

# LEADERSHIP STAFF CONNECTIONS

National Conference of State Legislatures

February 2010

## *A Dome with a View ...*

photos from Texas State Capitol

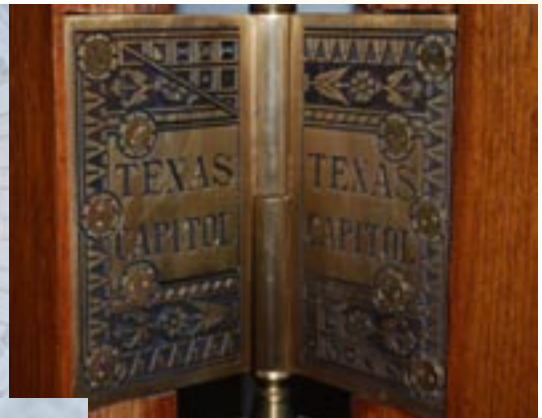


One of the highlights for Leadership staffers in Austin was the tour of the Texas Capitol Building. We followed our guide on the usual tourist paths—the rotunda, Senate Chamber, House Chamber, etc. Because we were special visitors, we were able to see some of the Capitol off the beaten path not open to the average tourist.

Did you know the Speaker has a residence inside the Capitol Building? We had the privilege of visiting the Speaker's residence. The appearance and purpose of the Speaker's Residence has evolved over the years. It began in the 1800s

with a small "private room" adjacent to the Speaker's office. By 1889, the Speaker's two rooms contained a desk, couch, dresser, beds, etc. In 1939, a newspaper reported that the Speaker's Apartment was quite spacious with a living area, bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom. The Speaker's residence was renovated during the Capitol Restoration in 1993-94 and is now established as a permanent legacy for future occupants.

Via circular stairway, we ascended upward to the top of the Capitol dome—not for those with weak knees! A peek over the railing made our stomachs quiver and our heads swoon (don't drop the camera!). Once at the top, we went outside on the balcony and viewed a spectacular panorama of the city of Austin. The Texas Longhorns Stadium (University of Texas at Austin) can be seen in one of the photos, along with many government buildings surrounding the Capitol grounds. (more photos on page 3)



Contact LSS at [NCSL.ORG](http://NCSL.ORG)

# LSS Chair's Comments

By **JANEEN HALVERSON, Chair**  
**NCSL Leadership Staff Section**  
**Executive Committee 2009-2010**



*Dear Fellow Leadership Staffer:*

I would like to express thanks to Tom Wright of Alaska who served as chair of our Leadership Staff Section this past year. Tom continues to be an active participant in our staff section as our Immediate Past Chair. In addition, he is now a member of the NCSL Executive Committee and will be our advocate on issues important to us.

In addition, I would like to thank the planners, presenters, and participants who guaranteed the success of our 2009 Professional Development Seminar in Austin, Texas, this past September. Many participants commented that it was one of the best seminars they had attended.

It has been a challenging 18 months in the history of the United States. As a nation, we are strategizing to emerge from the most serious economic downturn since the Great Depression. State governments and legislatures across the nation are coping with severe reductions in state revenue. Legislators are juggling priorities in order to balance state budgets and remain fiscally sound. As Legislative employees, we are asked to do more and more with less. And beyond that, on a personal level, we are doing the best we can to maintain our own fiscal security.

Due to the economic downturn, many states are dealing with travel restrictions and travel bans. Legislators and staff alike are unable to participate in NCSL to the degree they would like. NCSL has aptly responded to this situation by offering numerous e-learning and professional development products on their website. Many audio recordings and PowerPoint slides of the sessions from the Annual Summit and our Austin PDS are available at [www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org). NCSL also offers webinars on various legislative topics free of charge. In support of NCSL's effort, our staff section has its own E-learning Task Force chaired by Tom Bennett from West Virginia. The task force produced an e-learning project this past year—a video recording of an NCSL Fall Forum session entitled "The Rise and Fall of the Town Meeting."

Our staff section has several active committees working in specialized areas such as fundraising, outreach, communications, awards, program development, and bylaws. Even though your travel may be restricted, it does not need to impact your involvement in LSS. A committee assignment is a great way to get started.

