Daleville and Fairfield will start Phase I of the program this fall. Phase I focuses on community assessment, while Phase II concentrates on leadership development and strategic planning. Phase III wraps up the program with comprehensive planning and implementing the strategic plan.

ACE Program Coordinator Mary Jackson, who oversees the program, said, “ACE helps build foundational elements by recruiting citizens to participate in local strategic planning meetings; building local leaders organically; establishing a sense of pride; and most importantly assisting officials to develop a vision toward moving their community forward. How do you know where you’re going without having a plan to get there?”

For 22 years, ACE has provided the resources and knowledge for small communities across the state to

**Top:** Miles College's football field, the Albert J. Sloan - Alumni Stadium, is located in Fairfield, Alabama. The stadium is home to the Miles College Golden Bears. Photo Credit: Miles College

**Bottom:** Speakers at the 2024 Daleville Veterans Day program pictured left to right: Reverend John Logsdon of BRAVE and AMVETS, Elaine McLeod of the American Legion, Councilmember Kevin Turley of AMVETS, Charlie Wigglesworth of VFW, Wayne Wigglesworth of the U.S. Veterans Motorcycle Club and VFW, and LTC TJ Menn Commander of the 1-223rd Aviation Regiment. Daleville is at the main gate of the Gateway of Army Aviation, Fort Novosel. Photo Credit: Skye Turley





focus on the importance of planning, leadership development and broad-based community engagement. Community leaders are engaged through training and workshops to develop vision and mission statements, implementation strategies and a sustainable leadership development program. ACE assigns each community with a team of experts from the ACE Associates Council that guide them with an implementation strategy as they work through the program.

“I am grateful the city of Daleville has been selected to participate in the ACE program,” Daleville Mayor Jayme Stayton said. “I believe earning the ACE designation will positively impact our community now and in the years to come.”

ACE strives to guarantee widespread geographic coverage across the state. Forty-five cities have successfully completed the program to be designated as Alabama Communities of Excellence; they include: Alexander City, Arab, Ashville, Atmore, Bay Minette, Boaz, Brewton, Center Point, Childersburg, Demopolis, Elba, Eufaula, Evergreen, Fairhope, Fayette, Florala, Foley, Gardenale, Geneva, Graysville, Guin, Gulf Shores, Guntersville, Haleyville, Hanceville, Hartselle, Headland, Hefflin, Helena, Jackson, Jacksonville, Jasper, Leeds, Livingston, Millbrook, Monroeville, Montevallo, Oneonta, Ozark, Rainsville, Saraland, Spanish Fort, Tallassee, Thomasville, and Valley. Daleville and Fairfield will join Abbeville, Aliceville, Chelsea, Luverne and Red Bay, who are currently working through the phases of the program.

“The city of Fairfield is honored to be selected for the ACE program,” Fairfield Mayor Eddie Penny said. “The program will help city leaders develop skills to boost economic development and so much more.”

ACE’s partner organizations are vital to the success of the program. The program’s 2024 partners include: the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association, Alabama Municipal Electric Authority, Alabama Power Company, Alabama Small Business Development Center Network, Auburn University – Government and Economic Development Institute, Goodwyn Mills Cawood, Spire, The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development and the University of West Alabama. ■



**The Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) Program was created to help smaller communities (population 2,000 to 18,000) to Plan, Grow and Prosper. For more information about the ACE program, scan this QR code.**



# ALABAMA MANUFACTURED HOUSING ASSOCIATION



Earlier this year, AMHA was proud to work with Clayton Homes and the City of Gadsden to provide a manufactured home to serve as a temporary fire station for the Gadsden firefighters at Station 5 in Noccalula Falls.

## THIS IS JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF HOW MANUFACTURED HOMES CAN BE USED EFFICIENTLY IN YOUR CITY.

For more information, contact **Lance Latham**, Executive Director,  
Alabama Manufactured Housing Association.

**(334) 244-7828 | [llatham@alamha.org](mailto:llatham@alamha.org) | [alamha.org](http://alamha.org)**



Curt Brown • Governmental Director • J.M. Wood Auction Company, Inc.

**W**ant to enliven things next time you are in a group of your peers? Everyone in government knows that the key to a lively dinner conversation at a convention is fleet rotation!

Everyone has an opinion...none of them mild.

“You buy what’s cheapest and run it until there’s nothing left. That’s the only way.”

“No! You get whatever you want, do whatever you want with it and don’t worry about it.”

The real answer, as is almost always the case, lies somewhere in the middle – hiding in plain sight amongst the extremes. Most simply, a successful fleet rotation plan can be determined by three factors: **NEED, SPECULATION** and **LIFECYCLE**.

The priority in governmental fleet purchasing and rotation must be **NEED**. “Do we need this?” The answer must be a resounding “YES.” Governmental agencies are not in the business of vehicle and heavy equipment speculation. They are in the business of providing services for taxpayers. What does that mean? It means there is never a case for purchasing a piece of heavy equipment without the intent to use it but only to hold it and re-sell it for a “profit.” Every purchasing decision must start with **NEED**.

After **NEED**, comes **SPECULATION**. Once the need for a particular machine is determined, it is time to get into the details. “What do we buy?” This is not as easily divined as “Do we need it?” and requires a little extra thought.

While not intuitive, it is a fact that the *lowest operating cost does not equal the lowest purchase price*.

Let us repeat that for the folks in the back. *The lowest operating cost does not equal the lowest purchase price*.

Mind-bending.

One hundred years of municipal purchasing protocols indicate that the only way to be a responsible custodian of taxpayer funds is to buy the absolute cheapest possible alternative, but there is a better way. Here it is in a formula:

**(Lifecycle Cost) = (Initial Purchase Price) – (Sale Price) – (Repairs and Maintenance Cost Throughout Ownership).**

Think about that for more than 10 seconds and all the magic disappears, leaving a perfect moment of palm-to-forehead clarity. Why buy the cheapest available option, only to have it spend most of its life inoperable and then recoup almost none of the original purchase price when liquidated as surplus? Why not apply a little common sense and choose



the machine that does the job, is dependable and is attractive to the next owner when liquidated as surplus?

Once we apply these criteria to SPECULATION, our pathway becomes infinitely clearer, but there's one more factor:

**LIFECYCLE** – or “How long do I keep it?”

“That’s simple– you keep it until it’s worn out!”

