



SOUTHERN MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

2017 Leadership Meeting

BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE



Jekyll Island, Georgia

Wednesday, April 26

- 1:00 – 4:30 pm** **Registration**
Ballroom Parlor
- 2:00 – 3:00 pm** **Board of Directors Meeting**
Club Ballroom
- 3:00 – 4:30 pm** **General Session – State Reports**
Presiding – Ron Rordam, Mayor of Blacksburg, VA
- 5:00 – 6:00 pm** **Trolley Tour through Historic Area**
A trolley will depart the hotel for a tour of the revitalization of the island, from the complete rebuild of the 4H Center, to the Conference Center, new retail village and the public/private partnerships that are resulting in new housing and hotels. Drop off will be at the Riverfront Lawn at the site of the Reception and Dinner.
- 6:00 – 8:30 pm** **Welcome Reception & Dinner**
Riverfront Lawn
We welcome you to Jekyll Island, Georgia. Our Reception and Dinner will be nestled under the trees with a picturesque Southern view of the ocean where you will enjoy a true Southern Low Country Boil buffet.

Thursday, April 27

- 7:30 – 8:30 am** **Breakfast**
DuBignon Room
- 8:00 – 9:00 am** **Registration**
Ballroom Parlor
- 8:30 – 9:30 am** **City Rights in an Era of Preemption**
Club Ballroom
Presenter:
Christy McFarland, Research Director, National League of Cities
- 9:30 – 9:45 am** **Break**
- 9:45 – 10:45 am** **Firefighter Cancer Coverage: Georgia's Case of Mitigating Costs**
In 2016, firefighters brought legislation to provide them with workers' compensation coverage for cancer claims based on a low threshold of proof. Despite concerns of the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), the county association and our respective memberships, the General Assembly overwhelmingly passed the legislation on to Governor Deal. GMA presented information to the governor which showed potentially exorbitant

Thursday, April 27 - continued

costs to city governments, and the legislation was vetoed, with the governor citing GMA’s concerns in his formal veto message. GMA staff began exploring less costly options to provide cancer benefits for firefighters based on the political calculus that similar legislation would be difficult to stop in the General Assembly and that minor tweaks in a workers’ comp bill could potentially overcome the governor’s objections in 2017. The result of GMA staff research was to propose less costly insurance to pay cancer and disability claims by firefighters which may prove to be a model to replicate in other states, particularly those facing firefighter cancer presumption legislation or dealing with the high costs of workers’ comp claims.

Presenters:

Tom Q. Gehl, Director, Governmental Relations, Georgia Municipal Association
John Hanson, Insurance Benefits Consultant, Willis Towers Watson

10:45 – 11:00 am Break

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Muni-Gov Legislative Rapid-Fire Session

Often times, “home rule” is determined by state legislators who argue that they know best what powers a city should have in serving its citizens. Municipal leagues need the ability to counter legislative attempts to diminish their authority, and sharing information, tactics, and strategies with each other is crucial to our collective efforts state by state. Discussion will begin with attempts to regulate processes for issuing local licenses and permits, business license tax preemption attempts, telecom build-out legislation, and R.O.W. encroachment attempts, transportation solutions in other states, and other hot topics in the SE region.

Moderator:

Tom Q. Gehl, Director, Governmental Relations, Georgia Municipal Association

Presenters:

SMC Attendees

11:30 – 12:30 pm Spouse Luncheon

12:00 – 1:15 pm Group Lunch

[DuBignon Room](#)

Speaker:

Irma Esparza Diggs, Senior Executive and Director of Federal Advocacy, National League of Cities

1:30 – 2:30 pm Federal Advocacy: Ideas for Best Practices

Building relationships with federal leaders and agency representatives is an essential part of influencing federal policymaking. State leagues and cities employ a variety of approaches to federal advocacy, from group fly-ins to Washington

D.C. to small meetings with representatives and staff in district offices back home. During this session, participants will hear from NLC’s new Federal Advocacy Director about her goals for working with city officials and municipal leagues to advance NLC’s top priorities. Directors of federal advocacy programs in Florida and Georgia will

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also provide information about their respective methods for engaging federal leaders. Participants will discuss how federal advocacy is accomplished in their respective states, identify what methods are most effective, and share ideas each participant can take home.