Our 2010 Professional Development Seminar will be in Raleigh, North Carolina, September 9-11, 2010. Once again, our staff section will meet jointly with LINCS (Legislative Information and Communications Staff Section). We expect to have another informative seminar with a full slate of excellent presenters to assist you in being the best staffers you can be. We hope you will be able to participate.

LSS is your organization. I am committed to making it an effective resource for you. Please contact me at any time if you have questions or suggestions on how our staff section can best serve you and our leadership staff colleagues around the country.

*Janeen Halverson*

*Mark your Calendar!*

**Free Webinar, 90-minute session on Writing for the  
Legislative Audience: April 15, 2010  
12:00 noon MST (2:00 p.m. EST)**

**LSS/LINCS Professional Development Seminar  
September 9-11, 2010, Raleigh, NC**

**Legislative Summit 2010  
July 25-28, 2010, Louisville, KY**

**Leadership Staff Section Web Page**  
**[www.ncsl.org/Default.aspx?TabID=788&tabs=857,40,511#857](http://www.ncsl.org/Default.aspx?TabID=788&tabs=857,40,511#857)**

# Louisiana's First Electronic Voting Machine

written by Steven Tilly  
(submitted by Mechelle Miller)

In 1921, the Universal Indicator Company of Milwaukee, WI, approached the leadership of the House of Representatives with an offer to install an electric vote tabulating machine. The offer was that the company provide a ten-day, no obligation trial use of their vote tabulating machine. If satisfied after the trial, the House would pay Universal 10% of the machine's full price per year, payments not to exceed \$25,000 [\$300,700.00 in today's money] with the added option to buy out the contract at any time.

On November 16, 1921, the House of Representatives "by a rising vote<sup>1</sup> of 48 yeas and 46 nays" adopted HR 30, agreeing to conduct the trial with the voting machine. The trial started with the convening of the 1922 Regular Session, and Louisiana became the fourth state<sup>2</sup> with an electric vote tabulating machine. The voting machine may not have been accepted by the entirety of the House members. An argument in opposition was forwarded: "[t]hat the framers of the constitution did not contemplate this mode of voting on Legislative matters . . . ."

However, one contemporary press description of the proceedings in the House was:

"Representatives loved it [the voting machine] and cheered when a bill was introduced to negotiate for its purchase." By the end of the 1922 Regular Session, however, the only agreement House members would enter into was to pay the \$2,500 annual payment for the first year's use of the machine. The 1924 Regular Session brought more debate and negotiation and ended with the House's outright purchase of the voting machine for a single payment of \$15,000.

<sup>1</sup> Vote taken by asking those in favor to rise from their seats to be counted, followed by the same procedure for those opposed, also referred to as a vote by division; Mason's Manual, § 533.

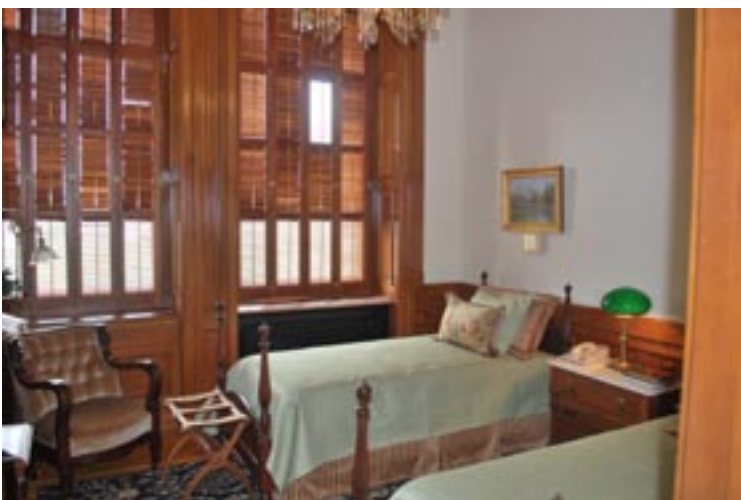
<sup>2</sup> Wisconsin, Iowa, and Texas were first to acquire an electric vote tabulating machine.