Well...maybe not...

Unlike the criteria for NEED and SPECULATION, there is no easy answer for LIFECYCLE. A popular rule of thumb is one to two years for passenger vehicles and vocational trucks and three to five years for heavy equipment or tractors. These timelines would usually allow for the machine to always be under factory warranty and remain desirable to the second owner without piling on considerable miles and hours. Beyond that, it is important to note peak seasonal usage, current economic conditions, new inventory availability and emergence of disruptive technologies when planning LIFECYCLE.

Let us review:

Managers of governmental fleet and machinery purchasing and rotation should consider three factors: **NEED**, **SPECULATION** and **LIFECYCLE**.

1. Do we **need** it?
2. Can we **speculate** it out so that we purchase the most reliable option that is also desirable to the next owner when liquidated as surplus?
3. Is our **lifecycle** determined by the right factors, such as warranty, miles/hours, peak usage and availability, of replacement inventory?

If a manager can answer “Yes” to those three questions, they are on the path to success. Over time, it becomes apparent that everyone wins. The agency sees savings resulting from minimum maintenance and labor costs. Employees take pride in having new machinery to operate, which often leads to increased productivity. The agency’s public image improves. Taxpayers and budgets see the benefits of increased returns when surplus inventory is liquidated. ■



*Curt Brown is the governmental director at J.M. Wood Auction Company, Inc., a strategic partner of the Alabama League of Municipalities. He can be reached at [curt@jmwood.com](mailto:curt@jmwood.com).*

**We are proud to support Alabama's Firefighters through the state's first supplemental cancer benefits policy**



## **Claims:**

- 🔥 **Dedicated 800 Claims Number**
- 🔥 **Dedicated Support Staff**
- 🔥 **Simplified Claim Filing**
- 🔥 **Endorsed by the Alabama League of Municipalities**



## **Insurance Coverage Options:**

- 🔥 **Up to \$50,000 in Cancer Benefits**
- 🔥 **Up to \$3,000 in Monthly Disability Benefits**
- 🔥 **Guaranteed Coverage**
- 🔥 **Career Firefighters**
- 🔥 **Volunteer Firefighters**
- 🔥 **Certified and Non-Certified**
- 🔥 **Simple Quoting Process**
- 🔥 **Base & Enhanced Plans Available**



**[www.alfrbp.com](http://www.alfrbp.com)**

**1-800-23-CANCER    [cancerinsurance@alfrbp.com](mailto:cancerinsurance@alfrbp.com)**



## The League Welcomes New Staff Members, Assigns

**D**uring the past few months, we have made several personnel changes at ALM. After a brief tenure with ALM's legal department, **Joseph Holley** decided to return to the Montgomery public defenders' office. Rob Johnston moved quickly to recruit **Mary Elizabeth Dial**, formerly with ADECA, and **Mikal Webb** to fill the two attorney vacancies. Both attorneys came with outstanding recommendations. We were also blessed to recruit **Jill Service** to support the legal team as executive assistant. Jill joined our team after working several years as a business office manager.

Our long-time CMO/corporate relations manager, **Cindy Price**, shared with us that she will be retiring at the end of 2025. We have been so blessed to have Cindy overseeing our CMO program since 2015. It is without a doubt the best CMO program in America. During her tenure, CMO has expanded to include the advanced and emeritus certifications, online training and now mandatory training for officials in 2025. Cindy will continue to work with ALM to coordinate our expo hall during the convention. Thank you, Cindy, for the excellent legacy you have given to ALM and for giving us 18 months to prepare for your retirement!

**Bryan Parker** and his wife, Katy, made the decision to raise their family in Baldwin County. Effective November 1, 2024, Bryan resigned from ALM as director of governmental affairs; however, we have retained him to continue working with the ALM Economic Development Academy (EDA). **Mary Jackson** has been promoted to director of professional and community development and will take on the administrative duties of EDA, along with overseeing the future of ACE and CMO. **Alexis Kelly**, who was promoted to ALM member services associate, will support Mary in the day-to-day operations of these programs.

**Kaleb Beck**, ALM legal associate has been promoted to legislative counsel working with newly promoted governmental affairs director, **Baker Allen**, and **Adam Kilpatrick**, ALM grassroots coordinator, to ensure our advocacy efforts remain strong. Lastly, we hired **Elliott Folmar** as a loss control representative after **Todd McCarley** retired.

**ALM is excited to welcome all of our new staff members  
and to continue serving Alabama's municipalities!**

# New Staff Roles and Bids Farewell to Departing Friends!

## Mary Elizabeth Dial, Associate Counsel

Mary Elizabeth Dial joined the League's legal department in October 2024 and is responsible for advising municipal officials and employees from more than 450 member cities and towns, writing legal articles and addressing municipal officials, employees and attorneys on municipal matters. Before joining the League, Mary Elizabeth worked in the legal section of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, where she assisted with the administration of grants and contracts, monitored legislative action for its potential effects on the department, and provided general legal advice and assistance. Prior to her time working in state government, Mary Elizabeth served as a law clerk in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia in Alexandria.

Mary Elizabeth grew up in Gadsden, Alabama. She earned her bachelor's degree in professional and public writing from Auburn University in 2016 and her juris doctor degree from the University of Alabama School of Law in 2020.

In her free time, Mary Elizabeth is involved in church activities and enjoys knitting and crocheting, reading and traveling.



## Elliott Folmar, Loss Control Representative

Elliott Folmar joined the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation and Municipal Workers' Compensation Fund Loss Control Division in August 2024. With nine years of steadfast dedication to public safety and emergency response within the fire service, Elliott brings a wealth of experience to his role. His career has been distinguished by over a decade of exceptional customer service, where he has consistently built positive relationships and ensured client satisfaction.

Elliott's extensive certifications span a broad spectrum of specialties. He is trained in hazardous materials handling, teaching and leadership, child safety protocols, and specialized rescue techniques, including heavy machinery and rope operations. His expertise also covers critical areas such as active shooter response, autism awareness, pipeline emergency response, traffic safety management, and fire investigation methodologies.

Outside of work, Elliott is passionate about college football and weightlifting. Residing in Morris, AL with his wife, Hannah, and their son, Oliver, Elliott and his family are enthusiastic supporters of the Auburn Tigers and enjoy celebrating their victories with a hearty "War Eagle!"



