

Montana Municipal Officials Handbook

Dan Clark

Director

MSU Local Government Center



MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY

Local
Government
Center

Montana – Big Sky County



Get directions My places

Washington, District of Columbia
Chicago, IL
Add Destination - Show options
GET DIRECTIONS

Suggested routes

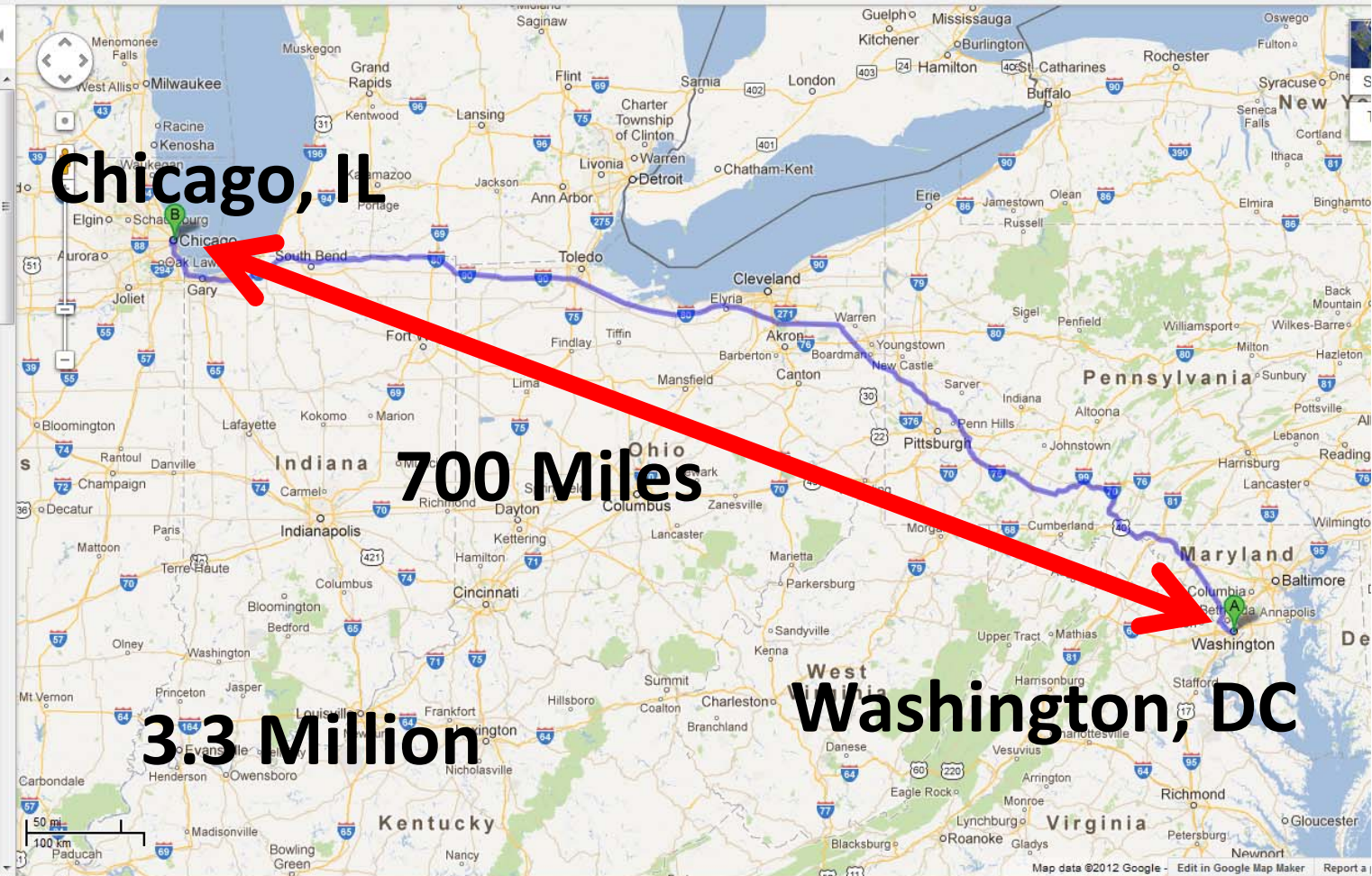
- I-76 W and I-80 W 700 mi, 12 hours 12 mins
In current traffic: 12 hours 12 mins
- I-70 W 754 mi, 13 hours 3 mins
In current traffic: 13 hours 3 mins
- I-76 W and U.S. 30 W 727 mi, 13 hours 9 mins
In current traffic: 13 hours 9 mins

Driving directions to Chicago, IL 3D ▶

This route has tolls.
This route has restricted usage or private roads.

