

LEADERSHIP STAFF CONNECTIONS

National Conference of State Legislatures

July 2009

Goodbye Brian ... Hello Natalie



Incoming **Natalie Wood** and outgoing **Brian Weberg** (with LSS newsletter in hand) at the NCSL Executive Committee Meeting in Tucson, AZ, January 2009.

Laura DeVivo, Brian Weberg, Tom Wright, Janeen Halverson
Natalie Wood (seated)
Tucson, AZ
January 2009

It is with deep regret that we say goodbye to Brian Weberg, who has for so many years devotedly guided our LSS staff section so very well. We bid adieu to Brian and wish him and Mary good fortune in their new life together (Brian and Mary were married March 21, 2009).

At the same time, all of us look forward to a strong, successful relationship with Natalie Wood, our new NCSL LSS liaison. She has already proven she is an asset and will keep a good pace with all of us. **Welcome Natalie!**

Bidding Brian goodbye, with an Alaskan memento, a replica of a piece of pipeline (crafted by a local Kenai Peninsula artist), while welcoming Natalie to our group.



Don't miss our annual NCSL Leadership Staff Section Professional Development Seminar. Join us in Austin, Texas, for an educational and energizing schedule designed with you in mind.

See Page 3 of this newsletter for all the details!



See ya'll soon ~ deep in the heart of Texas!

Contact LSS at NCSL.ORG

LSS Chair's Comments

By **TOM WRIGHT, Chair**
NCSL Leadership Staff Section
Executive Committee 2008-2009



Dear Fellow Leadership Staffer:

I am looking forward to seeing old friends and making new acquaintances during our professional development seminar in Austin, September 9th through the 12th. Although we are still in the process of firming up our final agenda, I believe we will have an entertaining and insightful program that you will enjoy and from which you will find beneficial as a leadership staff. In order to fulfill hotel obligations, we are teaming up with the Legislative Information and Communication Staff Section (LINCS) and the National Association of Legislative Information Technology (NALIT). Joint professional development seminars are going to be a wave of the future as NCSL's PDS organizations attempt to curb costs in order to make each seminar more affordable for its members.

I also wish to take the opportunity to welcome Natalie O'Donnell Wood to the fold as our NCSL staff liaison. Natalie recently replaced Brian Weberg and brings a wealth of experience and exuberance to our staff section. I have had many opportunities to work with Natalie these past few months and I have observed that she cheerfully takes on each and every task assigned to her. She has certainly reduced my work load as chair.

Speaking of Brian, we are going to miss him but he is still working at NCSL doing other tasks, and his schedule did not allow him to continue as our liaison. However, he and Natalie work very closely and he still lends a hand in guidance whenever he is asked and for that, we are eternally grateful. Brian has recently wed, and I know we all offer our congratulations and wish Mary and Brian the best.

We are contacting chiefs of staff from every state to encourage participation at our Austin meeting. Last March, Laura DeVivo and I made a presentation to state legislative leaders during the Legislative Leaders' Summit in Washington D.C., about the leadership staff section. We presented information about LSS and the benefits their staffs could receive through their participation. All in all, the presentation was well received, and I am anxiously awaiting to see if we have new leadership staff participate in Austin. We are also sending out letters to each House and Senate chiefs of staff throughout the country telling them about our mission and inviting them to send participants.

One of the issues I have undertaken as a member of the Leadership Staff Coordinating Committee is partisan staff participation in NCSL either through standing committees, LSCC or the executive committee. Partisan staff members are woefully under represented in NCSL committees, and through our Legislative Institutions Subcommittee, we on the subcommittee have been given the task to find means to correct this. This is a work in progress and we hope to have a final report submitted by the end of the month.

I appreciate all the efforts each of you on the LSS Executive Committee has made to assist in making our Austin meeting a success. I look forward to seeing you in Austin.

Tom Wright

*"A successful man is one who can
lay a firm foundation with the
bricks others have thrown at him."*

David Brinkley

Mini Biography

Brinkley hosted This Week with David Brinkley from 1982 until his retirement in 1997. In 1992, he won a Peabody Award for his report on the 50th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. As a news analyst, Brinkley was known for his terse, biting comments and his dry wit.

Howdy Pard'ners!