## Jill Service, Legal Services Executive Assistant

Jill Service joined the League in August 2024 as a receptionist and quickly transitioned to the role of executive assistant for the legal department. Jill grew up in Montgomery, Alabama but has lived in Pike Road for more than 30 years with her husband and son, Bobby and Copeland, along with her fur baby, Millie. Jill has a daughter, Tyler Ann, and two grandsons, Sutter and Woody Jr., that live in Kentucky. She graduated from Jeff Davis High School and has an associate degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in dental hygiene. Outside of the office, Jill enjoys managing her farm in Rockford, going to the beach and watching Auburn football.



# Local Government Best Practices for Nonprofit Collaboration

Clare Johnson • Vice President of Community Services • Central Alabama Community Foundation

**W**hen nonprofits and local governments can effectively collaborate to address critical issues and deliver needed services, the community is strengthened and will be more likely to thrive. As in any relationship, developing the trust, understanding and capacity needed for such collaboration will require some effort from both the nonprofit staff and the government official's team.

**Let us look at some of the functions we see most often between government and nonprofits.**

## **Tax Exemption**

Typically, nonprofits seek a tax exemption from the federal government, and some may receive it from the state government as well. When designated a 501(c)(3) public charity by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the nonprofit will be able to provide a tax benefit to donors. Most foundations and governments require this certification for the nonprofit to receive grant funding.

## **Accountability**

Governments should work to ensure nonprofits operating in their communities are legitimate and are using taxpayer resources responsibly. Nonprofits can amplify the voices of their stakeholders regarding quality-of-life issues and needed government services.

## **Partnerships**

Nonprofits and local governments may partner together to work on projects where they share a common mission. The local government may have resources and data that underscores the need for the effort. The nonprofit may have the skill set to provide the services, an understanding of best practices in case management and the community relationships to avoid missteps in the project's implementation at the grassroots level.

## **Policy Guidance**

Nonprofits can provide expertise about issues that fall within their mission when government seeks to set public policy. They may advocate for their clients' point of view to address unintended consequences that can occur due to existing systemic barriers or a lack of understanding of the culture or history of a stakeholder group. Government officials may share concerns expressed to them by constituents regarding nonprofit policies and services.

## **Resources**

Government may provide funding and in-kind resources to support the ongoing work of nonprofits or to expand their capacity to meet a new community need. Government or the nonprofit may be able to access funding outside of the community that the other is ineligible to receive. Both groups may have valuable data that, if shared, will inform the other group's efforts.

As a government official, you may have numerous nonprofit organizations requesting your time and assistance, or you may serve a rural area where there are few locally-based nonprofits. In either scenario, you may need to vet organizations to ensure collaborating with them will be a benefit to your community and a wise use of taxpayer dollars and your staff's time.

**Here Are Some Issues to Consider as You Conduct Your Due Diligence:**

## **Tax-Exempt Status and Legal Compliance**

Has the organization received its 501(c)(3) designation? Does it remain in good standing with the IRS? Use the search tool at <https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos> or scan this QR code to ensure the group has received tax-exempt status and that status has not since been revoked. Is the organization partnering with another credible 501(c)(3) nonprofit that can serve as its fiscal agent? Is the organization in compliance with your tax and other governmental regulations?



## Goals and Capacity for Success

What does the organization expect to accomplish for your community? What are the strategies it will carry out to achieve its goals? Does it have the capacity through qualified staff, available resources and strong community relationships to implement the strategies successfully? Are there areas where you as the local government can help grow the nonprofit's capacity to be more effective in your community?

## Monitoring/Evaluation

Is the project's timeline realistic? Does the nonprofit have a reasonable plan in place to routinely monitor programming outcomes and on a regular basis evaluate its progress in meeting its goals?

Any of these questions should be answered easily by the nonprofit's leadership. You may ask the nonprofit to provide its annual report; financial audit report (smaller organizations may not be able to afford this service); or a list of funders and partner organizations that can serve as references. You may also request a site visit where you can see the program in action. Additionally, there are outside sources you can check as you seek to determine if the nonprofit will be a good partner.

## IRS Form 990

Each 501(c)(3) nonprofit with gross receipts over \$50,000 should file this form annually. It will provide information on the nonprofit's income, expenditures, assets and governance.

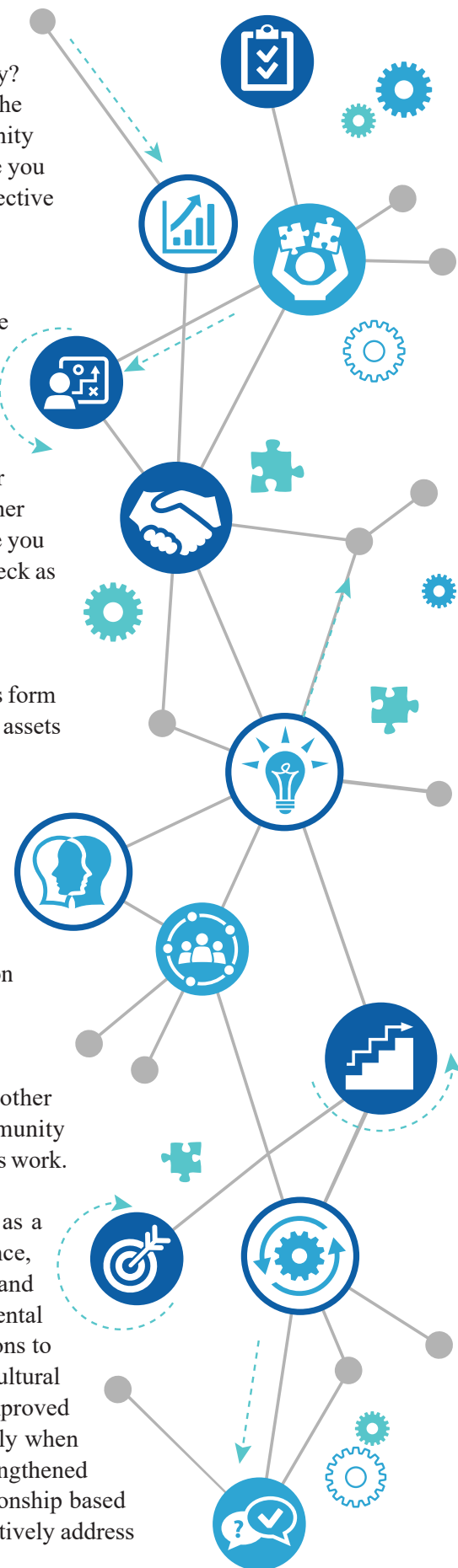
## Other Online Information

The organization's website and social media accounts should highlight its mission, priorities, programming and recent activities. You can search for stories from media outlet sites that may demonstrate the group's effectiveness in connecting with its stakeholders or may signal red flags in its governance or client relationships. [Guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org) and [CharityNavigator.org](https://www.charitynavigator.org) compile information about U.S.-based 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

## Other Grant-making Organizations

Check to see if the nonprofit receives funding from foundations or other governmental entities you trust. You may reach out to your area's community foundation and United Way to see if their staffs are familiar with the nonprofit's work.

