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Cover Photo and Our Town Photos by Emily Taylor taken for Taos Ski Valley Chamber of Commerce 2019-20
Los Alamos County has a variation of the statutory manager-commission form of government, and as such, fills vacancies on its Council by majority vote of the remaining Councilors. Filling a vacancy is how I was first appointed to the Los Alamos County Council, and there was a sense of deja vu a few weeks ago, when, following the resignation of one of our Councilors to assume the office of State Representative, we had to fill a vacancy one more time.

I presume that many of the readers of this column (if there are any!), are familiar with the specifics of the process for filling a vacancy in their own municipality. Los Alamos has a specific process that consists of asking each applicant to submit a letter of interest, then appear before the Council to present a short opening statement and finally answer a pre-selected set of questions.

The Council Chair appointed me and two others to come up with the questions that we would present to the applicants. This exercise is what I would like to share with you. If you were placed in my position, what would be the questions you would ask, and more to the point, what qualifications would you want to be elucidated by their answers? Would you want to know how knowledgeable they are about the community? Do they have a rational mind and careful consideration of issues before voting? Whether they have the time required to participate in meetings, committees, and public events?

Make sure that they would vote exactly like you? The last question is a tempting one, and maybe in our hearts this is what we really want. Since (of course!), we are always correct in our thinking, we want to “double-up” our vote with a twin (but who doesn’t look suspiciously like us, of course).

If you have never been impressed by my columns, I hope that this will do it... I am going to refer to the Greek philosopher Plato. He writes in his political thesis “The Republic” about the optimal form of government. Plato thinks that democracy is a crock, and the best government is led by a Philosopher-King. This King would be wise, humble, etc. and every decision would be the best to guide the “Ship of State.”

We did not ask the candidates to quote Plato; instead, we asked them about community involvement, time availability, their thoughts about our current goals and any proposals. However, it would have been great to come up with questions that would identify the Philosopher-King or -Queen.

Being wise, however, would not be my only criterion. The candidate better be persuasive enough to convince me to switch my vote. I wouldn’t want to look stupid, right?
On Tuesday, Feb. 12, the City of Las Cruces completed the first round of General Obligation (GO) Bond sales associated with last summer’s GO Bond election, in which Las Cruces residents overwhelmingly approved $35.6 million in GO Bonds to fund various life-enhancing projects in the community.

In signing the paperwork completing the $18 million bond sale, City Manager Stuart C. Ed said, “The bond program continues to move on schedule and within financial planning parameters.” Ed said the true interest cost (TIC) goal for the bond sale was 2.36% but the City realized a lower rate of 2.2678%, 10 basis points better. “The result was a savings to taxpayers of $40,000.” Ed also said GO bonds achieved such a low rate because they are more secure funding source than Gross Receipts Tax bonds. The City’s GO bonds traded stronger to the AAA MMDA than the City’s last Gross Receipts Tax bond issuance by approximately six basis points.

In addition to the bond sale, the City has already purchased the property for the new fire station #3 and requests for proposals for both the fire station and animal service center are in final draft.

Next steps in the overall process are planning, design and the start of initial construction and continued public input. Watch related video: https://vimeo.com/317094519

In a special mail-ballot election held between July 24 and August 21, 2018, Las Cruces voters approved four GO Bond questions:

1. Shall the City issue general obligation bonds, payable from property taxes, in an amount up to $16,900,000 to construct improvements to parks, including sports fields and other related facilities? Approved 57%

2. Shall the City issue general obligation bonds, payable from property taxes, in an amount up to $9,800,000 to construct a new animal shelter facility and related improvements? Approved 67%

3. Shall the City issue general obligation bonds, payable from property taxes, in an amount up to $6,200,000 to construct replacement fire station facilities for Fire Station 3 (at 390 N. Valley Drive), including acquisition of necessary land? Approved 70%

4. Shall the City issue general obligation bonds, payable from property taxes, in an amount up to $2,700,000 to construct and improve recreational walking, jogging, and biking trails, including acquisition of necessary land? Approved 58%
Raton MainStreet receive part of a $40K grant from the New Mexico Gas Company for Facade Improvements spurring Economic Development....more info to come soon!

Woo Hoo! The new concrete games have been installed at the Kids’ Zone. There are 2 Ping Pong tables, 2 Chess/Checker/Batgamin Tables and 3 sets of Bean Bag Toss!

CORRALES

Janet Cunningham-Stephens is the new P and Z Director!

Corrales’ new Planning and Zoning Director comes to the Village from the Town of Bernalillo where she spent 5.5 years handling their P and Z issues. “I was ready for a change of view,” says Janet Cunningham-Stephens.

She comes at a time when Corrales finds itself in the middle of a mini-boom of construction permits, renovation and zoning requests.