Washington, DC

- Head east on Ellipse Rd NW
Restricted usage road 0.3 mi
- Turn left onto 16th St NW
Restricted usage road 194 ft
- Turn right onto US-50 W/Constitution Ave NW
Continue to follow US-50 W 1.1 mi
- Continue onto I-66 W



Montana Demographics

- Population: 1,000,000 (Nov, 2011)
- Largest City: Billings, 104,170
- \$32,600 per capita income
- 129 Incorporated Cities & Towns
 - 118 less than 5,000
 - 77 less than 1,000
- 56 Counties
- 750+ Special Districts
- Manage \$2+ Billion in public assessments



Local Government in MT

- 112 Commission Executive Form
- 12 Manager Form
- 2 Commission Chair
- 1 Town Meeting
- 2 Consolidated City/County



Local Government Challenges

- High turnover rate of elected officials & staff
- Limited employment pool
- Rapidly changing landscape
- Aging infrastructure
- Complicated funding, financing, regulations, culture, attitudes
- Access to competent legal counsel



MSU Local Government Center (LGC)

- Established in 1985 at Montana State University
- In 1993, the Montana State Legislature formally established the purpose of the center (20-25-237 MCA).



LGC Purpose

- The purpose of the center is to *strengthen* the capacities of Montana's local governmental units to deliver essential services efficiently and to provide ***training, technical assistance,*** and ***research*** to local officials (20-25-237 MCA).



Training

- Leadership & Professional Development
- Curriculum Development
- Annual Schools
- Ad Hoc/Request

Technical Assistance

- One-on-one Contacts
- Association Listservs
- Strategic Planning
- Citizen Engagement

Research

- Surveys
- Profiles
- Policies
- Publications



Municipal Listservs

- MT Mayors
 - Began in May 2008
 - 964 Emails
- MT Clerks, Treasurers & Finance Officers Association
 - Began in October, 2008
 - 10,600 Emails



Municipal Officials Handbook

- Continuity of government
- Consistency in government
- Build trust
- Increase competency
- Improve efficiency
- Enhance responsiveness



Handbook Genesis

- Concept simultaneously evolved from 3 independent sources
 - Local Government Center
 - Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority (MMIA)
 - Ken Weaver, Former LGC Director



Talk to Action

- Convened a design team
- Developed a Table of Contents
- Recruited authors
- Set deadlines
- Appointed Wranglers
- Selected “Chief Editor” to pull it all together



Handbook Collaborators

- Local Government Center – Publisher, Editor, Authors, Wrangler, Financier
- MMIA – Host Convener, Authors, Wrangler
- MT League of Cities and Towns – Endorser
- Ken Weaver and Local Government Associates (Former LGC Director) – Editor in Chief



Municipal Officials Handbook

- Part I – Municipal Officials
 - 7 Chapters + Index
 - 184 pages
- Part II – Montana Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officer Procedure Manual
 - 5 Chapters + Index
 - 89 pages



Chapters – Part I

- Chapter 1 – Municipal Government Defined
- Chapter 2 – Governing the Municipality
- Chapter 3 – Human Resources
- Chapter 4 – Municipal Budgeting
- Chapter 5 – Financial Management
- Chapter 6 – Municipal Property and Contracts
- Chapter 7 – Citizen Participation and Interaction



Chapters – Part II

- Chapter 1 – Council Procedures
- Chapter 2 – Other Administrative Duties
- Chapter 2 – Licenses and Permitting Procedures
- Chapter 4 – Public Records
- Chapter 5 – Budget and Finance