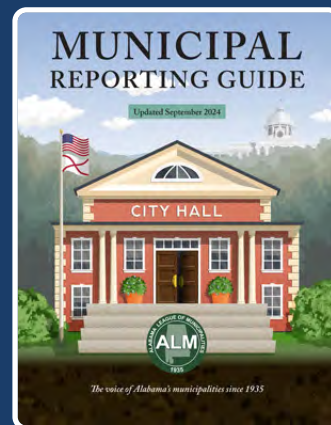
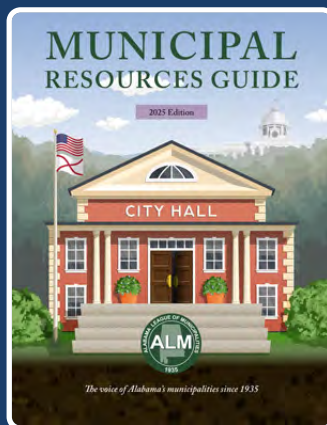
It is important to remember a nonprofit may do excellent work and serve as a valuable community resource but not have strong financials or an online presence, while another nonprofit may be excellent at managing financial resources and marketing, but not be effective at impacting your community. Visionary governmental leadership may provide support and encouragement to key nonprofit organizations to engage in capacity-building activities such as staff training on best practices, cultural awareness or leadership skills; enhanced financial management systems; and improved fund development strategies, so those nonprofits are able to respond successfully when new or expanded services are needed. The community's social fabric is strengthened when local government and nonprofits do the work to develop a dynamic relationship based on mutual respect and common goals, so they can easily come together and effectively address critical community needs as they arise. ■



## The Alabama League of Municipalities has recently updated our **Municipal Resources Guide** and **Municipal Reporting Guide**!

As part of our mission to support our members, the League created these one-stop guides to ensure our municipalities are aware of various state resources they can apply for and laws that require local governments to provide annual reports on specific municipal operations. While these guides do not include all the information about each grant program and law, they do provide an overview of the requirements, contact information and deadlines. Please reach out to any member of our team at (334) 262-2566, if you need any assistance.

Both guides are living documents that will be updated each year. Members, legislators and other elected officials are encouraged to share these great resources. They can be accessed online at [almonline.org](http://almonline.org).



Learn more about the  
**CMO Program**  
and how it strengthens  
municipalities by educating  
municipal leaders.



[almonline.org/CMOProgram](http://almonline.org/CMOProgram)

## IT in a Box

A complete IT solution for local government.



Cybersecurity  
and Computer  
Maintenance

24x7 Helpdesk

Data Backup and  
Disaster Recovery

Records / Document  
Management and Email

Policy and Compliance

Who guarantees  
IT services  
based on your  
expectations?

**WE DO!**

Website

Video Archiving

Vendor Management  
and Procurement

Sign up today and let us handle  
your IT needs and risks.

[www.vc3.com/itnb](http://www.vc3.com/itnb)

Powered by  
Ches Allen  
615.610.6122  
[ches.allen@vc3.com](mailto:ches.allen@vc3.com)  
[www.vc3.com](http://www.vc3.com)



Chuck Stephenson  
334.262.2566  
[cstephenson@almonline.org](mailto:cstephenson@almonline.org)  
[www.almonline.org](http://www.almonline.org)



**Make plans to join the League for training in 2025!**

- **February 12**  
Legislative Advocacy Day, Montgomery. Reception to follow.
- **March 10 - 12**  
NLC Congressional City Conference, Washington, D.C. (Learn more: [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org))
- **May 13 - 16**  
Annual Convention and Expo, Huntsville
- **August**  
ALM In-State Congressional Luncheons (locations and dates TBD)
- **October /November**  
Regional Orientation Trainings, several locations around the state  
(October 1-2, Tuscaloosa; October 29-30, Montgomery;  
November 5-6, Huntsville; November 12-13, Daphne)
- **November 19 - 22**  
NLC City Summit, Salt Lake City, UT (Learn more: [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org))



**Visit [www.almonline.org/UpcomingTraining](http://www.almonline.org/UpcomingTraining) frequently for training and updated registration information.**



# TRUCKWORX

Proud Sponsors of the Alabama League of Municipalities!

**YOUR 2023 NORTH AMERICAN KENWORTH TRUCK DEALER OF THE YEAR AND  
RECIPIENT OF THE GOLD AWARD FOR OVERALL DEALER EXCELLENCE!**



City of Decatur



City of Foley



City of Anniston

**Contact Truckworx today to see how you can save money**



**Allie Lashley**  
Cell: (334) 791-5615  
Email: [AllieL@truckworx.com](mailto:AllieL@truckworx.com)



**Audrey Freeman**  
Cell: (334) 224-2509  
Email: [AudreyF@truckworx.com](mailto:AudreyF@truckworx.com)



**Carl Cummings**  
Cell: (205) 283-0878  
Email: [CarlC@truckworx.com](mailto:CarlC@truckworx.com)

# **IT'S A WIN-WIN:**

## **DRIVE THE WORLD'S BEST FOR LESS!**



City of Montgomery



City of Prattville



City of Bessemer

and operate brand new Kenworth tractors and dump trucks!