“She’s got the background and experience to take a load off my shoulders and give some better organization to Corrales’ planning and zoning efforts. We have a new experienced building official, a new code enforcement officer and an excellent planning /permit technician. Together, we can now offer a higher level of service to Village residents,” said Village Administrator Suanne Derr.

“One of my challenges will be to make sure Village residents understand the Village codes, ordinance and regulations and get buy-in as to why they are so important to Corrales and protect our way of life.” For example, she said, “It’s very important for people to know about regulations and get permits for electrical and plumbing work and to make sure their slabs are done right. That protects their investments.”

ALAMOGORDO

FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

HOBBS

In last night’s Hobbs Council Meeting, Dalia Conken, received a plaque thanking her for the 25 wonderful years of service with the City of Hobbs. Above Dalia Conken and Doug McDaniel.

Hobbs congratulating Police Officer Matthew Olenick and Police Officer Zakariah Dale on receiving the Life Saving Award. Above Chief Chris McCall, Officer Zakariah Dale and Officer Matthew Olenick.

RATON MAINSTREET

Raton MainStreet receive part of a $40K grant from the New Mexico Gas Company for Facade Improvements spurring Economic Development....more info to come soon!
Once upon a time I was called upon to draft an ordinance addressing the use of electronic devices by council members during council meetings. The idea was to try to curtail the use of electronic devices (some people wanted a total ban) by council members during meetings. I immediately ran into a “buzz saw” of epic proportions. I had no idea how jealously people guard their electronic devices and their “right” to use them. The genesis of this request probable stems from the perception that the councilors were more interested in what was going on inside their electronic device and not paying attention to the presenters during council meetings. The habitual and continuous nature of some people’s relationship with their phones may be inappropriate at times or even downright rude, but is it a legal problem? Do we really need an ordinance addressing this, or a less from Miss Manners?

When beginning this project, I became immediately aware of the reliance of the governing body members on electronic devices and the reasons why. For decades the city clerk handed out paper copies of the Agenda, Minutes and all the supporting information for each agenda item. At times, the stack of documents easily stacked an inch high. This monumental waste of paper was finally addressed when the administration went to a totally electronic system. The Agenda, Minutes and all supporting documentation was digitized; council members were issued laptop computers to download the information in advance of the council meeting. Of course these computers were equipped with Wi-Fi capability. It was therefore comical to have one person suggest to me that there should be a total ban on electronic devices in council chambers during meetings.

What ultimately evolved was a discussion, the ordinance never passed on the possibility of limiting, and the reasons behind limiting the use of electronic devices beyond accessing the information that was provided to the council from the city clerk. This is where the real battle began. A little legal background is required before we can assess the need and extent of such limitations.

For some time now there has been a focus on transparency in government. Community leaders have increasingly called for more transparency in government. Unfortunately, the laws have not been able to keep up with the demands. The two most visible pieces of legislation addressing transparency are the Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act. These statutes are decades old and were written before the explosion of electronic devices in the workplace. Neither one of these statutes address, for example text messaging or instant messaging or chatting. Of these three platforms, texting is perhaps the most pervasive, and the one that is subject to the most abuse.
Open Meetings—There are two notable areas where text messaging might be found to violate the Open Meetings Act.

Elected officials should always be aware of the public policy behind the Open Meetings Act ("OMA"). Section 10-15-1 of the statutes states clearly that:

"the formation of public policy or the conduct of business by vote shall not be conducted in closed meeting. All meetings of any public body except the legislature and the courts shall be public meetings, and all persons so desiring shall be permitted to attend and listen to the deliberations and proceedings."

The OMA goes on to clarify:

"All meetings of a quorum of members of any board . . . municipality . . . held for the purpose of formulating public policy . . . discussing public business or taking any action within the authority of or the delegated authority of any board, commission or other policymaking body are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times, except as otherwise provided. . . ."

It is not unreasonable to suggest that “conversations” carried on via text messaging might run afoul of the OMA. There has been much discussion of late on the subject of “rolling quorums” The OMA prohibits a secret or private meeting of a quorum of a policy making body. This clearly means that if a majority of the members of a body meet together to talk about public business and do not notice this “get together” as a meeting, that the members of that body would violate the OMA. But what about serial meetings of the members on the same topic that ultimately involve a majority of the body. It has been suggested very strongly that this practice creates what is called a “rolling quorum” and that violates the OMA. It is not hard to see that text messages between two governing body members could easily extend to a third and then a fourth, or that a group text to a number of members could involve a majority of the body. This could likely lead to complaints that the body has violated the OMA.

The second area of concern involves the minutes of a public meeting. The OMA requires that:

The board, commission or other policymaking body shall keep written minutes of all its meetings. The minutes shall include at a minimum the date, time and place of the meeting, the names of members in attendance and those absent, the substance of the proposals considered and a record of any decisions and votes taken that show how each member voted.