**Saddle up, dig in your spurs,
and head for Austin!**

LSS and LINCS Professional Development Seminar

September 9-12, 2009 ~ Austin, Texas

This year's Professional Development Seminar will be held in Austin, Texas, September 9-12, 2009. The Leadership Staff Section (LSS) and the Legislative Information and Communications Staff Section (LINCS) are meeting together this year for a joint seminar designed to help attendees share solutions, discuss innovative uses of communication, increase the effectiveness of legislative staff, and forge important connections with peers from around the country. Additionally, the National Association of Legislative Information Technology (NALIT) will also be meeting separately in Austin, and there will be sessions that bring all three groups together.

Visit the Leadership Staff Section's home page at <http://www.ncsl.org/Default.aspx?TabID=788> <<http://www.ncsl.org/Default.aspx?TabID=788&tabs=857,40,520#857>> &tabs=857,40,520#857 for registration information and a preliminary agenda.

Hotel (reservation deadline is August 18, 2009):

Hilton Austin
500 East 4th Street
Austin, TX 78701
(800) 236-1592

Registration fees for the LSS/LINCS seminar:

- \$350 - Early Bird Registration for Legislative Staff (received by August 6)
- \$375 - Registration fee for Legislative Staff (received after August 6)
- \$110 - **Social Media Boot Camp, Wednesday, September 9, 2009**
(in addition to regular meeting fee)
- \$150 - One-day
- \$125 - Spouse/guest

Austin, Texas...

Austin, the capital of Texas, is located on the Colorado River in south-central Texas. Aside from its fame as the seat of state government and home to several universities, Austin is known as the Live Music Capital of the World. The slogan became official on August 29, 1991, after it was discovered that Austin had more live music venues per capita than anywhere else in the nation—nearly 200 in all.

Texas is the only state to have the flags of 6 different nations fly over it—Spain, France, Mexico, Republic of Texas, Confederate States, and the United States.

In 1853, the first Texas Capitol building was constructed of limestone. A fire destroyed it, however, and a nationwide design competition was held for a new Capitol building. The winner, architect Elijah E. Myers, also designed the Michigan and Colorado Capitol buildings. Contractors were offered an interesting trade—three million acres in the Texas Panhandle in exchange for constructing the Capitol. The current pink granite Capitol building opened in May 1888 and is the largest of all state Capitol buildings in the United States.

Texas is one of only five biennial legislatures—it meets every other year in the odd numbered years for 140 calendar days. The Texas Legislature has 31 senators (12 Democrats and 19 Republicans), and 150 representatives (74 Democrats and 76 Republicans). The longest filibuster in Texas happened in 1977 by a state senator who talked for 44 hours!

By concurrent resolution, the cowboy boot is the official footwear of Texas (bring 'em if ya'll have 'em), and the official snack is tortilla chips and salsa. And let's not forget the official cooking implement, the cast-iron dutch oven. You'll enjoy some good fixins' in Texas.

It's been 21 years since LSS met in Austin, so gosh darn, it's time to go back. We've lassoed some good speakers and roped some legislative staff for roundup discussions. It'll be worth your time.

See ya'll soon—deep in the heart of Texas!



Come Early for "Boot" Camp!

**sponsored by LINCS
all attendees invited
(extra fee required)
September 9, 2009**



Come early to Boot Camp on Wednesday, September 9 and receive hands-on training from some of the best in social media! Learn how to effectively use Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and Ning and what pitfalls to avoid.

Pre-registration for the seminar and Boot Camp will open this July.

More information on the sessions and activities offered will be posted on the LINCS' website at www.ncsl.org and on our Twitter account. Find us at NCSLLINCS.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA FOR AUSTIN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

8:00 am-5:00 pm Registration
 8:30 am-4:30 pm Social Media Boot Camp
 4:30-6:00 pm Welcome Reception
 6:00-9:00 pm LSS Executive Committee Meeting and Dinner

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

8:00 am-1:00 pm Registration
 8:30-9:00 am Continental Breakfast
 9:00-12:00 noon Concurrent Sessions
 12:00 pm-1:00 pm Luncheon
 1:00 pm-4:00 pm Capitol Tour and Concurrent Sessions
 5:30-6:30 pm Networking Reception

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

8:00 am-5:00 pm Registration
 9:00-10:30 am Joint General Session
 10:30-11:30 am Concurrent sessions
 11:30 am-1:00 pm Luncheon
 1:00-4:30 pm Concurrent Sessions

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

8:00 am-12 noon Registration
 8:30-10:00 am General Session Breakfast
 10:15-11:30 am Concurrent Sessions
 11:30 am-12:15 pm LSS and LINCS Business Meetings
 12:15 pm Meeting Adjourned



Don't miss the Annual NCSL Legislative Summit in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 20-24, 2009. Details and full agenda are available at <http://ecom.ncsl.org/summit/index.htm>.