**Heith Pike**  
Cell: (205) 446-3028  
Email: [HeithP@truckworx.com](mailto:HeithP@truckworx.com)



**Jessica Perez**  
Cell: (334) 651-3898  
Email: [JessicaP@truckworx.com](mailto:JessicaP@truckworx.com)



**Robby Jaye**  
Cell: (251) 359-1154  
Email: [RobbyJ@truckworx.com](mailto:RobbyJ@truckworx.com)



# Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation Celebrates 35 Years

Sean Duke • President • AMIC

Recently, I had the pleasure of hearing Nick Saban, The University of Alabama's former head football coach, speak at a benefit dinner. One memorable comment he made that truly resonated with me, and one that made me think of the times we are currently in at the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation, was "Change creates opportunity!" In 1986, Time Magazine's cover story highlighted the collapse of the commercial liability insurance market in the United States; a change that significantly impacted cities and towns across Alabama. Because of their loyalty and dedication to local government, Perry Roquemore Jr., who served as executive director of the Alabama League of Municipalities at the time, and Harold Swearingen, past ALM president and Pine Hill mayor, saw this not only as a challenge, but also as an opportunity to create a stable insurance market for Alabama's cities and towns through the creation of a risk pool or insurance company that would provide a reliable and stable source of insurance.

While conducting a considerable amount of research, the decision was made to form a not-for-profit mutual insurance company, which would be owned and controlled by its members. After traveling hundreds



**Top, right:** Cover of TIME magazine on March 24, 1986. Cover credit: Guy Billout.

**Bottom, left:** The AMIC Board of Directors which brought AMIC into the new millennium. Pictured in row one left to right: former AMIC Board vice-chair, Graysville Mayor Wayne Tuggle and former AMIC Board chair, Rainbow City Mayor Sue Glidewell. Pictured in row two left to right: former AMIC Board member, Priceville Mayor Melvin Duran; former AMIC Board member, Clanton Mayor Billy Joe Driver; and former AMIC Board member, Tallassee Mayor Bobby Payne.

**Bottom, right:** Jim Chamblee, AMIC's sales manager, is the organization's longest serving employee. He is responsible for writing AMIC's first policy and continues to write policies today.



*AMIC's current headquarters opened in 2002.*



*Left to right: Former AMIC Presidents Steve Wells (2000–2021) and Harold Swearingen (1989–1999).*

of miles throughout Alabama presenting the idea, 83 cities and towns took a leap of faith, based on a simple promise to provide consistent coverage in a fair and stable way to address members' insurance needs. In turn, these cities contributed approximately \$2.9 million (a number ultimately increased to 233 municipalities and a total of \$6 million) from their general funds to establish the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation. AMIC, as we are known, was born in 1989, and the late Harold Swearingen served as its first president.

In its first year of operation, AMIC wrote \$2 million of premium and approximately 180 policies. By 1998 AMIC had grown to approximately \$9 million of premium and, true to its promise, paid its first dividend to those capitalized members that took that leap of faith back in 1988. More change and new opportunities arose in 2000 when President Swearingen made the decision to retire, and Steve Wells became the organization's second president. Steve had the foresight to know that AMIC needed to make changes to capitalize on the opportunities available in the Alabama municipal market. In 2001, AMIC began accepting business from Alabama's independent insurance agents and premiums grew to \$12.5 million. In 2002, AMIC moved all functional services in-house rather than using a third-party administrator and moved into its own dedicated facilities. The combined savings of these changes were approximately \$3 million annually.

Thirty-five years later, and upon Steve's retirement, I have the pleasure of serving as AMIC's third president. We are excited to see what future opportunities will evolve because of the foresight of those men so many years ago. Over the past 35 years, AMIC has grown to become the premier provider of property and causality insurance for public entities in Alabama and those capitalized members have received more than \$18 million in dividends on their investment! AMIC's original mission of Insuring the Future of Local Government remains unchanged.

### **Today, AMIC has approximately:**

- \$151 million in assets
- \$59 million in capital
- \$62 million in annual premiums

### **AMIC insures approximately 85% of Alabama's municipal risk which includes:**

- \$11.78 billion in insured property values
- 20,000 vehicles
- 5,000 police officers



*The AMIC/MWCF SKIDCAR is one of the many services utilized by AMIC members.*

AMIC's dedication to its members through the years has allowed it to become the largest provider of municipal insurance in Alabama and the third largest provider in the overall commercial package market in Alabama, all while paying just over \$620 million in claims on behalf of insured members since 1989! Even today, just as in years past, AMIC realizes that its member cities and towns provide essential services with significant exposure to risk and limited financial resources. AMIC has grown from employing only a few individuals to having 43 full-time staff members, providing 24/7 claims services, sales, underwriting, loss control and administrative services, all of which are dedicated to protecting you and your ability to deliver these essential services without fear of financial ruin.

Today, the United States insurance market is again in distress due to inflation, catastrophic losses and nuclear jury verdicts. This time, due to the hard work and dedication of all those individuals back in the late 1980s, Alabama's cities and towns do not have to be concerned about their ability to obtain insurance or that insurance may become so costly that it is unaffordable. Because of the strength built on the dedication and hard work of so many over the past 35 years, AMIC will honor its promise of providing a stable market for Alabama's cities and towns and, to the extent possible, soften the impact of the market on their operations and financials. In addition, AMIC will continue to explore innovative programs and services that add value to our members while addressing their current and future insurance needs. We remain committed to Insuring the Future of YOUR Local Government for years to come! ■



**Top, left:** The current AMIC Board of Directors has served together since 2020. Bottom row, left to right: Athens Mayor Ronnie Marks, Board vice-chair; Robertsdale Mayor Charles Murphy, Board chair. Top row, left to right: Saraland Mayor Howard Rubenstein; Guntersville Mayor Leigh Dollar; Hartselle Mayor Randy Garrison.

**Top, right:** AMIC staff at its 35<sup>th</sup> annual convention meeting in Huntsville.

**Bottom, left:** ALM's third executive director, Perry Roquemore Jr., was honored for his years of service to AMIC and its members by former AMIC Board Chair, Clanton Mayor Billy Joe Driver.



Sean Duke was named president of the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC) in March 2022. Sean is a 1993 graduate of Auburn University Montgomery with a bachelor's degree in finance. He spent five years in the mortgage industry, primarily in mortgage pools and cash flow operations data evaluation. Sean then spent 24 years in the insurance regulatory industry as an insurance examiner with the Alabama Department of Insurance, involving financial and market conduct examinations and analysis of insurance and insurance related entities as well as company licensing and alternative risk. When Sean became AMIC's third president, he brought extensive knowledge of Alabama's insurance regulatory framework, laws, regulations and bulletins from his years of service to the state of Alabama.