Panelists:

Irma Esparza Diggs, Senior Executive and Director of Federal Advocacy, National League of Cities

Allison Payne, Manager, Advocacy Programs & Federal Affairs, Legislative Affairs, Florida League of Cities

Becky Taylor, Director of Federal Relations and Research, Georgia Municipal Association

Group Discussion:

SMC Attendees

2:30 – 2:45 pm

Break

2:45 – 3:45 pm

Federal Issues

At any given time, Congress is making decisions about issues that impact cities, ranging from infrastructure funding to environmental regulations. Attendees will first learn about the respective federal legislative priorities for Arkansas and Kentucky municipalities. Participants will then have the opportunity to engage in a discussion of the key issues that impact cities in other states around the region, including issues of mutual concern to all states, as well as those that have a unique impact to states depending on their location in the region such as flood insurance and access to water resources.

Panelists:

Don Zimmerman, Executive Director, Arkansas Municipal League
Jon Steiner, Executive Director, Kentucky League of Cities

Group Discussion:

SMC Attendees

6:00 – 8:30 pm

Dinner

Crane Courtyard

Friday, April 28

8:00 – 9:00 am

Registration

Ballroom Parlor

8:00 – 9:00 am

Breakfast

DuBignon Room

Friday, April 28 - continued

9:00 – 9:45 am

Safe Cities, Safe Florida Initiative

Florida is a smorgasbord. Its cities are as varied as the issues with which we deal. Yet, when we come together to learn from and share with one another, we discover we have more in common than ever. Specifically, we each have a commitment to bettering the lives of the men, women, and children who live, work and play in our 412 municipalities.

And that is the focus of the initiative, "Safe Cities, Safe Florida." As an organization, Florida League of Cities President, Susan Haynie believes the League should strengthen each city's ability to prevent, neutralize and respond to threats. This initiative will provide city governments and municipal stakeholders with training and resources to better service their residents in times of crisis. It will share best practices for building strong partnerships with agencies and organizations in the areas of incident management, health and safety, crisis communication and interagency coordination.

Regardless of the issues we face, we can work together to create safer communities for all of Florida.

Presenter:

Susan Haynie, President, Florida League of Cities, Mayor, City of Boca Raton

10:00 – 10:45 am

Workforce Development and the Impact on Cities

The Georgia Municipal Association's (GMA) Municipal Workforce Development Task Force was appointed in the fall of 2016 and was tasked to evaluate the workforce issues facing Georgia's city governments. The intent of the task force is not simply report on the issues cities face, but evaluate options for the association to consider to help member cities address the identified issues. Recommendations from the Task Force to GMA's Board of Directors will likely focus on training opportunities, assistance on how to market cities as good places to work, and a toolkit of best practices and resources.

Presenter:

Jan Moore, Chair, Georgia Municipal Association Municipal Workforce Development Task Force, Mayor, City of Statesboro

10:45 – 11:00 am

Break

11:00 – 11:45 am

Expanding Training Opportunities for City Officials

The Georgia Municipal Association, in partnership with the University of Georgia, offers an extensive training program for city officials. In addition to a state-mandated Newly Elected Officials Institute, the program includes a curriculum of more than 50 voluntary classes dealing with topics such as ethics, open meetings and open records, emergency management and municipal finance. Elected officials and city managers/assistant city managers are eligible to receive up to five certificates depending on the number of training hours earned. Mayor Austin will review the training program and share his perspective on how it is helping build leadership capacity in Georgia's cities.

Presenter:

Boyd Austin, President, Georgia Municipal Association, Mayor, City of Dallas

11:45 am – 12:00 pm

Closing Remarks & Adjourn

ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS

Christy McFarland

Research Director, National League of Cities

Christiana K. McFarland is the Research Director of the National League of Cities, the largest advocacy, resource and research organization dedicated to strengthening cities. As Research Director, McFarland manages the organization's research agenda, survey research, trend analysis and research partnerships. She is the principal author of NLC's *City Fiscal Conditions* report and survey of city chief finance officers, the only annual source of municipal sector data and trends. Christy has been with NLC since 2001, and prior to her post as Research Director, launched NLC's finance and economic development program, focused on supporting municipal leadership and outcomes in economic development, data efforts and municipal finance. She has published in applied research journals including *Economic Development Quarterly*, *Public Administration Review*, *Urban Affairs Review*, *Public Sector Digest*, *International Public Management Review*, and *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*. Christy has a BA in Political Science and Economics and Master of Public Policy from the George Washington University, and is currently pursuing a PhD in urban planning/economic development from Virginia Tech.

Tom Q. Gehl

Director, Governmental Relations, Georgia Municipal Association

Tom Gehl is currently the Georgia Municipal Association's (GMA) Director of Governmental Affairs, and he is responsible for representing the needs of the state's 537 city governments – "from Adel to Zebulon" – at Georgia's State Capitol. Tom has worked under the Gold Dome during every legislative session since the convening of the 1990 General Assembly. Tom is primarily responsible for overall legislative strategy at GMA, and has focused on local government, environmental and transportation policy areas. Prior to being recruited by GMA, Tom served under two lieutenant governors and the 56-member state senate as the Senior Policy Analyst for the Georgia Senate Research Office. In that role, he served as the lead staff for the Senate Natural Resources and Environment Committee, the Senate Transportation Committee, and the State and Local Governmental Operations Committee.