Text messages between and among members, even if a majority of the body is not involved, might also violate this provision because these messages really

Continued on page 27
You may have heard that “Gold is where you find it,” and that sentiment describes the history and activities in the Taos Ski Valley even today. From the search for El Dorado in 1540, to the gold rush of the 1860s, and the search for great skiing, outdoor activities and entertainment today, the valley has drawn visitors seeking the better life. The Village of Taos Ski Valley is located in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains at the southern end of the majestic Rocky Mountain Range. At a base elevation of 9,200 feet, the Village of Taos Ski Valley is the third highest municipality in the United States. Wheeler Peak, at 13,161 feet and situated to the south, is the tallest mountain in New Mexico. It looms over the Village core, ski area, and forests, the home of wildlife and residents alike. The highest home in New Mexico is in the Village of Taos Ski Valley, located at 10,388 feet.

The Valley at the head waters of the Rio Hondo has been a place of resources for local people for thousands of years. Artifacts estimated to be Pre-Puebloan have been discovered in the Valley. The area was used for seasonal shelter, and for harvesting native plants and wildlife. As farming began the local people began to settle, form larger communities, and build homes in the area and continue to draw from the Valley resourc-
es. Taos Pueblo, one of the great cultural locations in the region, is inhabited by the Tiwa-speaking people who still live in the ancient multi-level adobe buildings.

Both the Indigenous and Spanish cultures in the area have maintained language, history and traditions that continue to frame the later activities, culture, development and people that have visited or stayed in the area. The remote area has been the backdrop for Independents throughout history. The area continues to be a sanctuary; from the Taos Pueblo insisting on its rights and taking to the hills in 1640, to Pope’ the Pueblo Revolt leader’s hideout in 1680, shelter for the leaders of the Taos Tax revolt of 1816, Kit Carson in 1826 and the resistance to US military in 1846, the Taos Society of Artists in 1915, the ski explorers of the 1950s, Hippie commune of the 1960s, to today’s visitors from across the country and the world that get away for a while or for good.

The Village of Taos Ski Valley was the 100th incorporated municipality in New Mexico in 1996 and included the Twinning Water District that had been developed after the ski industry was introduced in earnest by the Blake family in 1956. Previously there had been miner towns established in the Valley by 1880. The miners looked for gold and other minerals in the fault lines of the great rift, where the uplifting mountains had pushed against ancient rock and exposed quartz veins. One miner’s camp about six miles up the valley at Gavilan Canyon soon grew to over two thousand people and supported a combined hotel and post office building. The building was owned by Al and Amizette Helphenstine and the town was named Amizette which boasted a daily stage run from the valley to Tres Piedras. The area did not produce large quantities of gold, maybe as much as $100,000 at the time, but other minerals were found in the area.

After most of the gold available had been mined, copper was mined towards the top of the canyon. William Frasier started the first copper mining company and brought in Albert Twining, a New Jersey Banker as his largest investor. By 1900 the copper mining concern included a smelting mill and hydro-electricity generator at the site of the present day Village core. The Frasier Mountain Copper Company and the town of Twinning were successful enough to encourage a sawmill to be built at the red river pass by Jesse Young in 1900 to supply material to the growing community. However, the success of the operation soon faltered when metal in the smelter “froze’ and the mine failed. With the owners and company ruined, the industry left the valley and by 1930 the towns of Amizette and Twinning had almost disappeared and buildings, equipment, and land were sold.

The Land that been the Frasier Mountain Cooper Company was purchased in 1946 by Mr. and Mrs. Orville Pattison and later they and their sons started with cabins and built an electric generator and the Thunderbird Lodge, for visitors to the outdoor wonder
of the valley. One of those visitors in 1950s, was Ernie Blake, the future developer of the ski resort area in the Twining Valley. The ski area property was purchased from Orville Pattison by Ernie Blake. The Taos Ski Valley ski area owes its beginning to the determination and imagination of the German-born Swiss-educated Mr. Bloch who, after instructing skiing in Europe serving in the Swiss Air Force, immigrated with his parents to America in the late 1930s. He traveled to the West to ski, before marrying Rhoda, joining the US Army, and becoming a citizen as Ernie Blake.

Ernie Blake had dreamed of building a world-class ski area for many years and together with family and friends began building the Taos Ski Valley in 1955. Pete Totemoff a friend who had helped the Sandia Ski Area get started, was with Mr. Blake on his earliest examination, (by plane and ski) of the Twining Valley. Pete was an Aleut native that had grown up skiing on the Aleutian Islands and moved to New Mexico for his health. He was experienced, knowledgeable and skilled in skiing, and he helped get the ski area started. Many of Blake’s friends and fellow pioneers were Europeans from Austria, France, Germany and Switzerland. The architecture of the Village is influenced by this international infusion within the larger cultural context of the region. The “Old World” ambiance that the building and facilities provide are against the backdrop of hundreds and thousands of years of polite, warm and welcoming culture of Northern New Mexico. While international visitors remain a constant pulse for the Valley, the tradition of regional visitors from the Southwest has continued to increase.