While in Philly, don't miss the events on the agenda co-sponsored by the NCSL Leadership Staff Section.

Date	Time	Agenda Item
Monday, July 20	1:00 - 2:45 p.m.	Stepping Up to the Plate: Confronting Ethical Problems Head On
	3:00 - 4:30 p.m.	What's New with Constituent Services Moderator: Tom Wright, Chair, Leadership Staff Section
Tuesday, July 21	10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon	An Eye on the Executive Branch
	2:30 - 5:30 p.m.	Staff Mega Session: Doing More with Less: Become a Creative Innovator
Thursday, July 23	11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Leadership Staff Section Luncheon and Business Meeting (all leadership staff invited)
	3:30 – 5:00 p.m.	Connecting to Constituents through Social Media
Friday, July 24	2:00 – 3:45 p.m.	Staff Mega Session: Building a Thriving Organization

Are You Prepared for a Disaster??

Emergencies and disasters can strike quickly without warning—tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, landslides, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, avalanches, power outages, floods, natural gas leaks, severe weather, etc. Where will you be when disaster strikes? You could be at home, at work, at school, in the car, or otherwise away from home. You may even be required to evacuate your home.

The Red Cross reports that only 7 percent of Americans have taken the recommended actions to prepare for a disaster. That means 93 percent of us need to pay attention and get ready.

Utah's "Be Ready Campaign," sponsored by Utah's Lieutenant Governor Gary Herbert and the Utah Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security, recommends the following four steps to prepare for a disaster:

1. Get a Kit (car, home, and workplace) — Include the basics: water, food, first aid supplies, protective clothing, bedding, tools, and medicine. (see 72-Hour Kit Checklist at right)

2. Make a Plan (home and office) — Talk about the possible causes, plans, and provisions for evacuation and how they could impact your family or employees. Be sure to include your pets in your plan.

3. Be Informed — Know the specific risks associated with your area and where your nearest shelters are.

4. Get Involved — Prepare yourself to help your community. As an example, CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) is a training program that prepares you to help yourself, your family, and your neighbors in the event of a disaster.

Lots of detailed information available at www.bereadyutah.gov



72-Hour Kit Checklist

You should prepare a portable kit for each member of your family. Consider preparing one for your place of work as well as one for children to keep at school and one for the car.

- **WATER.** Store 1 gallon of water per person per day. Keep at least a three day supply of water.
- **FOOD and UTENSILS.** At least one to three-day supply of non-perishable food that could include ready-to-eat meats, juices, high-energy foods such as granola or power bars.
- **NOAA WEATHER ALERT RADIO,** either hand crank or battery powered, extra batteries if needed.
- **BLANKETS/PILLOWS/ SLEEPING BAG**
- **FLASHLIGHT** and extra batteries or hand crank, or light sticks. Do not use candles/open flame during an emergency.
- **WHISTLE** for emergency signal. Ready to hang around neck.
- **DUST or FILTER MASKS,** readily available in hardware, N95 mask recommended for preventing inhalation of airborne particles.
- **MOIST TOWELETTES** or Baby Wipes for sanitation
- **TOOLS - Wrench** or Pliers to turn off utilities, Broom, Shovel, Hammer and Working Gloves.
- **CAN OPENER** for for food (if kit contains canned items).
- **PLASTIC SHEETING** and **DUCT TAPE** to "seal the room" for sheltering in place.
- **MEDICATIONS** to include prescription and non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, stomach remedies and etc.
- **FIRST AID SUPPLIES.** An assortment of bandages, ointments, gauze pads, cold/hot packs, tweezers, scissors and sanitizer.
- **PERSONAL HYGIENE ITEMS** to include at least one change of clothing/shoes/outerware.
- **GARBAGE BAGS** and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- **PAPER SUPPLIES.** Note pads, markers, pens, pencils, plates, napkins, paper towels and etc.
- **CAMERA.** Disposable camera to record damage.
- **CASH/ATM AND CREDIT CARD.** Keep enough cash for immediate needs in small denominations.
- **EMERGENCY CONTACT PHONE LIST.**
- **MAPS.** Local road and area maps.
- **MEDICAL HISTORY LISTS.** For every family member in your home make a list of medical history, all medications (by name) and dosages.