# You are in Control.

CenterPoint® Fund Accounting and Payroll

To get your FREE guide visit:  
[www.csasoftwaresolutions.com/fundaccounting](http://www.csasoftwaresolutions.com/fundaccounting)

Distributed By

**CSAsoftwaresolutions**  
Accounting & Billing Specialists

[www.csasoftwaresolutions.com](http://www.csasoftwaresolutions.com) • 800.264.4465



## Alabama's only state tax refund municipal debt recovery program

(FREE to eligible participating members!)

[www.alintercept.org](http://www.alintercept.org)

### Why use Municipal Intercept Services (MIS) when you already have a debt collection service?

MIS is **NOT** a debt collection agency or service. MIS does not do what debt collection services do and debt collection services cannot offer what MIS does. MIS is a unique way to attempt to recover money owed to your municipality by “intercepting” an individual’s Alabama State tax refund. Debt collection agencies CANNOT offer you this service. MIS is a legislatively sanctioned conduit with the Alabama Department of Revenue (ADOR) that enables ADOR to recover delinquent debts owed by individuals to your municipality by collecting this debt from the individual’s Alabama state tax refund. This system was made possible by an Alabama legislative change enacted in 2014 through which ADOR agreed to process these debts through only two clearinghouse organizations: the Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM) for municipal entities and the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA) for county entities. In 2015, ALM formed MIS to act as the clearinghouse on behalf of its municipal entities. **NOTE:** If the debtor is not eligible for an Alabama State tax refund, no money can be collected.

### Who is eligible to use the MIS system?

Only municipal entities within Alabama are eligible to use the MIS system. This includes cities, towns, certain utility boards, housing authorities and hospitals. **For more information, visit:** [www.alintercept.org](http://www.alintercept.org).

# BETWEEN THE BALLOTS

Ways Elected Officials Can Make the Biggest Impact as Leaders During Their Term in Office

Mary Jackson • Director of Professional and Community Development • ALM

**The** decision to become an elected official is not one to be taken lightly, and understanding how to lead your community during that term in office is just as important. With roughly 465 towns and cities in this great state of Alabama, we are fortunate to have long-standing mayors and councilmembers, along with eager newly-elected officials at the helm of the council chambers. City hall can be a magical place. It is a place full of history and progress to help serve our communities in becoming a place citizens like to live, work and enjoy.

While studying for the Master of Arts in organizational leadership (OL) at the University of Alabama's College of Communication and Information Sciences, I was on a quest to pursue knowledge on how to build leadership skills for the local leaders I get to engage with on a daily basis. With 10 years in the municipal government arena, I saw the OL program through a different lens from most of my graduate school peers. Drilling down the material spurred the term '*Between the Ballots*,' which questions *how can a local elected official have the biggest impact as a leader of their city during their term in office for four years or more, in some instances, between each election cycle?*

Here are some key takeaways for municipal leaders from the top four final papers I wrote and the corresponding course from the program:

## Group Leadership

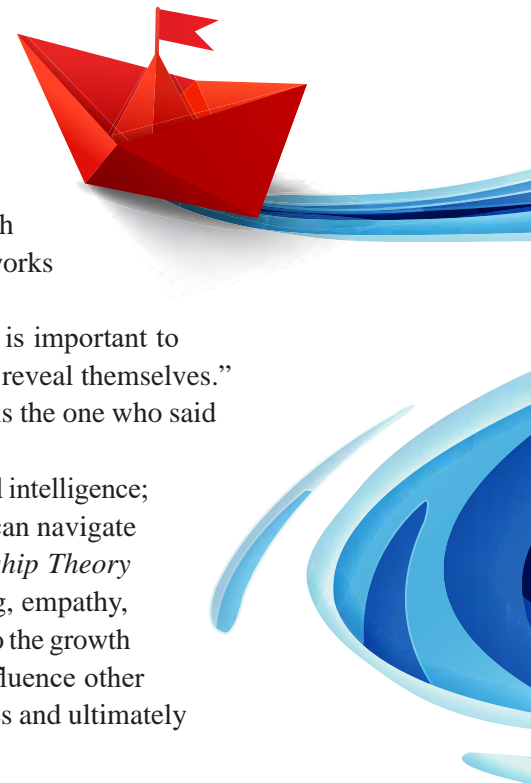
### *"Leave It Better Than You Found It"*

Of the two leaders I interviewed, one is influential in transforming communities into vibrant economies, and the other is influential in transforming people into better leaders. The community leader was the one who gave voice to the title of the paper. She said she was inspired by her mother and Michelle Obama to carry this mission with her daily of "leave it better than you found it" and apply it to the communities she works with. Other quotes of inspiration they shared were:

The "*Mission Match* – find out what matters and is important to them, not what is important to you. Find their purpose by asking the right questions and their values and beliefs will reveal themselves."

One biblical quote that sits on one of their desks is: "The greatest Servant Leader is the one who said '*I did not come to be served, but to serve.*'"

Both shared the same leadership sentiments: an influential leader has strong emotional intelligence; is socially competent of their followers – has empathy; is a good communicator; and can navigate well through conflict management. Furthermore, Peter Northouse, author of *Leadership Theory and Practice*, said that servant leaders at the core share the characteristics of listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community. By mirroring their leadership styles, I hope to influence other leaders and followers to become better people, which in turn makes better communities and ultimately accomplishes the goal to "leave it better than you found it."



## Gender and Political Leadership

### *The Importance of Local Government in Building Future Female Politicians*

While women make up 51% of the U.S. population, there is low representation of women in politics across the spectrum - a staggering 20%.

Most women start off dipping their toes in the political waters by serving on local church, civic or student government boards. The primary motivator is to make a difference in their community and to make it a better place. If they venture into motherhood, they often pursue a seat on a local school board to hopefully become an agent of change to their, and other, children's education. Like a ripple effect, some continue on and then run for mayor or council, state office and even national political positions.

Research results:

- According to Susan Carroll and Kira Sanbonmatsu, professors at Rutgers University, almost 87% of women who ran for office were encouraged or recruited by a friend or acquaintance. Their research, in 2010, found that most would not have considered running for their first municipal office until someone else suggested it.
- Even former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin said John Lewis inspired her "to act rather than watch and wait."
- Laura Van Assendelft's research found, in 2010, female mayors share similar goals for their communities just as male mayors. Some examples include economic development, infrastructure and physical safety; however, the approach differs. Women were more likely to emphasize a hands-on style, collegiality and teamwork.
- The barriers that keep women from running for higher political offices are time, family and money. Some also avoid it because of the media's invasion of privacy and safety.

