

# LEADERSHIP STAFF CONNECTIONS

National Conference of State Legislatures

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## LSS AND LINCS HOLD JOINT SEMINAR

For the first time, the Leadership Staff Section (LSS) and the Legislative Information and Communications Staff Section (LINCS) held a joint professional development seminar on October 25-29, 2005 at the Providence Biltmore Hotel in Providence, Rhode Island.

If you missed this year's professional development conference, you missed an outstanding opportunity to meet and share ideas with leadership and communication staff from around the country.

Read this issue of the newsletter for articles from staff who attended this year's meeting and see what they gained from the outstanding opportunity to learn.

Come join us this year in Santa Fe, New Mexico. You'll go away from the experience enriched with friends working in legislatures around the United States and its providences.



Rhode Island House Chamber



Rhode  
Island  
Senate  
Chamber



Rhode Island Capitol Building

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## LSS LEGISLATIVE STAFF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



The NCSL Legislative Staff Sections annually present Legislative Staff Achievement Awards to recognize staff excellence in supporting the work of a state legislature and strengthening the legislative institution.

At the Annual Training Seminar in Rhode Island in October, the Leadership Staff Section presented two awards:

**Laura Bauman, Chief of Staff, Senate Democratic Caucus (IN)**  
**Erin Russell, Exec. Dir., Republican Assembly Caucus (NV)**

**CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR OUTSTANDING  
CONTRIBUTIONS!**



# EXPERIENCING AN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

**By Jan Shirrell, Executive Assistant, Indiana Senate**

As I returned from Providence and reflected on the past five days, a myriad of things I learned came to mind. The first thing I learned, was that flying into a Northeast is in itself a test of trust (pilot) and faith (He took good care of me). Since we haven't had a team building session in a while, I gave this a thought but decided that He would probably be booked that week or have more important things to do than to try to teach us how to work with our peers.

The next thing I learned, that continued through my week, was that Rhode Island hospitality is something everyone should experience—as Alaska would say—before you die. I cannot thank the Rhode Island staff, faculty and elected officials enough for making our week an exceptional one. From beginning to end they were incredible. And I guess the most important thing I learned from them is that if you keep the chambers hot enough it will limit debate.

The reunion of old friends from around the country, and the making of new friends is always premier and guaranteed at our meeting. One new acquaintance I made, and one that I hope to continue to stay in touch with, was Dr. Solomona from American Samoa. He was there to learn more about representative democracy, and I always noticed a sparkle in his eyes when he spoke about his country and the



legislative process. I was again reminded to never take for granted those principles we hold dear, and that I am forever proud and grateful to play a role in this democracy. I learned that as a leadership staff person my responsibility in promoting civic education is significant.

And I learned more about patience and tolerance. And how we are all different, yet all the same. How we all want to do the best we can within our legislatures, and how different our paths are in getting the same result. That tolerance is an attitude we can all improve on, and accepting our differences and embracing them can be a positive force.

Finally, I learned that it is never dark at the end of a tunnel. That the spirit of resolve is strong within leadership staff, and that with a small group of dedicated individuals problems melt away like a spring snow. That change is not a negative but can generate renewed enthusiasm and fresh ideas

in our staff section, as well as our institutions.

Obviously, I learned many things from our vast skills development session that I will begin to utilize. But I came home a better person, which will make me a better staffer.

If you have not had an opportunity to experience what I have, I hope you will join us next year in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

***“Education is a social process...Education is growth...Education is, not a preparation for life; education is life itself.”***

**John Dewey**



## SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO IN 2006



Sangre de Cristo Mountains, NM

**By Rosina J. Boyd, Chief of Staff  
Minority Office  
New Mexico House of Representatives**

Greetings from New Mexico.

The NCSL Leadership Staff Annual Professional Development Conference will be held in Santa Fe, New Mexico **September 19-23, 2006**. We are excited about the conference being held in Santa Fe and hope all of you plan to attend.

Santa Fe has a wealth of history, including adobe buildings that grace the city with old world atmosphere. Santa Fe was established prior to 1610 by the Spanish settlers and has some of the oldest public buildings in the United States.