Emergency Container Tip:

Create emergency kit(s) and store in any type of containers with wheels. Such as for the larger kits; garbage cans, foot-lockers, chest, duffle bags, tote bags, ice chest, various size suitcases or various size plastic boxes. A water-tight container is most ideal for keeping a 72-Hour Kit.

Suggested Areas To Store Emergency Kit(s):

Store grab-and-go food and water container where easy to access in case you are advised to evacuate.

Children and adults keep their emergency kit(s) in their bedrooms. Let the children have responsibility for their own backpack and have the older children buddy-up and take care of younger brothers or sisters. Mom, dad take care of baby.

If a senior citizen resides with the family, also buddy-up and help them for they move slower and a backpack may be too heavy for them to carry.

Don't forget house pets should also have emergency kits to be ready to grab-and-go. Pack the foods pet(s) normally eat, leashes, crates and litterbox.

Re-think where all of your camping gear is located throughout the household. Keep in one area if possible for easy access so you're not looking in the dark with a flashlight for things.

Always keep a pair of hard sole shoes underneath your bed.



Car Survival and Emergency Kit

- Kept in a backpack
- Maintain a minimum of ½ tank of gas
- Tools needed to change a flat tire
- Jumper cables
- Road emergency flares
- Flashlight with extra batteries – Light Sticks
- Blanket(s) – (can be Mylar)
- Whistle (equipped to hang around neck)
- Food/Power Bar(s)
- Water: 2-liter soda bottles (filled ¾ full to allow for freeze expansion) Rotate water every six months. Secure for safety
- Collapsible shovel
- Fire extinguisher (Standard Class ABC)
- Rubber disposable gloves
- Coat(s) or Jacket(s) and Rain Poncho
- Boots/Goulashes
- First Aid Kit
 - Band aids, gauze, non-adherent sterile pads (various sizes) First aid tape
 - Anti-bacterial ointment
 - Burn cream
 - Scissors, tweezers, pocketknife, razor blades...
 - Large cotton cloth (use for sling, tourniquet, bandage)
 - Non-aspirin pain reliever
 - Chemical ice pack, hand warmer packets
 - Safety pins (various sizes) needles, heavy thread
 - Matches (waterproof)
 - Eye wash
 - Hand wipes (antiseptic) cotton balls, cotton pads
 - Alcohol swabs, iodine (bottle or pads)
 - PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS
- Additional car kit supplies
 - Siphoning Hose
 - Bag of sand or rock salt
 - Tow rope
 - Personal sanitation items (toilet tissue, Towelletes)
 - Writing pad, pencils, road map
 - Ice scraper
 - Dust Mask

Identity Theft

by **Cathy Flewelling**
Chief of Staff
Senate Minority Leader
Massachusetts Senate



It seems as if a day doesn't go by where you don't hear or read about Identity Theft. With access to products, entertainment, financial services as well as social networking on the Internet, anyone can become a victim. If you think that no one would be interested in your personal information, think again.

What is identity theft? It occurs when someone steals someone else's personal information as his own and creates a new identity of that existing person. It could be accessed via a social security number, driver's license number, employee identification number, mother's maiden name, personal financial information as well as computer usernames and passwords.

How does someone access that information? One way is by a scam called "Phishing." A thief will try to trick you into giving them confidential information usually through links within emails by falsely identifying themselves as a legitimate company or financial institution. Should you receive an email, text or pop-up message asking for such information, do not reply nor click on the message. Also, do not cut and paste the link from the message into your web browser.

Another scam is "Pharming" where a hacker will redirect traffic from one website to a different identical-looking site. The thief hopes that you will enter your username and password on the fake site.

What can you do if your personal information has been compromised? First, you should place a "fraud alert" on your credit reports and obtain free copies of these reports so you can review thoroughly. Secondly, close all accounts which have been created fraudulently or tampered with. Lastly, file a report with police and the Federal Trade Commission. Using anti-virus and anti-spyware software as well as a firewall for future protection will also help.

In closing, while on the Internet, you should know who you are dealing with and what you are getting into especially, when utilizing social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. While it can be fun to be social on line, think before you divulge personal information as there are millions of strangers who may be waiting to access this information.

Tom & Sue's Backyard Volcano

Forty-seven miles west of Tom and Sue Wright's Alaskan homestead in Kenai is Mount Redoubt, their personal backyard volcano. They have an awesome view out their window.



As you have undoubtedly heard, Mount Redoubt began erupting March 22, 2009, and has continued intermittently. This eruptive activity is the most profound in over 20 years. Associated Press reported that "Alaska Airlines canceled 19 flights on March 23 because of the ash. In-state carrier Era Aviation canceled four. Five of 20 Alaska state senators were scheduled on the morning flight from Anchorage to Juneau, which was canceled. As a result, consideration of legislation was delayed."



