

# WAMCAM

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL/COUNTY ASSISTANT MANAGERS

SUMMER 2002

## President's Message



Hello WAMCAM Members:

WAMCAM's humble beginnings took place over a year ago, and now, thanks to your involvement, we are an association of over 30 members from across the state. Our membership ranges from Calumet County to the Village of Pleasant Prairie; from the City of Janesville to the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. The diversity of our organization is impressive, and the interest that you have shown in WAMCAM and our profession is even more impressive. I am truly excited about these early stages of WAMCAM, and the potential we have to grow.

The greatest resource of WAMCAM is you. Within our membership there is so much experience and information just waiting to be used. I would like to encourage WAMCAM members to share ideas with each other. The networking value of an organization like ours is that it can actually help us do our jobs better than we may have on our own. So don't hesitate to send out that mass-e-mail, make phone calls or send surveys to your fellow WAMCAM members. Our membership is a resource at your fingertips just waiting to be used.

Many of you have participated in some WAMCAM events, including our bi-monthly meetings or suc-

cessful March mini-conference in Oshkosh. These types of events will continue, and we will work hard to hold them in various locations throughout the state. This newsletter will soon be joined by e-mailed news updates and a website to enhance the ways in which WAMCAM communicates with members. Networking opportunities and social events are also being considered by our Programming Committee (hopefully to include a Brewer's Game / Tailgate Party later this summer - stay tuned).

As your President, I have also been working hard to establish connections between WAMCAM and other organizations. We are now affiliated with the Wisconsin City/County Management Association, and their membership and Board of Directors support and encourage WAMCAM's growth. I am also hopeful that we will be able to cooperate with our sister organization in Illinois (IAMMA). Conversation has begun between WAMCAM and IAMMA dealing with cooperative efforts and joint training opportunities.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the members of WAMCAM's first Board of Directors. What an excellent, dedicated and energetic group of people! It has been an honor and pleasure to work with all of them. Pete, Tina, Jeff, Rebecca and Ray have gone above and beyond to foster WAMCAM's success. Please thank them when you have an opportunity.

Sincerely,

Todd Schmidt, WAMCAM President

## State Budget Debate

Crafting municipal and county budgets this year will be very challenging. Elected officials, and therefore administrators and department heads are feeling pressure to keep tax levy increases minimal from constituents. Outside influences that we have very little control over, mainly health care costs, are driving budgets all across Wisconsin. And finally, the foundation for local budgets, the state budget, has yet to be resolved.

Where does the state budget stand? As we all know, Wisconsin faces a \$1.1 billion deficit. Governor McCallum proposed closing this shortfall by eliminating shared revenue entirely. That proposal received little to no support.

Next, the Joint Finance Committee crafted a proposal that would have kept shared revenue and used the entire tobacco settlement and

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some state budget cuts to fill the budget gap. The plan was approved by a controversial 9-7 vote and moved on to the Assembly and Senate for their consideration.

The State Assembly passed a plan that reduced, but did not eliminate, shared revenue, used less of the tobacco settlement, increased cuts to the UW System, and reduced more state spending.

The State Senate passed a plan to keep shared revenue intact, offered an early retirement plan to save short-term funds, lessened the cuts on the UW System, and used the entire tobacco settlement.

These divergent plans led to the creation of a Joint Conference Committee to resolve the over 300 different issues between the plans in April. At the time of this writing, only two items have been resolved and the clock is ticking toward the impending need for state payments to various local units of government in June.

Two items of most interest to local government that need to be resolved are shared revenue and tax caps. There are several variations to shared revenue including reducing shared revenue immediately, keeping shared revenue whole this year and reducing over the next two years, and no changes to shared revenue.

Tax caps also come in different sizes and flavors. Some are pushing for a hard levy freeze. Some are advocating for allowing levy increase equal to the rate of inflation; others are saying increases should be tied to inflation and population growth. Another group is suggesting there should be no caps whatsoever.

It is in your best interest to follow the budget discussions and final decisions closely. A more detailed analysis will be provided for you in an upcoming newsletter.

## WAMCAM June 6th Meeting



On June 6<sup>th</sup>, WAMCAM met at the West Allis City Hall for a box lunch meeting with Dan Finley, Waukesha County Executive. Mr. Finley shared his views on intergovernmental cooperation. “The bottom line in local government is not money, it’s control. Our citizens can be our toughest sell. Cooperation has to be a win-win situation, there can’t be a loser.” Mr. Finley stated that the largest savings he has seen was in the consolidation of the police dispatch and 911 centers. Waukesha County was able to reduce staffing by 40 positions countywide. He would also like to see the county improve cost accounting by charging townships for services that are not provided to the cities.