With the sale of the ski area by the Blake family in 2014 to Louis Bacon, and under the direction of Taos Ski Valley Incorporated, many improvements have been planned and, in cooperation with the Village, have found funding. Underground utilities have been extended up to the Valley and through the core of the
Village. A chairlift up to Kachina Peak and a new high-speed quad lift from the base area have been installed, and additional ski trails have been developed. The development of a new hotel with shops and restaurants, and a planned conference facility and multi-unit residential building, make the Village boom with renewed vitality.

Summer activities and access have increased in recent years for enjoyment of the surrounding Carson National Forest and federally designated wilderness area. Visitors can participate in year-round activities and special events, from special shopping, cultural and dining experiences to great adventures in the outdoors. All are welcome to the community. From the winter events to hiking, biking, equestrian, climbing, rafting, fishing, art, music, education and health retreats, the area is rich with opportunity for life quality events. The Village provides services so that residents, part time or permanent, and visitors can rely on modern conveniences amongst the natural beauty shared with birds, fish, bear, elk, deer, puma, and bighorn sheep. The Census counts the Village of Taos Ski Valley with fewer than 100 inhabitants but for half the year the Village population is closer to having five thousand friends in the Village.

Please come visit and see how rich life can be.
4 FACTORS THAT CAN PROVOKE MEDIA SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES

By Rick Spears, Lexipol

Called to a classroom for a report of a fight between two students, the School Resource Officer plunges into the fray, tossing chairs aside and lunging at the students. Within seconds he has one of the students on the floor, arms pinned behind his back. “I can’t breathe!” the student shouts. “You’re hurting me.” “Well you should have thought of that before you started fighting,” the officer yells back. He yanks the handcuffed student to his feet, then pushes him up against the wall. Behind the officer, multiple students are filming. In minutes, the videos are posted to social media; within the hour, reporters descend on the school.

These days, it can take mere minutes between a call to 9-1-1 and an incident hitting the news. Although the above example involves a law enforcement officer, no public safety agency is immune. As incidents go viral on social media, the risk of lawsuits with large potential exposure is very real.

We can’t change the fact that everyone is carrying around a high-definition video camera in the form of a phone, or that platforms like Twitter magnify incidents and sometimes spread bad information. But we’re not helpless either. This article is designed to provide insight on the importance of training your staff to handle critical incidents, with tips on how to quickly identify the circumstances that can generate a highly publicized incident and effectively manage these situations.

First, let’s look at four factors that can provoke media scrutiny of public safety agencies.

1. Demographics
   An entity’s demographics can dramatically alter the media’s response. Many town demographics have changed over the years. Towns may have started with most of their citizens having European backgrounds and, as the town ages, more residents are African American and Latino. This can become an image problem if public safety personnel demographics do not change in the same way. The media may become quick to jump to allegations of racial bias. Did a black patient have to wait 9 minutes for an ambulance to arrive, when response times in the predominantly white neighborhood are under 5 minutes? Suddenly there’s a story.

   Obviously, you can’t change demographics over night. But if your town faces such demographic disparities, you can prepare messaging to combat such stories. You can ensure recruitment practices are aimed at hiring personnel who reflect the community you serve. You can demonstrate how your policies prevent racial bias and unequal treatment. And you can use performance measures to determine whether in fact there are racial disparities—and if there are, address them.

2. Caught on Video
   Videos are becoming the major attention-grabber. Many police departments and some corrections agencies are using body cams. Such cameras do not always provide a clear picture of what occurred or what happened before the camera started filming. In addition, departments often don’t release body-cam footage...
as soon as the media would like.

But that doesn’t mean the footage remains in the agency’s control. Many witnesses record their own videos with their phones. There have been several occasions when an incident occurred and the department’s video was not released right away, but the witnesses’ videos were posted online in less than an hour. The media then starts requesting the agency to release their video, which cannot always be done as the internal investigation may still be underway. If the media’s request is refused, negative publicity can result, especially if there are many other videos posted online.

If the public safety agency does not respond to questions raised by the media, reporters will often reach out to the mayor or the city council to seek more information and opinions.

Body cameras can grab the media’s attention in other ways too. Sometimes, the body cam is turned on late, or not at all; on occasion, they have been turned off at the wrong time. A body cam line of sight can also get unexpectedly restricted by the officer’s body position. It is very important to train your department personnel to use body cams properly. Many lessons can be learned from prior events in your town or others. Your department should have a robust body camera policy as well as clear direction on when to release videos to the media.

3. Mixed Messages

Open communication within your entity is also very important. If the public safety agency does not respond to questions raised by the media, reporters will often reach out to the mayor or the city council to seek more information and opinions. There have been several occasions where the mayor or other town representatives answered requests by the media even though they had not been advised of the details surrounding an incident. While well-intentioned, such comments can backfire, undercutting the decisions of the fire chief or police chief. It always works out better if elected officials have more knowledge of the incident, so it is good to keep them advised. In addition, political town members should be coached not to give statements until they have the necessary information.