A barn covered with volcanic ash.



Photos and information submitted by **Sue Wright**

Chamber Talk ...

Alaska, the biggest state in the nation, passed the fewest number of bills in the nation this past legislative session – 57 bills.

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.

Chair:
Janeen Halverson (UT)
(801) 538-1406
jhalverson@utahsenate.org

Newsletter:
Marsha Conley (PA)
(717) 783-0196
mconley@pahousegop.com

The Last Frontiersman



It was a cold windswept day on the banks of the Kenai River October 12, 2008. I had walked down to a point about 200 yards from the house to fish chrome bright fall Silver Salmon the Kenai is famous for.

Primer, my year-old, Curly-coated Retriever, tagged along at my heel as he has done so many times before. Primer comes from a long line of Champion Curly-coated Retrievers and is the son of Trigger. Trigger is a Grand Champion Curly that has won Nationals two years in a row. He won his second championship last month in the Midwest. So, Alaska produces more than record salmon; it produced Trigger and Primer.

Owned by my wife Colleen and daughter Sammie, Trigger and Primer are both recognized as the breed standard for Champion Curly-coated Retrievers. Needless to say, my wife and daughter would be very upset if something happened to either Trigger or Primer.

I landed my limit of two Silvers in less than an hour as the chrome salmon were boiling, darting, and jumping all across the hole which lies directly down river of our place and right in front of Tom and Kathy Vogal's Peninsula Furs store here in Sterling, Alaska. As I landed my second and final Silver after releasing several smaller eight to ten-pounders, I decided to keep this heavy chromer to finish off the evening's limit.

As Primer and I headed back up the bank and down the trail to the house, I noticed the dog starting to growl in a low tone almost undetectable against the sound of the Kenai River flowing by. The Brown Bear was only 50 feet from the trail when I first saw her. Primer began to bark, and the sow stood up in the wheat-colored grass. She began to swipe her paws and make a jaw-snapping sound Uff Uff Uff that made the hair stand up on my neck.

I knew from a lifetime of hunting bears in Alaska to stand my ground. Primer, only a year old, was ready to take the sow on. I held the dog's collar and slowly backed up down the trail toward the house. "Only a few more steps to go," I thought. The Brown Bear stepped onto the trail, still snapping her jaws and making that Uff Uff Uff sound. It was then I spotted the two cubs standing beside her in the tall grass. The cubs were about two-thirds grown, and all three Brown Bears stood up on their hind legs to get a better look at Primer and me. In a hurry to go fishing earlier, I had left my 500 Smith & Wesson on the kitchen table, and now, I was unarmed and up against a sow and twin cubs.

Primer and I, facing the Brownies, continued backing up down the trail and toward the house. Holding Primer's collar tight, the Brown Bears continued to follow

us down the trail keeping their distance of about 50 to 75 feet. As I backed up the trail and into the yard past my Cadillac with Primer in hand, the three bears were picking up their pace, getting louder with their snapping jaws and the Uff Uff Uff sounds made with each step.

If Primer got loose now, the chances of the Brown Bears killing him were probable. I held on tight, but as the bears drew closer, Primer fought hard against the grip keeping him from falling prey to the three Alaskan Brown Bears drawing nearer with each step. By the time Primer and I backed our way to the foot of the steps leading up and into the house, darkness had fallen across the Kenai.

The Brown Bears were milling around, snapping their jaws, and tearing up everything in their path. Once in the house, I found my 500 S & W. I walked back to the porch, listening as the Brown Bears wrecked havoc in the darkness.

Out of precaution, I fired off a few rounds from the 50-caliber handgun. The 500 Smith and Wesson is the largest handgun made. When in bear country, it is recommended you have the right gun for the job just in case you run up against one or more of these Alaskan giants.

When the salmon start to die off in the fall, the Brown and Black Bears come from miles around to fatten up on the dead and dying carcasses left behind from the huge runs of salmon migrating up the Kenai River to their spawning beds each year. The runs of King and Red Salmon (Sockeye) in 2008 were lower than expected on the river, and the bears were hungry.

continued on next page



FRONTIERSMAN ... continued

The summer of 2008 was one of the coldest and wettest in my recent memory.