Georgia Trend magazine in January 2017 recognized Tom as one of 51 "Notable Georgians who are making an impact in the state". The January 2016 edition of Capitol Faces magazine named Tom as one of the "60 Powerful Leaders Who Rule the Capitol," among those "trendsetters, rainmakers and policy experts who impact the capitol."

John Hanson

Consultant, Willis Towers Watson

John is a consultant with Willis Towers Watson, a global risk management corporation. He has worked in the legal and insurance industry for over 25 years with a focus on public policy and benefit design strategies. John is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the University of Maine School of Law. He lives in Atlanta with his wife Simone and three sons.

Irma Esparza Diggs

Senior Executive and Director of Federal Advocacy

Becky Taylor

Director of Federal Relations and Research, Georgia Municipal Association

Becky Taylor is the Director of Federal Relations and Research for the Georgia Municipal Association and has been with GMA for 14 years. Prior to coming to GMA, she worked for six years as the County Planner/ Assistant to the County Manager in Bulloch County, Georgia, and worked for two years as a grant writer and consultant for local governments. A native of Mississippi, Becky received her undergraduate degree in Political Science from Mississippi State University and obtained a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Georgia. She lives in Athens-Clarke County, GA with her husband Tim, who is the county's Budget Administrator, and they have a 10 year old son.

Allison Payne

Manager of Advocacy Programs and Federal Affairs, Florida League of Cities

Allison Payne is the Manager of Advocacy Programs and Federal Affairs for the Florida League of Cities. She is a part of the FLC lobbying team that represents the interests of over 400 municipalities before the Florida Legislature. As the manager of advocacy programs, Allison coordinates advocacy efforts with city officials. She maintains the legislative key contacts program and sends out various legislative alerts during session. Allison is also the League staff person for federal issues. She works closely with the National League of Cities and the Florida Federal Action Strike Team (FAST) to advocate on behalf of cities at the federal level. She coordinates the Florida League's congressional delegation visits to Washington DC. Allison has been with the FLC since 1994.

She graduated from Florida State University with a BS in Political Science in 1993.

Don Zimmerman

Executive Director, Arkansas Municipal League

Don is a graduate of North Little Rock public schools, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville with a BSBA and the UALR School of Law with a JD degree. He has served the Arkansas Municipal League as a Federal Aid Coordinator, Field Representative, Managing Editor of the League's magazine, Legislative Counsel and Assistant Director before becoming its Executive Director. He has also served as Plan Administrator of the Municipal Legal Defense Program since 1979, the Municipal Health Benefit Fund since 1981, the Municipal Vehicle Program since January 1982, the Municipal League Workers' Compensation Trust since July 1985 and the Municipal Property Program since October 1985. He has represented Arkansas municipalities before the Arkansas General Assembly for 46 years.

He has served three terms on the Board of Directors of the National League of Cities. He previously served as 2nd Vice Chairman of the National League of Cities Mutual Insurance and continues to serve on its Board of Directors. He is a past Chair of the State Municipal League Directors, founding Chair of the National League of Cities Risk Management Group and current member of the Southern Municipal Conference Board of Directors. He is a past Chairman and Board member of the Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System and currently serves on the Winrock Advisory Council. He was also inducted to North Little Rock Boys and Girls Club Hall of Fame.

Jon Steiner

Executive Director/CEO, Kentucky League of Cities

Jonathan "Jon" Steiner joined the Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) as executive director/CEO in November 2010. He oversees KLC and its affiliate organizations including KLC's member association, insurance and finance programs.

Steiner's career working with local government spans more than 25 years. He also relates to local officials having been elected to four local government positions himself in New Hampshire. Prior to KLC, he was with the New Hampshire Municipal Association and served as Vice President of the N.H. School Boards Association.

In addition to his work at KLC, Steiner serves on several boards and committees including the University of Kentucky Martin School of Public Policy & Administration Board of Visitors and the Kentuckians for Better Transportation Board of Directors.

He received an undergraduate degree as well as a Master of Public Administration from the University of New Hampshire and a Master of Arts from Dartmouth College.

Mayor Jan Moore

Mayor Moore is in her first term as mayor of Statesboro. She took office in January 2014.