We would like for you to plan to come early or stay after the conference to enjoy some of the sites in and around Santa Fe. To name a few: Bandelier National Monument (ancestral pueblo ruins), Taos, Chama and a large variety of Native American Pueblos.

A great agenda is planned and we expect the best attendance ever. We will send out more information before the conference.



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(COMMITTEE—continued on page 5)



# LSS CHAIR'S COMMENTS

**By Mary Sue Jones, Chair  
NCSL Leadership Staff Section  
Executive Committee  
2005-2006**

Greetings from Idaho!

First off, may I once again offer a huge thank you to all who made Rhode Island such a great experience! It is always so much fun to see each of you and renew our friendship! In addition, we get to capture a glimpse and sample the flavor of yet another great state in these awesome United States of America! The states themselves are as unique as the capitol buildings we visit!

I have reflected many times since last October on the things I learned at the last Leadership Staff Section Annual Meeting and why being a member of the staff section is valuable to me. Each of you has contributed in your own intricate way to my perception of the political arena in which we work. It is always fun to hear about the differences in organization and execution of the same basic legislatures across the nation. It is interesting to hear about some universal problems with a variety of solutions. I come away each year feeling empowered and motivated to do a better job upon my return home.

This year I have reflected on the things I learned in the speech writing boot camp regarding generational differences and the class on blogging moderated by Ric Cantrell from Utah. The information has been intriguing and helpful.

I always seem to come away from the annual meetings knowing myself better...it gives me tools and an opportunity to examine why I think what I think and ask if that is what and where I want to be at the moment...I look forward to the classes that teach principles to better interact with others as well as know yourself.

I feel like we are educated at the conferences in specific ways that apply only to our line of work and in a way that we are not going to find elsewhere. I appreciate the updates on the latest in technology, political trends, current affairs and issues. I learned a lot about Medicare and Medicaid this year and for the first time in my life was actually interested! Does that mean I am getting old?

As an Executive Board, we would collectively encourage you to get involved. Serve on one of the committees! Ask yourself, and then tell us, what you "need" from this organization...and in return, what can you contribute? Perhaps you should consider

running for office or hosting an annual meeting in your state some time soon. At the very least, ask yourself if there are others in your circle of influence who would benefit from attending our meeting. If so, let's get them on board!

We are excited that next year's meeting will be in Santa Fe! If you've never visited, you are in for a pleasant surprise...and for those of us that have visited before, we can hardly wait to go back! It promises to hold something for everyone...so start planning now and we'll see you there!

In the meantime, best wishes for a productive and peaceful Session.

**By Nancy Butcher, Immediate Past Chair  
NCSL Leadership Staff Section  
Executive Committee  
2004-2005**

Hello Leadership Staffers:

Sadly, but thankfully, my year as Chair of the Leadership Staff Section has ended. Mary Sue will do a tremendous job and with all of our help, we have a great year ahead. When K.T. gave me this assignment, I thought, "Oh, this will be easy. Just thank everyone, say some nice things about my year as Chair and mention what a great time we all had in Providence and I'll be done." I must say that after several attempts at starting this article, I've found it to be not as easy as I thought. So, here goes...

First, I want to mention Lori Rigby. Lori, was to be our Chair this year but because of changes in the Delaware Legislature, she had to step aside. Lori is without a doubt one of the most wonderful people I have ever had the privilege of meeting, getting to know and working with. She always has a smile on her face and even when things look their worst, has a great outlook on things. To Lori, I have to say, "Thank you for your words of encouragement and wisdom. I can never repay you but please know that I truly appreciate all that you did for me."

Second, to all the members of the Leadership Staff Section, thank you for the hard work you did this year. I could not have made it through the year without you. To Jimmy Lovette and Barbara Oakes...what would I have done without you?! Dawn Reese, Co-Chair of the Program Development Committee...you made my job so easy. All I had to do was sit back and wait for our annual training seminar to arrive!

Don't get me wrong, there are many others that contributed to the success we had this year, but I truly wanted to thank those individuals separately. To everyone, "Thank you, each and everyone!!!!"