4. Failure to Engage

When the media shows up, it can become a problem if there is no one to respond to their questions or if their questions are ignored. It may be too early in the investigation process to be able to provide all the findings to the media but giving them some basic informa-
It all starts with having strong relationships with your community partners. In Ruidoso we pride ourselves on having a pool of resources from which we can draw. Ultimately your community partners will make all the difference when hosting an influencer or throwing your next FAM tour. If you can honestly say you can leverage your local resources thoughtfully and thoroughly, move on to the next step...

Why in the world do you want to take on the headache of an influencer trip or a FAM tour? It’s a lot of work, it’s like herding cats, and you’ll likely end up at your wit’s end when all seems to go astray at some point or another. But they do offer tremendous value. Earned media is incredibly difficult to come by these days. With the numerous online outlets, countless special interest magazines and the infinitely growing number of bloggers, we are all competing for a chance to have our voice heard. According to Hootsuite, “47% of millennials say their purchase decisions are influenced by social media and consumers who include social media as part of their shopping process are four times more likely to spend more money on purchases.” When identifying press or influencers be very strategic with whom you chose to participate in your FAM tour. Pitch your tour to press specific to your industry. You want to find credible sources that can reinforce your brand message. Attack your FAM tour with pinpoint focus. You will reap the rewards you sow. Whether it be a particular publication you are targeting to spread your brands message or an industry aligned publication whom can provide credibility to your brands messaging, a FAM tour can and should pay dividends.
Ensure it is well thought out. Schedules should be planned in 15-minute increments, allowing time for the activity, loading and unloading (people love to stand around and chat), drive times are over accounted for, and try to operate between the hours of 8am-8pm (People get grumpy when you stay out too late), and have potential back up plans for things that could go wrong (weather related activities). You want the key interests to be broad enough to cater to multiple palates while maintaining a theme and focus. A simple approach is to discuss the potential itinerary with the influencers/press. What is it that their audiences want to see? This affords insight to the fit of the writer for your destination and also provides ideas of how to cater a trip to better fit the narrative where the writer is trying to focus. This is your opportunity to wow your guests. After all, we want them to brag about us. Identify unique story lines and angles. FAM tours, admittedly are strategically more complicated when dealing with multiple interests but thorough planning and vetting of writers can produce an amazing trip with tremendous benefit.

Following your tours, stay in touch with your contributors. Ensure they are working on the pieces they came to write. Remember to be patient. Social influencers will have a much faster turnaround than traditional press. You should expect a minimum of 8 weeks before you see anything produced; and it could be much longer for a particular publication to pick up the piece written about your destination. If you are a seasonal destination, it is important to think about timing. It may be snowing when you host a tour, but there’s a chance the season could have changed by the time your content goes live.

When your content is live you’ll want to leverage this press. Create an in the press section on your website to host links to the articles, share it on your social media channels, and get it out in your monthly eblasts. This is your opportunity to give third party credibility to who you claim to be… an amazing tourist destination.

Stay in touch with your influencers and members of the press. They may be interested in a return visit on a separate topic. If you maintain good relationships with the press and influencers, you’ll also find they are eager and willing to connect you with their peers. Which will take a lot of the leg work out of planning your next trip.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me personally. I’m happy to help increase tourism to our great state in any way I can.

Cheers, Justin
STATE OFFERS FINANCIAL INCENTIVE TO PROMOTE TOURISM

By Finance New Mexico

NEW MEXICO attracts more visitors every year, but the state wants to further boost tourism and related revenue by expanding on successful programs like New Mexico True and the Cooperative Marketing Program (CoOp).

New Mexico True is a brand that businesses, governments and nonprofit organizations can use by partnering with the New Mexico Tourism Department. That involves demonstrating how the organization expresses or evokes the state’s distinctive landscapes, cultures, food, art or history.

The CoOp program gives local nonprofits, municipalities and tribal governments a financial incentive to market what’s uniquely New Mexican about their event or location and even participate in existing advertising campaigns. Through the CoOp program, state money is leveraged with money from other public entities to amplify media buying power for all involved parties. (Private businesses can contribute up to 50 percent of a public entity’s total CoOp investment.)

Parallel tracks

The Tourism Department awards CoOp funds every year, and the application cycle for fiscal year 2020 is scheduled to open this spring. Applicants must participate in a April 9 webinar that outlines the rules and provides tips for a successful application. Register here

The two funding tracks are the Media Menu Program, which lets participants piggyback on the department’s existing marketing relationships, and flex grants, which cover complementary marketing efforts. An organization can apply for both at once, but
all marketing must conform to the New Mexico True Brand, and ads must be approved before release.

Successful applicants to the Media Menu Program may advertise on indoor and outdoor billboards, digital venues and publications — including some where the department already advertises — and split the cost 50-50 with the state.