Gender quotas have been implemented in many other countries, like Germany, India and Turkey. The most impactful research I found was in the book entitled *Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective*, which discovered a co-mayor system that the Turkish (BDP) party instituted where each man running for mayor is partnered with a woman vice mayor. If he is elected, the two politicians serve as mayor together – making joint decisions and co-signing official documents. This could be expanded to include co-mayoring with people of different backgrounds, ethnicities, people with disabilities, etc. If there is a policy that will affect people in your community, make sure they have a seat at the table and are represented fairly.

## Relational Communication

### *Bridging the Gap and Establishing Strong Relationships Between Our Youth and Local Leaders.*

William Galston's research about our youth says, "They understand why it matters to feed a hungry person at a soup kitchen; they do not understand why it matters where government sets eligibility levels for food stamps or payment levels for the Earned Income Tax Credit."

Youth participation is critical at all government levels; however, the challenge has been, for many years, where does the burden lie for cultivating and maintaining strong relationships between the youth and the leaders in our communities to encourage and maintain civic engagement?

Many articles pointed at the education system to require civic courses from K-12; some think that parents need to establish strong

civic lessons at home while their children are young; and others think the elected officials need to identify and nurture the relationships with their citizens.

Today’s youth find more social capital in volunteering their services and time versus the cost of voting in an election. The reward of volunteering and performing community service far outweighs the cost of standing in line at a polling place and continuing to feel like their vote will not make a real difference.

My advice is to go to them. Do not expect them to come to you. Utilize media platforms to showcase your volunteers and the organizations that are actively strengthening your community. Research what platforms are popular with the youth and meet them there. Market the town hall meeting on that platform. Contact the local Student Government Association at the local high school for help with marketing. Most importantly, be authentic and transparent from beginning to end.

Qualitative Research

*From Recruit to Retain to Retire: Finding Quality Employees to Support Our Organizations and The Secret Ingredients for Success.*

Organizations, public and private, need to examine all levels of employee engagement and understand each generation on a holistic level, as well as an individual level, to create a resilient succession plan for the future. Most public offices, like city hall, police and fire departments are feeling the strain of quality employees leaving for higher paying jobs, mediocre job performance and having to do more with less staff and funding.

The following table, populated with information from reputable organizations, shows the time frame for each generation currently active in the workforce in the United States.

Article	Baby Boomers	Gen Xers	Millennials	Gen Zers	Gen Alphas
Durkin, D.	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1980	1982 – 2000	1997 – 2012	2013 – 2024
O'Connor & Raile		1965 – 1980	1981		
Pew Research	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1980	1981 – 1996	1997 – 2012	2013 – 2024
Partin, C.	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1980	1981 – 1996	1997 – 2012	
Twenge, J.	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1979	1980 – 1994	1995 – 2012	2013 – 2029
U.S. Federal Reserve	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1980	1981 – 1996	1997 – 2012	
Visual Capitalist	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1980	1981 – 1996	1997 – 2012	2013 – 2024
MEDIAN	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1980	1981 – 1996	1997 – 2012	2013 – 2024

Jean Twenge’s book, *Generations: The Real Differences Between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents - and What They Mean for America’s Future*, discovered that (surprisingly) technology has been the most important

driver of each generation's unique trait(s). Much of Twenge's research between the three generations determined that the Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers, at the same age in their professional careers, valued meaning in work and how the work helps others.

Understanding the generational dynamics and diversity that make up your work force is crucial to retaining staff for the long haul. Organizational resiliency is an evolving practice that leaders need to understand to stay ahead of the curve and competition. Authors Neil Howe and William Strauss' academic article, *The Next 20 Years: How Customer and Workforce Attitudes Will Evolve*, recommended, "To anticipate what 40-year-olds will be like 20 years from now, don't look at today's 40 year-olds, look at today's 20 year-olds."

Gen Zers have expressed two things that are most important to them - jobs that help others and jobs that have a societal impact. The three qualitative research participants echoed this same fulfillment in their work. They all love the work they do for their community and want to make it a better place for everyone. This should be great news for our local governments because there is so much reward in helping community members and making an impact on society. We need to equip our mayors, councilmembers and department heads to cultivate this type of environment for Gen Zers if they want to attract and retain this up-and-coming generation in their organization.

## Conclusion

Here is a compilation of the research I found on retaining current and future generations into your organization. These traits are what Millennials and Gen Zers are looking for from their employers:

1. Engagement with servant leaders and colleagues through respectful communication
2. Valued and supported by leadership and colleagues
3. Clear expectations and frequent feedback
4. Professional and personal growth – skills training and continuing education
5. Work-life balance – flexible and accommodating time off opportunities
6. Competitive salaries and/or "quality compensation"
7. Benefits – retirement, health insurance, vacation and sick time to include mental health days, life insurance and dependent care accounts

Vice versa, Donny Jones, executive vice president and chief workforce officer of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, recently shared with me the top four skills employers are looking for from employees are:

1. Show up on time.
2. Do your job.
3. Get along with others.
4. Pass a drug test.

It all comes down to leaders who are not afraid to roll up their sleeves and be servant leaders; having mutual and respectful understanding; cultivating future male and female leaders; and engaging our youth into building and communicating the end goal of your city's vision and mission.

There are 1,460 days in the four years our elected officials have between the ballots. How do you plan to spend each day serving and strengthening your community?

As motivational speaker, Zig Ziglar, often shares, "You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great." ■



*Prior to joining the League's team, Mary served as the City Clerk for Monroeville for six years where she received her Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) designation in November 2020 and in 2018 achieved the Certified Governmental Accounting Technician (CGAT) designation. Mary joined the Alabama League of Municipalities staff in July 2021 as the Education Coordinator and Alabama Communities of Excellence's Program Coordinator. In 2024, her title changed to Director of Professional and Community Development and her responsibilities have grown to encompass the ACE, EDA and CMO Programs. Please contact Mary Jackson at [mjackson@almonline.org](mailto:mjackson@almonline.org) for more detailed research information and references.*

# A Century of Strengthening Cities: National League of Cities Turns 100

**O**n December 12, 1924, John Stutz, the head of the Kansas Municipal League, called to order the first meeting of a group of 10 municipal leaders from across the country at the University of Kansas. Initially known as the Association of State Municipal Organizations, later the American Municipal Association, and finally, the National League of Cities (NLC), these 10 founders set out with a big goal: to provide services and offer a venue to empower local officials, particularly as cities and towns rapidly expanded after the Industrial Revolution.