As Paul Harvey would say . . . now, the rest of the story. Over the past five years, I've learned a lot about LSS but more importantly, about myself, in large part because of my involvement in LSS. I remember my first meeting in 2000, Mechelle Miller was Chair. I had only been working for the WV House of Delegates for a couple of years and while I thought I knew my job, I realized that there was so much more to know. The information that was provided at the annual staff section meeting was great, but the thing that most impressed me was the camaraderie among Legislative staff members from across the country. I was struggling to process all the valuable information that was being supplied and struggling even more to remember the names of all the wonderful people that I had met.

Over the years, I've had the privilege of meeting some amazing people that I rely on for support. I know that this past year is a learning experience that I will never be able to duplicate. The amount of work that goes into planning our annual training seminar is sizeable and it takes dedicated people to plan a seminar that is both interesting and fun. I know that before becoming Chair, I didn't put a lot of thought into what was on the agenda. I'd do my letter to the Speaker requesting permission to attend, attach a copy of the agenda and wait for my approval. Little did I know that I would find myself worrying that we hadn't included enough of a variety of topics for our members or topics that would interest Legislative staffers that had never attended one of our training seminars. I came to realize that I wasn't really ready for this responsibility. What if the seminar was a flop? What then? Would I be able to accept the fact that I had failed? Needless to say, that didn't happen! Our seminar this year was great. The folks in Rhode Island were wonderful. The hotel was awesome and joining with the LINCSS section was marvelous. I met some great people that I know I will stay in touch with, not only with the LSS section but with the LINCSS section.

If I had to name one thing that impressed me most this year, by being part of the planning seminar and attending, without a doubt, it would be the people. It's strange how much this stands out in my mind. Not only were friendships that have developed over the years strengthened but new ones were forged.

**(CHAIR'S COMMENTS—Continued on page 6)**

# LEADERSHIP LESSONS IN HISTORY

Many leadership traits can be learned from history. This new feature in the *Leadership Staff Connections* will use historical stories about people to demonstrate how leadership traits help us all achieve success. In this issue we will see “determination” through the successes and failures of Thomas Edison.

Thomas Edison held patents for more than 1,000 inventions, including the incandescent electric lamp, the phonograph, and the motion picture projector. He set up his first lab when he was 10 years old.

In 1876, Edison established a research laboratory in Menlo Park, where he achieved his greatest successes. He experienced far more disasters, however, than successes. Edison once said, “Results! Why, man I have gotten a lot of results. I know several thousand things that won’t work.”

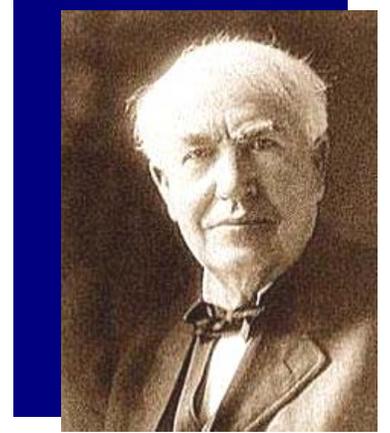
Edison thought of disasters as learning opportunities and he worked hard and with determination to achieve successes. One winter, his lab stove went out. As a result, many expensive chemicals were frozen. On another occasion, unprotected chemicals were damaged by sunlight. Deter-

mined to continue with his experiments, he learned to change the chemical makeup of some of the damaged chemicals so they would still be useful.

When someone once said that Edison was a genius, he replied, “Sticking to it is the genius!”

*“Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”*

*Thomas Edison*



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## CHAIR'S COMMENTS (Continued from page 4)

If I could relay to someone, who has never attended one of our seminars, one main "selling point", it would be the people. What a tremendous source of information! I know that on any given day, there are a number of people I could contact if I needed assistance, information or a shoulder to cry on! As Leadership staffers, we are unique and our issues are varied. Having the ability to draw upon our counterparts provides a source of information that cannot be matched. At times, the stress and pressure of this job makes me wonder if I'm a glutton for punishment or just plain crazy. The thing that helps me make it through those times is the fact that there are people like me in every state, working for a Legislative Leader!!!