An excerpt from *First Reading*, a weekly newsletter published by the Louisiana House of Representatives for legislators and staff.



Bornett L. Bobroff (inventor) before a U.S. House Committee, demonstrating the use of his electric voting machine.

## Texas Capitol ... Speaker's Residence



# What I Wish I Knew Early On in My Job

By Natalie O'Donnell Wood

NCSL Liaison for Leadership Staff Section



## Moderator:

**GENE ROSE,**  
Communications Director, NCSL

## Participants:

**RICHARD BINHAMMER,**  
Sr. Manager, Communities  
and Conversations, Dell Inc.

**NANCY BUTCHER,**  
Administrative Assistant to the  
Committee on Finance,  
House of Delegates, West Virginia

**JANEEN HALVERSON,**  
Executive Assistant to the  
Minority Leader, Senate, Utah

**CHUCK TRUESDELL,**  
Legislative Research Council, Kentucky

- ◆ If it's a good idea, and you don't put it in PowerPoint, it's not real.
- ◆ Templates are your friend. Use red text to indicate what elements can be changed.
- ◆ Get to know NCSL and the staff sections. Get familiar with what NCSL is and what resources it offers.
- ◆ Create sample letters (examples include congratulatory, recommendations, retirement, support for grants etc.). They help interns, many of whom haven't been trained on correspondence, and they help you, by saving you time.
- ◆ Web notation tools like **Delicious** and **Evernote** can help you turn the web into your own reference library.
- ◆ Always let someone else look over your work and put this tip into practice every day. When you edit or review your own work, you sometimes only read what you **thought** you wrote. Asking for someone else to review your work makes sure someone reads what you **actually** wrote.
- ◆ Learn the legislative process.
- ◆ Be supportive of and become friendly with your interns. Have fun with them - they are excited to be working for the legislature and are often political junkies too. They will produce a lot of work for you.
- ◆ Get involved with the "interactive" or "social" web. Social media can be used not only for elections - it is also a tool to govern, communicate, converse, win and stay in touch with constituents.
- ◆ Legislation that didn't pass this year

LSS and LINC'S fall professional development seminar participants gathered on Thursday afternoon, September 10, to hear tips and trends designed to save legislative staff time, stress, embarrassment and money on the job. The four panelists were asked to share several ideas, explaining each of them in less than a minute. Their "what I wish I knew..." statements provided a mix of technological, practical and personal advice and generated great discussion among those in attendance. The session was among the highest rated of those in Austin. A complete audio recording of the session can be found on NCSL's website, at, [www.ncsl.org/?tabid=18540](http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=18540).

The panelists and their suggestions are listed below.

will come up again next year, so don't throw your research, press release, or notes away. Filing cabinets are your friend. Archive information on the web, and track where you put it.

◆ In the legislative setting, information is everything. Who you know helps. Make yourself a contact list of state agencies, federal government, other elected officials, etc. Call these people and introduce yourself. Tell them who you work for and what you do. Get a contact in each place. Share the list with your co-workers.

◆ Say more, respectfully, than your boss wants to hear. They in turn will respect your honesty. Know that constituents and the press want to understand and are open to conversation and explanation.

◆ The media loves anything that simplifies information. Give them fact sheets, charts, and graphs.

◆ When you're on the telephone talking to members or constituents, keep a notebook of who you're talking to and who they represent or work for. Keep that information - you never know when you'll need it.

◆ Invest in a comfortable chair close to your desk. It provides you with a way to connect with your members, former members, constituents and advocates. You can learn valuable information and build a good relationship with your bosses when they are sitting next to you rather than across from your desk.

◆ Jokes don't show up well in print.

◆ Don't try to make your bosses funny. The one exception to this rule is self dep-

recation - but only if the politician understands, appreciates, or agrees with the joke.

◆ Discover where other offices are located. Get to know your counterparts in the other chamber and within your own chamber.

◆ Make a list of the acronyms you encounter and learn what they mean.

◆ There is no such thing as a dumb question.