Members of the CoOp team collaborate with successful Media Menu applicants to create high-quality advertisements, videos and marketing collateral that is consistent with the New Mexico True brand. They negotiate with and pay vendors and place all orders.

Flex grants cover advertising or other costs for independent though complementary marketing. For example, a grant might cover website development or exhibit fees and booth rental at a trade show not part of the Media Menu Program. Successful applicants pay all costs, provide proof of placement, report ad performance, and apply for reimbursement.

Joint investment

In fiscal year 2018, CoOp partner governments, event organizers, MainStreet entities and industry associations contributed $379,945 to a total $760,000 Media Menu Program expenditure. Their ads ran in the department’s annual adventure guide; in magazines like Texas Monthly, Outside Magazine, and New Mexico Magazine; in digital ads on platforms like TripAdvisor and Expedia; and on billboards in New Mexico and Texas.

New Mexico Wine, the nonprofit winegrower’s association, has participated in the CoOp program for several years. One year it spent flex grant money to purchase wine glasses embossed with the New Mexico True logo. “We have leveraged their matching funds to help propel our brands into the consumers’ hands … with specialty glassware that has shelf life in consumers’ homes,” said Chris Goblet, the association’s executive director. The association also leveraged funds to produce videos that showcase the country’s oldest wine growing region in the country. In the current cycle, New Mexico Wine’s award will, in part, fund outdoor billboards promoting annual festivals on Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends.

Short videos on NM:
* NM Wine click [here](#)
* Gallup Mountain Biking [click here](#)
* And on Las Cruces click [here](#)

The Tourism Department is available for one-on-one consultations throughout the year. For more information and a list of past awards, visit [https://www.newmexico.org/industry/work-together/grants/co-op-marketing/overview](https://www.newmexico.org/industry/work-together/grants/co-op-marketing/overview). Send questions to coop.marketing@state.nm.us.

Finance New Mexico partners with the New Mexico Municipal League on the Grow It! project and other economic development initiatives. To learn more, go to [www.FinanceNewMexico.org](http://www.FinanceNewMexico.org) and [www.GrowItNM.org](http://www.GrowItNM.org).
An organization that never had a non-white employee was sued for racial discrimination and ordered to hire three African-American men who had been rejected as applicants. Although now employed with a fair salary, the collective hostility of the existing employees toward the three men resulted in the silent treatment to shun them. Except for minimal communication necessary to do their jobs, no one would speak to them, help them, or acknowledge their presence. No one would sit within ten feet of them in the company cafeteria. No formal leader of the organization—President, Department Director, Team Leader, or Union President—did anything to address the issue.

After about a week of this treatment, John, a well-respected white employee without any formal title or authority, stopped at the cafeteria table where the three men sat, separated from everyone. He asked if he could join them. They accepted, and he returned the next day to join them again. On the third day, he invited a friend to “come meet the new guys, you’ll like them.” On the fourth day, he asked two other friends to “come meet the new guys, you’ll like them.”

These simple acts, sent a powerful message about how the organization’s culture needed to change and how people should be treated. While all the formal leaders were ‘missing in action’, John quietly led his organization away from racial discrimination into a more inclusive workplace by his example.

There is an immediate tendency to reserve the word ‘leader’ as a job description limited to individuals whose names appear in a box on an organizational chart, from the Mayor or City Councilor, President or Executive Director, to the Department Head or Team Leader. This is a serious mistake. There are leaders who carry formal authority and titles, and there are those who LEAD.

I have encountered more than a few organizations where the people with the titles were unable, or unwilling to lead. I have also worked with people, like John, in the middle or lower ranks of organizations who deeply understand the organization’s mission and guiding values, quietly leading by example every day as they do their work and interact with others. Leadership integrity at all levels is crucial to build and sustain a healthy organization.

For the past 15 years, I have asked the same question at the beginning of my ethical decision-making seminars: Think of a leader you know who has integrity. What does integrity look like in a leader? The answers I have received from participants in many states and other countries who work in government agencies, nonprofits, and corporations are remarkably similar and confirm three qualities that demonstrate leadership integrity to others.
• CHARACTER OF THE PERSON
  The foundation of integrity is moral character. Leaders are honest. They always strive to do the right thing, aligned with their principles. They keep their word and their commitments.

• CONSIDERATION OF OTHERS
  Real leaders communicate integrity by the quality of their treatment of others. Leaders are not self-centered. They do not put themselves above and before others. Rather, they show positive regard for others’ dignity by always treating them respectfully. They listen carefully to others and sincerely consider their needs and concerns.

• CONSTANT, AUTHENTIC PRESENCE
  Leadership integrity requires a consistent and reliable set of behaviors so others know they can count on you. An erratic temperament and unpredictability make a leader untrustworthy. Without trust, leadership is compromised. Unlike the example above, integrity requires the courage to face difficulties directly. Leaders do not go ‘missing in action.’ Employees know a leader has their backs. Also, a leader does not wear a mask. She shows the same sincere, ‘face’ to everyone, in public and in private, regardless of their status.

Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it and I will move the world. – Archimedes

Leadership is always about moving the organization forward to fulfill the mission. Significant forward movement requires effort and leverage. Moral character is the fulcrum where the leader stands on her principles in all decisions and actions. When a leader strongly connects with others through considerate, respectful listening and a constant, authentic presence, he lengthens the lever available to influence others and move the mission forward. John moved his organization onto a better path by quietly standing up for strong principles, giving others respectful consideration, treating them well, and acting authentically and consistently. We all ‘belong’ to various organizations: our work in the public, private, or nonprofit sector, our church, family, or neighborhood association, or a nonprofit where we volunteer. The quality of our lives is deeply affected by the health of these organizations. Leadership integrity matters from the smallest team to the executive level of a large organization,

There are leaders, and there are those who LEAD....

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Mark D. Bennett has an organizational consulting practice based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He leads workshops in ethical decision making (Stronger Decisions by Design), coaches leaders in all sectors, and helps organizations build cultures of high performance through wise planning and creative collaboration. www_decisionres_com
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embodi the debate of the body and help to form the basis of why a particular councilor voted in a particular manner? Could this not be considered a part of the “substance of the proposals considered” and therefore a part of the public minutes? It is an interesting question.

Inspection of Public Records Act (“IPRA”)

The IPRA is another aging attempt to legislate transparency. Its public policy is clear: “Every person has a right to inspect public records of this state except:” This means that unless specifically exempted, all public records are subject to inspection (and copying) by the public. The critical question here is the definition of public records. The IPRA did a better job at predicting the future than OMA because it did address at least the notion of electronic communications, just not the scope. Public records under the IPRA means:

“all documents, papers, letters, books, maps, tapes, photographs, recordings and other materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, that are used, created, received, maintained or held by or on behalf of any public body and relate to public business, whether or not the records are required by law to be created or maintained.”

It is not a quantum leap to get to the point of determining that text messages can indeed be public records. A text message may well be some “other material” because it is in a form not specifically identified that is used, created, received, maintained or held by or on behalf of any public body and related to the public business. Consequently members of the public could request transcripts of text messages between councilors that relate to the public business if they knew such messages exist, and municipalities might be required to produce transcripts of these conversations; regardless of the platform upon which these messages age taking place. In fact, it matters not whether the text messaging occurs on a “city phone” or a personal phone; such message is probably a public document that needs to be preserved.

Quasi-judicial Hearings

In preparing the draft ordinance, I was also advised that some councilors were utilizing the Internet to conduct their own research or fact checking as well as to consult with people who were not present during the hearing. Both of these practices are extremely dangerous and put the results of the hearing in jeopardy.

This comes from the requirement that quasi-judicial proceedings require that the parties be afforded Due Process. This means notice and an opportunity to be heard. This opportunity also involves knowing who is present or “testifying” at a hearing and a reasonable opportunity to cross-examine that witness. Due Process also requires that the decision of the body be based of the evidence, testimony an information presented during the hearing. The problem with board members using text messaging or Internet research is also very apparent in this example.

When a member does their own Internet research on their electronic device, they are acquiring information that was not presented at the hearing and to which the parties did not have the opportunity to cross examine. Independent Internet research violates the tenets of Due Process on two fronts.

Similarly, I was advised that during at least one board meeting, a member was texting with two other people, one who was in the audience, and one who was out of the country. This practice also was contrary to the protections guaranteed by Due Process; the parties could not cross-examine the people at the other end of the text message, and the board members was made aware of information that might affect their decision of which the other board members were not made aware.

The end result was that no ordinance was passed. It was simply too difficult to wrest control of electronic devices from their owners. But, I do believe that they all received a stern warning and a wakeup call to the very significant issues surrounding the use of electronic devices during public meetings. All the members of this board pledged to keep OMA and IPRA and Due Process in mind before accessing electronic devices and to use common sense before engaging in any electronic communication during a meeting.

So how will your next meeting go?
4 Factors That Can Provoke the Media
Continued from page 19

Anticipating Media Scrutiny
So how do you know which events will set off the media alarm bells? After being involved in an incident, ask yourself the following question: Is my perception and analysis of the incident the only way to think about what happened? If I’m playing devil’s advocate, could I see the event in a different light?

As you know, you can rarely be certain that reporters and social media users will have the same analysis as you do. Opinions are often formed before all the details are learned about the incident; sometimes, one aspect of the incident generates a powerful emotional response. In shooting incidents, for example, the race of person who was shot or the number of shots fired can be enough to grab the media’s attention. It is important to closely analyze all aspects of the incident and be ready to properly respond when the media shows up. Be on the lookout for unclear fact circumstances, tragic events sustained by the involved parties or their family or friends, and negative opinions regarding the agency’s ability to provide proper security to their population.