I just can't seem to get away from the fact that our staff section is a great section. We aren't just counterparts from other areas of the country, we are a family. When one of our family hurts, we all hurt; when one of our family rejoices, we all rejoice. I remember a conversation with some of my co-workers a year or so ago regarding another group's staff section meeting. (First, let me tell you this, the people I work with on the Committee on Finance are a very close group. Actually, we're as close as some families so we have a tendency of doing things together outside of work.) We were discussing some of the activities that had been planned for the meeting. I was amazed to find that my co-workers had done everything together, never venturing off with staffers from other states. I can't imagine one of our meetings where I would spend all my time exclusively with my co-workers! I know that there will always be times when new attendees feel a little isolated but for the most part, I think we are a

very friendly group and we do a pretty good job at making new people a part of the group. I think we go with that old theory of "the more the merrier" and try harder each year to make that theory a reality.

I am truly looking forward to this year and my involvement with LSS. I look forward to our staff section meeting in Santa Fe and seeing all the people that make our group the unique group that we are. Our staff section and our annual training meetings can only get better if we all take an active role, whether it's through serving on a committee, helping with outreach, writing an article for the newsletter or some other role. Through participation we get to know our counterparts more and have a greater understanding of how our job responsibilities are alike and different. We have a large untapped source of information at our disposal and even more, a huge untapped source of support at our fingertips. In using these, we make our staff section stronger and make ourselves more useful to our leaders. This New Year is a new opportunity for the Leadership Staff Section to expand our membership and to grow stronger in our areas of expertise.

It's really not that cold here, yet! But I'm so looking forward to the warm sunshine awaiting us in Santa Fe and the opportunity to experience some of the wonderful things New Mexico has to offer. I know that Rosina, Erlinda and their planning committee are already hard at work. When you have a minute to spare, give them a call or send them an e-mail with some words of encouragement and the offer to assist them. Before your new legislative year begins, make yourself a "jot-down ideas" sheet and as you think of things that would make our

section and our annual training seminar better, write them down and then share them with Mary Sue and Rosina. Take another minute and check out our website and stay informed on what's happening with LSS.

Finally, I want to thank everyone for allowing me the privilege of serving as Chair of LSS this past year. This experience was challenging and awesome. I hope that Mary Sue enjoys it as much as possible. Even with all the headaches, it's an experience I wouldn't trade for anything. Let's all pitch in and make this year the best ever. To each and every one of you, good luck with your 2006 Legislative Sessions. If there is anything that I can do for you, please let me know. You can go to the bank with this...if I need help; I will call or e-mail you. Again, thank you for all the memories!!!!

*"We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results."*

*Herman Melville*

# LSS: LEARNING — SOCIALIZING — SERVING

By Scott V. Brubaker, PHR  
Director of Staffing & Administration  
Pennsylvania House Democratic Caucus  
Member, LSS Executive Committee

OK, we know that LSS really stands for Leadership Staff Section. However, attending the LSS Annual Training Seminar involves much Learning, Socializing, and Serving (LSS). I look forward to attending with great anticipation every year. Let me explain why.

I've been attending the Annual Training Seminar for four years now and every year is a fresh opportunity for new and useful LSS.

**Learning** I have had the opportunity to attend sessions on managing myself, managing others, emotional intelligence, stress reduction, people skills, and many other self-development topics. I have learned about public policy subjects

(LSS- continued on page 7)





## LSS (Continued from page 6)

ranging from Internet privacy, tax reform, prescription drugs, term limits, and redistricting, all the way to gaming, media management, economic development, and Medicaid. Lastly, we are always provided an opportunity to learn about the legislatures in the host state which is of particular interest to me as a history buff. I have always found the sessions to be both informative and beneficial to my personal and professional growth. You will too!

**Socializing** To describe the LSS folks as fun would be an understatement. We are a diverse crew, no doubt, yet we seem to feed on that and each other's enthusiasm, wisecracks, and good natured teasing. The Annual Training Seminars represent a wonderful opportunity to meet your counterparts from around the country—and farther (American Samoa, for instance). I thoroughly enjoy the sessions where folks with similar duties congregate to share our challenges, opportunities, and war stories. We always learn from the experiences of our colleagues who have or are facing the same challenges we are facing. I and my colleagues in Pennsylvania have capitalized on our personal connections by calling on folks from other states for help and

information on a variety of topics.