◆ Write for your legislator, not for yourself. You need different voices for the different legislators you write for. Interview your members so you can match the voice. Their words, not yours, need to be conveyed.

◆ Learn how to say "no" to people in authority, especially when it comes to taking on more work. Use statements like: "I'd love to help, but I can't squeeze it in today, maybe next week..." or "I can't get to that right now, but if it's something that can wait until I free some things up, I'll be happy to do it." Other suggestions include asking to share responsibilities with your colleagues; explaining your priorities, and what will not get done if you take on the requested task; and suggesting, when appropriate, that a member not take that particular action.

You were hired for a reason, and members

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Notes from NCSL  
Leadership Staff Section Seminar  
Austin, TX -  
September 2009



**"Obstacles are those frightful things you see  
when you take your eyes off your goal."**

**- Henry Ford**

# ZEN AND THE ART OF POWERPOINT

In our legislative journey, some legislative staff are asked to prepare astonishing PowerPoint presentations. We think that we have everything together for a fabulous presentation that everyone will find intriguing, interesting, and entertaining. Information. Check. Cool distracting clip art. Check and Check. After all the tedious hours that were put into the presentation, your boss reviews your work and is at a total loss for words, not to mention still in a daze from the psychedelic clip art that he has stared at for the last four slides. You stop and think, well I got it, why didn't anyone else?

Mark Leutwyler, Presentation Design Specialist, Dell, Inc., explained the common mistakes that are made when producing a PowerPoint presentation. Mark Leutwyler guided us through Zen and the Art of PowerPoint.

During the presentation, Mark reminded us that cognitive guidance begins with understanding how the human mind works. He emphasized that in order to create a powerful PowerPoint, we must

stick with the basics which included:

- ◆ Get the audience's attention early
- ◆ Keep it simple....take things one step at a time
- ◆ Illustrate your ideas with compelling imagery
- ◆ Tell a story; use complete sentences
- ◆ Present facts to back up your assertions. DO NOT get bogged down in details
- ◆ Avoid Clip Art and distracting animations
- ◆ Only present information when ready to talk about it
- ◆ Keep up the pace
- ◆ Find consistent fonts and color schemes to use

Mark also offered helpful websites and books that will enable us all to become masters of the PowerPoint. Be sure to check out Mark Leutwyler's presentation and others at <http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=18540>.

by **Tracy Campbell**  
*Administrative Assistant  
to the Majority Whip  
West Virginia House of Delegates*



Notes from NCSL  
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Austin, TX -  
September 2009



*Too much information on one slide.*

## E-LEARNING ON NCSL'S WEBSITE

By *Natalie O'Donnell Wood*

Several new e-learning and professional development products for state legislative staff are now available on NCSL's Web site.

NCSL recorders were on hand to capture 50 sessions held at NCSL's 2009 Legislative Summit. From key policy issues to the operation of state legislatures, the new online content provides you several opportunities to benefit from the content of the Philadelphia meeting.

The multimedia options include video from three General Sessions. We have Bill Gates' speech on education issues, a stimulating discussion on the state of the economy and a speech from U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke.

You'll also find more than 40 breakout sessions, including ones on ethics, building a thriving organization, interpreting federal law and Dr. Richard Beeman's presentation on the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

There are a couple of ways to access the online content. If you want to browse and sort by issues and subjects, visit <http://www.ncsl.org/Default.aspx?TabID=714&tabs=2638,123,1059#2638>. If you want to go through the daily schedule of the Summit and also have access to PowerPoints and other materials, visit <http://www.ncsl.org/Default.aspx?TabID=714&tabs=2638,123#2638>.

We urge you to take advantage of these new e-learning opportunities and to watch for more in the coming months.

## WHAT I WISH ... continued from page 4

often expect you to advise them when they shouldn't do something, when things aren't acceptable, or when they need to do things differently.