The Program Committee report followed with a suggestion for a late July or early August meeting at the Milwaukee Art Museum. The Committee will also bring forth a recommendation for providing members with opportunities to meet one-on-one with Administrators. Watch your e-mail for notification of these wonderful opportunities. The Public Relations Committee noted the near completion of this newsletter and welcomes articles or suggestions for upcoming issues.

It was noted that the Illinois chapter (IAMMA) has voted to allow WAMCAM members to their conferences and events and IAMMA member rates.

## Tax Refund Intercept Program

The State of Wisconsin has been offsetting taxpayers refunds and other refund credits against county/municipality debts for several years now, but the program tends to be overlooked and under utilized. The Tax Refund Intercept Program (TRIP) can be used by municipalities to collect any fine, fee or forfeitures over \$20. The State charges a 2% administrative fee based on the amount actually collected on a particular debt. To participate, the county/municipality must be able to provide the debtor information, including social security number and name and electronically submit the information.

Several Wisconsin counties have already established accounts for the use of this program for the collection of child support payments, but the program has since been expanded to include other debt, giving municipalities the opportunity to pursue monies owed to them.

Several States have similar programs that could also be used in conjunction or through a regional effort to facilitate collections across state lines. Any debt that is intercepted is distributed based on the level of government and then order by date of certification, leaving it very beneficial to be a participating municipality as soon as possible. For more information, please contact the Wisconsin Department of Revenue at (608) 266-2772 or visit their web page at <http://prd2p.it.state.wi.us/dorapp/tripapp.jsp>

## Member Profile



**Name:** Linda Kutchenriter

**AKA:** Linda Lu

**Employer:** City of Ripon

**Position:** Accounting Services Manager/Assistant to the Administrator

**When did you start in this position?** March of 2001

**What are your duties?** I handle the financial management and reporting for the city as well as technical services, grants administration and many other miscellaneous duties. I am assigned new projects by the administrator on a regular basis as needed.

**What is the favorite part of your job?** The daily change of duties keeps life interesting.

**Least favorite?** City Council Politics!

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?** In a Public Administration Position.

**Schooling to date:** Bachelors of Science in Mathematics

**Planned Schooling:** Enrolling at UWOC this fall for a Masters in Public Administration

**Employment History:** After the various high school/college jobs, I spent 15 years at the City of Omro working as an Account Clerk and Data Processing Manager.

**Claims to Fame?** My famous banana bread.

**Marital Status?** Married for 8 years. Eloped at a condo at Powderhorn Mountain after giving our friends one hour to prepare for the upcoming wedding!

**Spouse Name (if applicable):** Loyd

**Children (Names & Ages if applicable):** Megan, age 7 and Kyra, age 2. They are the joys of my life!

**Life History:** Born to an Air Force Sergeant Dad and a Scottish Mom in San Antonio, Texas, I was brought up in Anchorage Alaska, Falls Church, Virginia, and Oshkosh, Wisconsin. I now live in Omro, Wisconsin.

**Advice for other WAMCAM members:** Love what you do, put family first whenever possible.

## WAMCAM BIRTHDAY!!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY WAMCAM. On June 28th 2001, the bylaws that established the Wisconsin Association of Municipal/County Assistant Managers were passed, and the first WAMCAM board was elected. The first official year was very rewarding and a special "thank you" is owed to all of the founding members!

## *Congratulations Ray!*

A special congratulations to Ray Ellingen, the new Village Administrator for the Village of East Troy, WI. Ray is the former Management Analyst for Whitefish Bay and former WAMCAM Treasurer. The newest WAMCAM board member is Scot Simpson who has replaced Ray as the WAMCAM Treasurer.

All members are asked to notify Pete Coffaro, the Chair of WAMCAM's Membership Committee, when moving on to new positions, so that we may all share in the excitement. Pete can be reached at [pcoffaro@ci.wauwatosa.wi.us](mailto:pcoffaro@ci.wauwatosa.wi.us)

## Volunteer Opportunities

WAMCAM has many different opportunities for members to get involved. To volunteer for a committee appointment or to help out with an upcoming event, please contact President, Todd Schmidt at (414)371-3050 or via email at [tschmidt@vil.brown-deer.wi.us](mailto:tschmidt@vil.brown-deer.wi.us)

## Website Note:

WCMA has a website that lists Wisconsin job opportunities and current events. For more information, please visit the WCMA website at [www.wcma-wi.org](http://www.wcma-wi.org)

## WAMAM BOARD

Todd Schmidt,  
President

Jeff Landin,  
President Elect

Tina Salzman,  
Secretary

Scot Simpson,  
Treasurer

Peter Coffaro,  
Director-at-Large

Rebecca Finn,  
Intern/Student  
Representative

This newsletter was put together by Larry Bierke, Linda Kutchenriter, and Jeff Landin, of the *Public Relations Committee*.

### WAMCAM

c/o: Ed Henschel, WCMA Secretariat  
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