Further, did I mention that we are a raucous, fun-loving group? Indeed, the evening hospitality suite is a great opportunity to continue the networking begun during the day sessions. I am convinced that Leadership Staff are far more interesting, gregarious, and entertaining than staff from other sections. I really enjoy this fun group of folks. You will too!

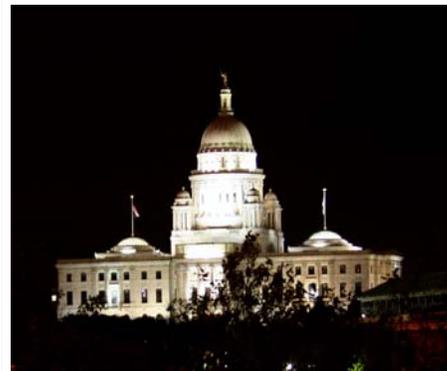
**Serving** After attending the Annual Training Seminar, I always return to work energized, enthused, and refocused on my mission: Serving the Leaders and Members of the PA House Democratic Caucus. The seminar really charges my batteries and gives me a fresh perspective on my work and its importance to the proper functioning of our system of representative democracy. Indeed, the connections I've made with the NCSL staff has allowed me to share my knowledge and experiences with others around the country on administrative and human resources issues.

The work that we do is service based and it is vitally important to our legislatures. We owe it to our taxpayers, our legislative leaders, and our legislators that we be effective public servants. The Annual Training Seminar is an important method by which we can keep our professional edge, so to speak, and enhance our

effectiveness. I consider the LSS Annual Training Seminar a great way to improve my service to my legislature. You will too!

**LSS** I have found that the LSS Annual Training Seminars provide a great mix of **Learning** and **Socializing** which prepares me for **Serving** my legislature. You will too!

I'll see you all in beautiful Santa Fe, New Mexico in September 2006.



Rhode Island State House at night.

## PICTURES FROM RHODE ISLAND MEETING





# ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE STAFF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



The Legislative Staff Section will give out two awards for outstanding contributions to the legislative process and the professional development of leadership staff. At least one of the awards will be

presented to an individual who has been an active participant in Leadership Staff Section activities, as evidenced by attendance at the Section's annual training seminars, or by other significant involvement with the Section.

A nominee may be an individual, office group or team whose contributions benefit the roles of leadership staff, and should meet a significant number of the following criteria:

1. Identified differences and used them positively to benefit the organization, and ultimately our roles in individual states.
2. Identified significant areas within which we can learn from one another.
3. Outstanding credibility and genuine interest in networking ideas.
4. Common understanding necessary for inclusive contributions and acceptance of Leadership Staff Section participants.
5. Effectiveness in giving...self, time, resources, etc., to benefit our section.
6. Insights that can be developed through teamwork (ability to objectively process knowledge/patterns for contriving options for avoidance of common obstacles).
7. Determined toward efficiency and betterment of professional selves; shares "best game" strategies.
8. Promotes benefits gained from Leadership Staff Section.
9. Developed solution(s) for various subterfuges; emanating realistic expectations versus frustrations—for example, "New Dimensions for Change" ideas.
10. Improved communication and/or participation in Leadership Staff Section.

All nominations will gladly be accepted. Please contact one of the co-chairs or any member of the Awards Committee if you have any questions about the awards or the nomination process. We look forward to

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The members of the Awards Committee look forward to hearing from you.

Please submit your nomination to any member of the Committee.

hearing from those of you who have deserving colleagues to nominate for this outstanding recognition!

The awards will be presented at the 2006 NCSL Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee.

**The deadline for nominations is May 31, 2006.**

**Learn more about the NCSL Leadership Staff Section and the Annual Legislative Staff Awards by visiting us on the Web at:**

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legman/lss/lsshme.htm>



## NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Comments about this issue, or suggestions or articles for the next newsletter are gladly received by the Outreach, Newsletter and Web Site Committee.

We encourage you to contact the committee co-chairs or newsletter editor with your idea.

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