- ◆ Learn how to say nothing. Leadership staff are often in the middle and have to contend with caucus members with different viewpoints. As their sounding board, you have to become "comfortable with your discomfort" and refrain from comment. Make yourself a "safe" or neutral place where they can vent.
- ◆ "Most firewalls are not. I have yet to meet a smart filter that is."
- ◆ Anticipate the unanticipated questions a member will be asked during an interview. Ask the tough questions in advance so that they are prepared.
- ◆ Learn how to breathe. Learn how to laugh at yourself and the situation. You must learn how to handle the stress you encounter during session.
- ◆ Keep a notebook to remind yourself of things you want to discuss or change once session is over. Review your notes and evaluate what was done right, what was done wrong, what to adjust, and how to improve the process.
- ◆ Turn off email and Twitter. Delete. Archive. Search.
- ◆ Understand that the other side is not the enemy, they are the opposition. This is not idealism, it's practical. One day you'll be in the minority and you'll want to be treated well. Take advantage of your friendships with the opposition, as it makes for great opposition research.
- ◆ Read professional magazines. Your members and colleagues may be quoted; your state may be featured. It will allow you to build political capital with people, and it shows you have interest in your job and in them.
- ◆ Cultivate your mind-reading ability. And have fun!

# Past Sites Of The NCSL Leadership Staff Annual Professional Development Seminar

- 2010 Raleigh, North Carolina  
(Joint meeting with LINCS)
- 2009 Austin, Texas  
(Joint meeting with LINCS)
- 2008 Indianapolis, Indiana
- 2007 Anchorage, Alaska  
(Joint meeting with LINCS)
- 2006 Santa Fe, New Mexico
- 2005 Providence, Rhode Island  
(Joint Meeting with LINCS)
- 2004 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
- 2003 Charleston, West Virginia
- 2002 Portland, Maine
- 2001 Overland Park, Kansas
- 2000 Denver, Colorado
- 1999 New Orleans, Louisiana
- 1998 Palm Coast, Florida
- 1997 Santa Fe, New Mexico
- 1996 Jackson, New Hampshire
- 1995 Indianapolis, Indiana
- 1994 St. Petersburg, Florida
- 1993 Albany, New York
- 1992 Anchorage, Alaska
- 1991 Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 1990 Reno, Nevada
- 1989 Hershey, Pennsylvania
- 1988 Austin, Texas
- 1987 Lake Ozark, Missouri
- 1986 Wilmington, Delaware
- 1985 Scottsdale, Arizona
- 1984 Lexington, Kentucky
- 1983 Sacramento, California
- 1982 Annapolis, Maryland
- 1981 Seattle, Washington
- 1980 Topeka, Kansas
- 1979 Concord, New Hampshire
- 1978 Salt Lake City, Utah
- 1977 Nashville, Tennessee

# LSS E-LEARNING TASK FORCE REPORT

By **Thomas R. Bennett, II**  
West Virginia House of Delegates  
Second Vice Chair, NCSL Leadership Staff Section  
Chair, LSS E-learning Task Force

In November of last year, Janeen Halverson, Chair of the Leadership Staff Section, graciously offered me the opportunity to chair a task force to evaluate and submit a request to the NCSL Foundation for e-learning funds to create a project/product to be posted on NCSL's website. I accepted and Janeen recommended three great leadership staff for members of the task force. They are Nancy Butcher, who works for the West Virginia House of Delegates with me, Laura Bauman in Indiana, and Peter Dodds in Washington State. Also, I could not forget the excellent staff person from NCSL that has greatly assisted all of us, Natalie Wood. The project that we were able to present could not have been accomplished without the extraordinary work that these individuals put into this project.



All members of the task force agreed that recording the session on "The Rise and Fall of the Town Meeting" during the NCSL Fall Forum would be very informative as many of us were and are dealing with this type of issue. As Leadership staff we play an integral role in helping our memberships conduct public hearings and deal with issues, not only on the state level but also on the federal and local levels. As such, the recent disruptive behavior that has developed at some of the town hall meetings is something that some, if not most of us, have not had to deal with previously. This session provided suggestions on how to handle such disruptive behavior and hold a productive meeting which we felt would be extremely beneficial on such a new issue.