Since her election, she has been very active in GMA. Presently, she serves on GMA's Board of Directors, Executive Committee and Member Services Advisory Council. Last fall, she was appointed by GMA President Boyd Austin to chair GMA's Municipal Workforce Development Task Force.

In her day job, she is the Vice President for Economic Development at Ogeechee Technical College. She previously served as Dean of Students at OTC and worked with the Bulloch County Board of Education, where she served as Special Education Supervisor/Behavior Intervention Specialist.

She holds an Education Specialist degree and Masters of Education degree, both in School Psychology and both from Georgia Southern University. She also has a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Georgia.

Her work experience also includes six years as School Psychologist with the Bryan County Board of Education. She also served eleven years as Business Editor of the Statesboro Herald.

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Mayor Moore is an executive board member of the Lynda Brannen Williamson Foundation and was recently named as an Advisory Board member for the University of Georgia's J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development. She is also a board member of the Coastal Regional Commission and served on the Georgia Southern University Presidential Search and Screen Committee in 2015-2016

Mayor Boyd Austin. Jr.

Mayor Boyd L. Austin, Jr., is a lifelong resident of the City of Dallas, and a 6th-generation Paulding Countian. He is a 1980 graduate of Paulding County High School. He graduated with honors from the University of Georgia in 1984 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree, and is a Life Member of the UGA Alumni Association. He is the longest-serving mayor in the City's history. First elected in 1995, he is presently serving his sixth term in office. Mayor Austin also achieved another historic milestone in June when he became the first elected official from Paulding County to be elected President of the Georgia Municipal Association, serving 522 member cities across the state. He chairs GMA's Board of Directors, Executive Board, and serves on its Legislative Policy, Federal Policy, and Property Committees. He is currently the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of GMA's Risk Management & Employee Benefits System, and is only the third person to serve simultaneously as President of the Association and Chair of the RMEBS Board. The Board manages more than \$2 billion in assets providing pension, life and health, workers comp, and property & casualty benefits to member cities and their employees.

He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. He holds a seat on the Paulding County Board of Health, Paulding County Airport Authority, and chairs the Paulding County Industrial Building Authority. Mayor Austin is currently serving his second term as chair of the governing board of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District; the District covers 15 counties, 93 municipalities, and almost 6 million residents in the greater Atlanta area. Governor Sonny Perdue appointed, and Governor Nathan Deal re-appointed Mayor Austin to serve as a municipal representative on the Board of Directors of the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, where he presently serves as Chairman of the Board. His leadership on the Water District and GEFA Boards have been key to the approval and funding of Paulding's new Richland Creek Reservoir, which is finally under construction. Mayor Austin is very active in the community. He is a member, serves on the Executive Council, and teaches the Joshua Sunday School Class at the First Baptist Church of Dallas. He is a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Sons of Confederate Veterans, and the Sons of the American Legion. He is a Mason, a Shriner, and a member of Kappa Sigma Fraternity. In 2014, Mayor Austin was named one of the "100 Most Influential Georgians" by *Georgia Trend* magazine. Mr. Austin is the property manager of Homeplace Communities Management, LLC, which manages several independent senior communities in the west metro area of Atlanta.

Susan Haynie

Susan Haynie is Mayor of the City of Boca Raton. She served 5 terms on the City Council prior to being elected Mayor and was reelected in 2017 for her second mayoral term. Her years of experience provide her with extensive knowledge of the City budget, public safety concerns, growth management issues and a strong collaborative partnership with the neighborhoods. Her strong public and community service record can be seen through her involvement with the Boca Raton Planning and Zoning Board, Federation of Boca Raton Homeowner Associations, Coastal Ocean Task Force, Community Emergency Response Team and as a former member of the Board of Directors of Boca Helping Hands. Additionally, as a leader in transportation planning, Susan's service also includes: Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council, Vice Chair; Florida League of Cities Board of Directors and 2016-17 president after serving two years in Vice Presidential seats, Member; South East Florida Transportation Council, Chair; Palm Beach County League of Cities, Past President seats; South East Florida Transportation Council, Chair; Palm Beach County League of Cities, Past President; Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization, Chair; Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, Gubernatorial Appointee. Susan was recently named "Woman Transportation Leader of the Year" for South Florida Women in Transportation. Her experience and community minded approach has helped to improve Boca Raton and strengthen its reputation as a world-class City with an unmatched quality of life. Susan is a Florida Native and a 40-year resident of Boca Raton. She is a graduate of Lynn University and holds a certification in Traffic Engineering Studies from Georgia Institute of Technology and Northwestern University. Susan began her career as an Engineering Analyst in the City of Boca Raton. She is also a State licensed General Contractor and a Community Association Manager.