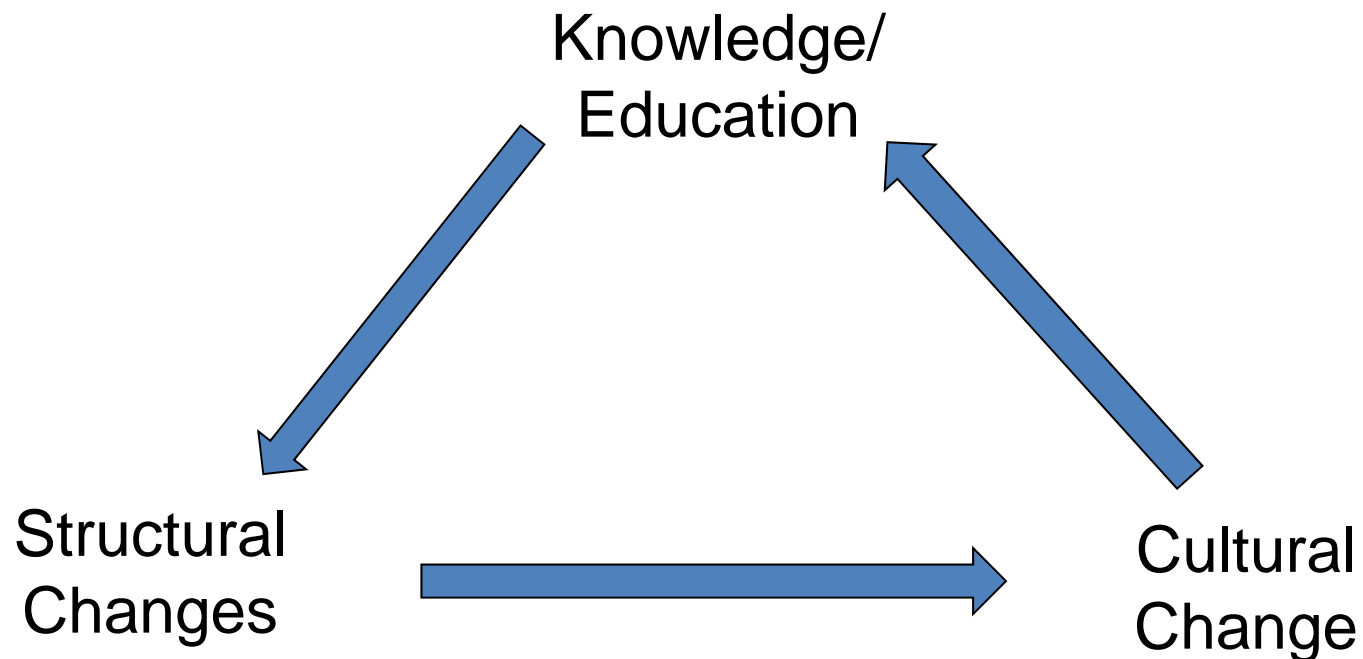


Work in Progress

- Changes to MT Code effecting LG each time the legislature meets
- Changes to Federal law
- Omissions
- Commissions



How Do You Create Cultural Shift In Local Government?



Changing a Culture

- Handbook release
 - Basic question still posted to listserv
 - Same type of technical assistance phone calls
- Possession of the handbook did not guarantee its use



Handbook Highlights

- Weekly Email
 - Every Monday morning at 8:00 am
 - Consistency in its presentation
 - Branded
 - Easily forwarded to Council members & others not on listervs
 - Posted on website
 - [Handbook Highlights](#)



Handbook Highlight Topics/Themes

- Governing – Dan (Director)
- HR – Betsy (Associate Director)
- Procedures – Jen (Program Coordinator)

- Topics selected are timely
 - Municipal cycles
 - Calls
 - Issues on listervs



Technical Assistance

- When responding to Technical Assistance calls/emails
 - Always reference the MOHB



Impact??

- Types of questions and technical assistance requests have shifted away from the “Basic” and is more focused on the unique or complicated.

Does anyone have a policy on excavation bonds they are willing to share? Basically what do you ask from contractors who dig on city property or city streets? Do you require them to be bonded and if so for how much?

Thank you

Sonya
Scobey
487-5581



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Next Steps

- Update version 2.0
 - Make corrections
 - Clarify some topics
 - Add additional topics
 - Online??



THANK YOU!!

Please contact us with any questions:

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