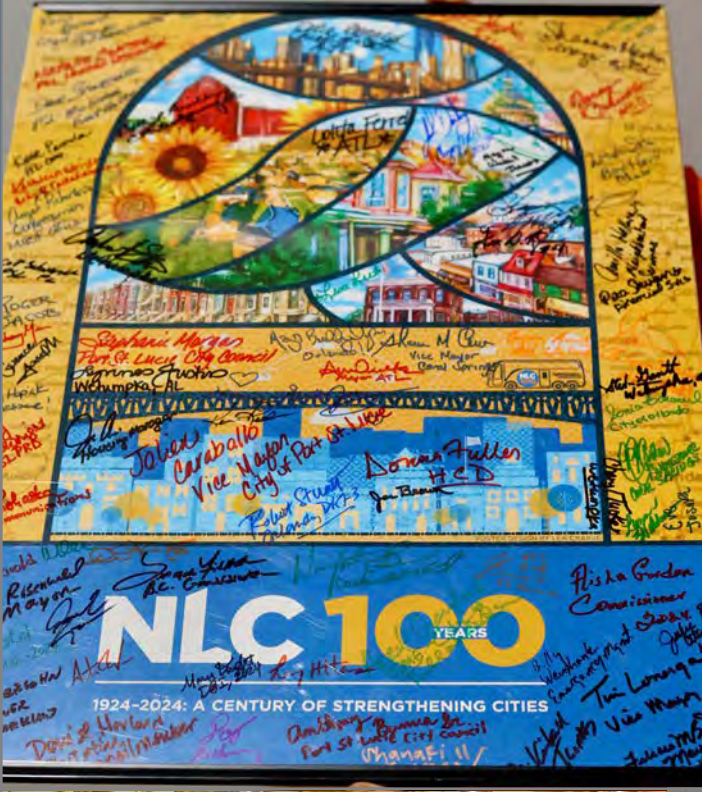
Over the last century, NLC has become a trusted resource for mayors, city councilmembers and municipal staff, providing unparalleled research and technical expertise to benefit local governments. Throughout 2024, NLC has celebrated its centennial milestone by showcasing its legacy as a resource for local leaders and as a partner to the federal government.

From a coast-to-coast roadshow to city proclamations, recognition of outstanding young municipal officials and much more, NLC's centennial celebration has made a mark. Kicking off in Atlanta in November 2023, NLC has crisscrossed the country to celebrate the impact of local government, visiting over 100 cities nationwide. This year-long celebration has included visits to state municipal league events (including Wetumpka, Montgomery and Mobile in Alabama); compelling youth and partner engagement opportunities; and the publication of a book about the history of the organization.

Over the last 100 years, NLC has played a significant role in creating and passing many of the country's landmark pieces of legislation. These include the creation of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the passage of the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, the American Rescue Plan Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. NLC's influence is underscored by the fact that past presidents of the organization have gone on to become governors and U.S. representatives, senators and cabinet secretaries.

NLC has also played host to nearly every U.S. president over the last century, offering them the chance to communicate directly with the men and women leading America's communities. As President Ronald Reagan put it in a speech to NLC in 1982, "I believe you're the hope of our nation. I put my faith in the American people and the quality of the leaders they elect to local office."





Faced with some of the toughest challenges of our time - including economic hardships, health crises and climate change—local public servants have consistently risen to the occasion, and NLC has been there alongside them every step of the way.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, NLC launched the “Cities Are Essential” campaign to lobby for direct federal funding during the crisis, which ultimately led to the signing of the CARES Act under President Donald Trump and the American Rescue Plan Act under President Joe Biden.

Beyond pandemic response, NLC lobbied hard for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, securing billions of dollars to fund much-needed local infrastructure projects throughout the country, and NLC did not stop there. Once the law was passed, it helped launch the Local Infrastructure Hub (LIH), leading to a series of free trainings designed to help small communities successfully apply for federal dollars. To date, participating local governments have won more than \$315 million in federal infrastructure dollars with the help of the LIH.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor, NLC launched the “Good Jobs, Great Cities Academy” to support cities in creating scalable solutions to upskill workers for jobs in infrastructure, clean energy and advanced manufacturing - industries boosted by federal investments like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. These initiatives highlight NLC’s dedication to empowering local governments to tackle today’s challenges.

Reflecting on the organization’s long history, NLC CEO and Executive Director Clarence Anthony shared, “Those leaders who convened in 1924 wanted cities to have an impact. They wanted one unified voice to represent local leaders in Washington, D.C. to drive change and influence, both in the federal government and in communities across America. Today, our organization is so much more than any of those initial delegates probably ever could have imagined. And over the next century, we will continue looking forward, striving to make more progress, building better communities and delivering on our consistent mission: to relentlessly advocate for and protect the interests of, cities, towns and villages - by influencing federal policy, strengthening local leadership and driving innovative solutions.” ■



**CITIES STRONG TOGETHER**



**Celebrate NLC's First 100 Years!**  
Visit their website for a look back  
at a century of support.



**Join NLC in Moving Forward!**  
Visit the Local Infrastructure Hub,  
connecting cities and towns to  
federal infrastructure funding.





**Low-interest loans ideal for:**

Equipment Financing • Capital Improvement Projects • Refinancing

**Simple application process:**

Straight-forward • Quick Turnaround • No Obligation

Complete  
application.

Provide 3 most  
recent audits.

Sign and submit.



**It's that simple.**

**[www.amfund.com](http://www.amfund.com)**

Alabama League of Municipalities  
PO Box 1270  
Montgomery, AL 36102

Presorted Std.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Montgomery, AL  
**PERMIT NO. 340**

# Insuring the Future of Local Government



[www.amicentral.org](http://www.amicentral.org)

1-866-239-2642

To find out more  
about AMIC and the  
protection we offer  
Alabama's municipalities,  
scan the QR code below.



## Is *YOUR* Future Covered?