This was a great project and I truly appreciated the confidence and trust that Janeen and the other members of the task force placed in me. Here is the link to the recording, of "The Rise and Fall of the Town Meeting", <http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=19305>. As a task force, we also wanted an introduction provided to the recording and Laura Bauman graciously agreed to provide the voice. I hope this recording will be a true benefit to anyone who is interested in or dealing with this issue.

## NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED

Comments about this issue, suggestions, or articles for the next newsletter will be gladly received by the Communications Committee. We encourage you to contact the committee chair or newsletter editor with your ideas.

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# FINDING AND DEVELOPING OUR OWN LEADERSHIP STRENGTH

by **Mary Sue Jones**

Administrative and Fiscal Assistant to the Senate President Pro Tem  
Idaho State Senate



The Strength Finder Class was an amazing class that helped us discover how others perceive us as opposed to how we perceive ourselves. The instructor of the class was Halee Fischer-Wright, MD, MMM and she had emailed a link to take a test long before we ever arrived in Austin. The test identified your top five strengths from a list of 34 themes or talents. Some of the talents/themes listed were analytical, adaptability, belief, communication, developer, discipline, empathy, harmony, includer, learner, maximizer, positivity, responsibility, etc.

When we arrived at the appointed hour of the class in Austin, it was interesting to note that Ms. Fischer-Wright was not only an accomplished speaker but a trained pediatrician. She told us she had spent her whole life observing the behavior of others. My only disappointment was that we did not have more time to fully explore the depth of her knowledge and presentation.

The objective of the class was to help us a) identify strengths in yourself and others b) develop your strengths and c) use your strengths to take your leadership to the next level.

She quoted Peter Drucker as saying: "Most Americans do not know what their strengths are. When you ask them, they look at you with a blank stare, or they re-

spond in terms of subject knowledge, which is the wrong answer." Abilities are actions not strengths. Values are not strengths. Values are things in life not worth living without. Would I kill or die for this? Strengths are talents you were born with. She cautioned that it is not good enough to **have** strengths; we must **develop** our strengths to their full potential.

She began by having us complete an exercise where we identified the first time someone noticed one of our strengths. Where were we? What were we doing? How did it make us feel? Secondly, she had us think about someone we considered to be world class. She had us write down all the things we assumed they did to become world class. Lastly, she asked us to think about the best day we had ever had at work. What were we doing?

She drew our attention and recollection to the movie Rudy. The movie reminded us Rudy was:

- small but "all heart"
- Rejected three times before admission to Notre Dame
- For 2 years, he was a tackling dummy
- Rudy gets his reward in the last game

In the movie, overcoming deficits is how we become successful. What is it in real life?

**Overcoming deficits is how we become successful!** We must focus on our strengths and develop strategies for overcoming weakness. We must figure out the rules of the game, so we can play, too!

**Leadership is operating in your own strengths and identifying, utilizing, and investing in others' strengths.**

During the next exercise, we broke off into teams of two and each member of the team related a story of their life to

the other. The listener was to write down what the storyteller did well in the story. It was interesting to note the perceptions of the listener vs. the perceptions of the storyteller.

**The recipe she gave us for strength-based development was:**

Talent (natural way of thinking, feeling, or behaving) x Investment (time spent developing skills, building your knowledge base, and time spent in practicing) = Strength (the ability to consistently provide near perfect performance)

If you are interested in pursuing this course to a greater degree, the two sources she provided are <http://strengthsfinder.com> or her email address which is [fischerwright@culturesync.net](mailto:fischerwright@culturesync.net)



Halee Fischer-Wright, MD, MMM

Notes from NCSL  
Leadership Staff Section Seminar  
Austin, TX -  
September 2009

## KENTUCKY LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

### Louisville, Kentucky – July 25-28, 2010

This summer in Louisville, 5000-6000 individuals interested in public policy will gather to solve America's toughest problems. This four-day meeting will provide a forum for state legislators and legislative staff to network, exchange ideas, hear from leading experts and build strong legislative institutions.

Your state needs you to lead the way during these challenging times. The Summit will address serious concerns such as:

- state budget deficits;
- healthcare reform;
- transportation funding;
- higher education costs;
- and many other issues facing the states.