The Importance of Training
Successfully navigating media scrutiny of public safety agencies requires training your personnel before the microphones and cameras come out. This training can help your agency become aware of how fast the media will get involved in an incident—even those you wouldn’t consider “critical incidents.”

Prior to setting up the training, do some research to identify lessons learned the hard way by other municipalities. Many times, an incident will not appear to be too serious at first, but a seemingly minor aspect can unexpectedly raise the publicity to a negative high level. Review newspaper articles on the internet regarding similar events that you could be exposed to. But don’t stop with just the reported information—look at the

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CONTINUED STORIES

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reader comments, too. They provide immediate insight into how citizens view incidents and the fallout public safety agencies can face if they’re not prepared. This has a cumulative effect—an agency with a poor reputation will almost certainly face more media scrutiny.

In addition to your internet search, it can also be helpful to talk with your insurance carrier. They may have already been involved in cases that generated unexpected publicity.

Start Today
Responding to media scrutiny of public safety agencies is a multifaceted process. It involves training staff to recognize which events may spiral out of control, ensuring open lines of communication across the municipality and to reporters, and being prepared with appropriate messaging to counter attacks on your agency’s policies or personnel actions.

But it starts with building relationships and in turn, enhancing your agency’s reputation. Many departments have increased the number of charity-related events they participate in, and they look for unique ways to interact with their community. As positive interaction with their community improves, an agency will receive stronger support in the media. (It doesn’t hurt to get to know your local reporters, either.)

The bottom line: Stay alert! Consider all the aspects surrounding an event and try to anticipate what could generate negative publicity, potentially hurting your agency’s reputation or even influencing an expensive lawsuit.

RICHARD SPIERS, a Market Ambassador for Lexipol, started in the insurance industry in 1980 and has been a claims executive in the reinsurance and excess marketplace since 1985. He was with Genesis Management and Insurance Services, a subsidiary of General Reinsurance, for more than 20 years, until the end of 2017. Rick has extensive experience handling the wide array of claims faced by public entities, K-12 school districts and the higher education sector. Based in Chicago, he has also worked for Transamerica Insurance Group, Northbrook Excess and Surplus Insurance Company, CNA Insurance and Allstate Reinsurance. He is a graduate of Northern Illinois University, a member of the Society of CPCU, and holds associate designations in risk management, claims and reinsurance. Rick has been developing and presenting insurance industry-related training sessions to a variety of client and industry groups for 20 years.

CONTINUED STORIES

UPCOMING EVENTS

Workshop Announcement
April 18 – 19, 2019
Marriott Pyramid North Conference Center
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2019 New Mexico Water Workshop
“WATER PORTFOLIO: THEN, NOW, TOMORROW”

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Certification renewal credits available for water and wastewater operators.

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Individual, Sponsorship, and Exhibitor registrations NOW OPEN!!!
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DISTRICT/LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 2</td>
<td>District 7 – Las Cruces</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotel Encanto</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>705 South Telshor Blvd.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>575-532-4200</td>
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<td>Wednesday, April 3</td>
<td>District 6 - Ruidoso</td>
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<td>MCM Elegante Lodge &amp; Resort</td>
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<td>107 Sierra Blanca Drive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>575-258-5500</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 4</td>
<td>District 5 – Artesia</td>
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<td>Hotel Artesia</td>
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<td>203 North 2nd Street</td>
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<td>888-746-2066</td>
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<td>Friday, April 5</td>
<td>District 4 – Tucumcari</td>
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<td>Tucumcari Convention Center</td>
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<td>1500 West Route 66</td>
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<td>575-461-3064</td>
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<td>Monday, April 8</td>
<td>District 2 – Red River</td>
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<td>Red River Conference Center</td>
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<td>101 West River Street</td>
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<td>575-754-1708</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 9</td>
<td>District 1 - Bloomfield</td>
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<td>Bloomfield Cultural Complex</td>
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<td>333 S. First Street</td>
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<td>505-632-2840</td>
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<td>Wednesday, April 10</td>
<td>District 3 – Las Vegas</td>
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<td>Plaza Hotel</td>
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<td>230 Plaza Park</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 11</td>
<td>District 8 – Rio Rancho</td>
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<td>1465 Rio Rancho Blvd. SE</td>
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MEDIA RELATIONS & PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER TRAINING

During the two-day class you will learn:
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- understand the rules of engagement, and
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The New Mexico Department of Transportation is the sponsor for the free, two-day class and the New Mexico Broadcasters Association conducts the class. Instructors include: Melanie J. Majors, New Mexico Broadcasters Association, and Keith Elder, Retired New Mexico State Police lieutenant.

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To sign up go to NMBA.org and click Media Training Button

For questions: Phone/ Fax: Melanie J. Majors
505.881.4444/800.622.2414
e-mail: melaniemajors@nmba.org