**Registration and housing will open March 1.**



# NCSL LEADERSHIP STAFF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

## Barbara C. Oakes

Maryland House of Delegates Administrator



The Leadership Staff Section recognizes Barbara C. Oakes for her contributions to the Maryland House of Delegates and the Leadership Staff Section of NCSL.

Barbara has worked for the Maryland House of Delegates for 30 years and has been the House Administrator since 1991. She has worked through the administrations of four successive Speakers and is known for her dedication to the legislative institution and her fairness to all members of the House.

Barbara has been involved in NCSL and the Leadership Staff Section since 1983 and has participated in many staff seminars and annual meetings. She is currently serving on the LSS Executive Committee and has chaired its Awards and Bylaws Committees.

She is an asset to the Maryland Legislature and an outstanding example of professionalism in legislative staff.

## Erlinda Campbell

New Mexico Senate - Leadership Analyst to Senate President Pro Tem



The Leadership Staff Section recognizes Erlinda Campbell for her contributions to the New Mexico Senate and the Leadership Staff Section of NCSL.

Erlinda has worked for the New Mexico Senate since 1998, the last four years as the administrative staff for the Senate President Pro Tem. She became the first staff person in the Pro Tem's Office to be retained by the new, incoming President Pro Tem after her former leader passed away. Erlinda is highly respected and trusted by members of both parties in the Senate.

Erlinda became a member of the Leadership Staff Section Executive Committee in 2007 and has served on the Outreach, Awards and Newsletter committees. She was instrumental in helping plan the Leadership Staff professional development seminar when it was held in Santa Fe in 2006.

She is passionate about her work and is an outstanding example of the dedication of legislative staff.

Congratulations were extended to Erlinda in **The New Mexico Independent** last August. View the article at <http://newmexicoindependent.com/33230/nm-legislative-staffers-win-national-awards>

*Regrettably, Erlinda was not able to attend our Professional Development Seminar in Austin. Her award was mailed to her.*

# Enabling Smarter Government

Presentation by **Scott N. Howell**  
Business Development Executive  
IBM Corporation

Summary by **Janeen Halverson**, Chair  
NCSL Leadership Staff Section

Scott Howell of IBM conducted a very interactive session at the LSS Professional Development Seminar in Austin about smarter government. Governments, including state legislatures, face many challenges that affect their ability to serve constituents. Six drivers are reshaping public service: Changing demographics, globalization, environmental concerns, evolving societal relationships, threats to stability, and technology.

"Whose government is it anyway?" Scott asked the group. With rapid worldwide changes, it is our responsibility to adapt and discover creative, smart solutions to the challenges of our globally integrated world. The mandate for change is a mandate for smart. Due to necessity, governments are becoming integrated, instrumented, and intelligent.

Scott drew the following image (see photo) on his flipchart and asked the question, "What is this?" Assuming it was a trick question, the audience brainstormed "outside the box" and offered numerous answers to "What is this?" Salsa and chips, Christmas lights, a Lego block, a sound card, something with an Earth/sun/environment theme, a trio of peppers.

Perplexed by it all, Scott then provided the obvious answer. "It's exactly what it looks like--a stoplight." But it's not just an ordinary stoplight. It's a SMART stoplight. This SMART stoplight records audio and video at the intersection and its converging streets. It monitors the speeds of cars approaching the intersection and can hold yellow, hold green, or hold red to prevent collisions. It can summon emergency personnel such as paramedics, a life flight helicopter, or a fire truck. By controlling the speed of cars, it can save gasoline. It can even report an occurrence of gunfire and report the caliber of bullet fired.

Smart government ensures a sustainable environment for now and for the future. We've only just begun to uncover what is possible on a smarter planet.



Notes from NCSL  
Leadership Staff Section Seminar  
Austin, TX -  
September 2009





# 2009-2010 LEADERSHIP STAFF SECTION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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**In this newsletter, we have included only a few summaries of sessions at our Professional Development Seminar in Austin, Texas, last September. At our NCSL Leadership Staff Section website, you will find audio/video recordings and PowerPoint presentations of many of the sessions in Austin.**

**Click on this link:**

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