The wild berry crops also suffered, and the bears were starting to show signs of aggression from their hunger and winter's grip fast approaching the Alaskan landscape. By late October, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game had already shot several bears in the area, and I knew the way the sow and twin cubs were acting, they would more than likely be next.

It didn't take long for things to quiet



down once Primer and I were in the house. A warm fire roared in the fireplace, and we scarfed our supper down with abandon. As my companion and I settled in for the night, Primer more than once cautiously walked up to the glass front door and peered out into the darkness, all the while growling in that low, almost inaudible tone as he had done when we first spotted the Brown Bears down by the fishing hole earlier in the evening. As we started to doze off into a well-deserved sleep, I felt Primer in the darkness jump up onto the foot of the king-sized bed and curl up where I could feel his warmth and security.

Throughout the night, Primer and I both would wake up, look around, listen and then fall back to sleep. That's how it was most of the night, and before we knew it, the sun began to rise up out of the eastern sky.....red for the coming storms. As I opened the door at 4:30 a.m., I held Primer's collar steadfast in my right hand, all the while looking out across the yard to make sure the three Alaskan Brown Bears had moved on.

We cautiously walked down the steps and out into the yard of my parents' home, which lies on the bank of the Kenai River in Sterling, Alaska. As we moved across the yard, we began to see all the destruction the three bears had done the night before.

First, I saw the burn barrels, which were upended in the burn pit. Then we moved on to the garage where the bears had run their claws across the door and knocked the rollers completely off the track on one side.

I could see where the three bears were looking for something to eat as they moved from one place to another in the yard. Holes had been dug in several places, and the grass by the bib burn barrel was torn up and the bib burn barrel itself was on its side.

As I walked toward the cabins and past

my car, I noticed something out of the ordinary on the tail fin of my Cadillac. I could barely believe it! There were large tooth marks where one of the Alaskan giants had bitten my car!

Now I don't mind the bear upending the burn barrels or even digging a hole or two in the yard, but when a bear, especially an Alaskan Brown Bear, decides to bite not only my car but my Cadillac, that's downright lowdown and underhanded. The Caddy wasn't armed and had no choice but to sit and succumb to the steel trap jaws of the Brownie. I could see the claw marks in the dirt next to the destruction on the fins of my poor car.

If the three Alaskan giants were truly as brave as I had thought, they would have faced me bear-to-man, like real Alaskan Brown Bears and tried to eat me instead of sneaking around in the darkness assaulting an innocent car. If that's the way they choose to fight, then this is WAR..... next time I'll bring my one-ton truck.

After all, they have picked on the wrong Alaskan. They have chosen to fight ... **The Last Frontiersman.**

**True Alaskan Bear Tail by
The Last Frontiersman
(a/k/a Dan McDowell)
5801 Yadon Drive
Wasilla, Alaska 99654**

A Boost for Civic Education

Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, in cooperation with Georgetown University Law Center and Arizona State University, is developing a civics education Web site for middle school students called **Our Courts** (www.ourcourts.org). Expressing concern about students' declining civics awareness, she said, "Knowledge about our government is not handed down through the gene pool. Every generation has to learn it, and we have some work to do."

The former Justice is assisting in the development of computer games on the Web site intended to be played in the classroom. In the game **Do I Have a Right?**, students advise fictional kids about their rights under the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. A second game is **Supreme Decision**. In this game, students are Supreme Court law clerks. At issue is whether or not a fellow student, Ben, can be suspended from school for wearing his favorite music band T-shirt. The games should be ready for the 2009-2010 school year.

O'Connor became the first female Supreme Court Justice in 1981. She retired from the Court in 2006.



NCSL LEADERSHIP STAFF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Nominations Open for 2009 Awards

The NCSL Leadership Staff Section invites nominations for the 2009 Leadership Staff Section Achievement Awards. Outstanding legislative leadership staff members are recognized each year for the important contributions they make to the legislative process. These awards present a unique opportunity to acknowledge exceptional staff.

Nominations can be made by state legislators or other legislative staff. Winners are announced at the NCSL Legislative Summit and awards are presented at the NCSL Leadership Staff Section annual Professional Development Seminar.

AWARD CRITERIA

A Legislative Staff Achievement Award 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. At least one of the awards is 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, and by other significant involvement with the Section.

1. Identified differences and used them positively to benefit our 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. Effective 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 of Members; shares "best game" strategies.
8. Promotes benefits gained from Leadership Staff Section.
9. Develops 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.

More information about the NCSL Leadership Staff Section awards can be found at www.ncsl.org. Nominations for the 2009 Leadership Staff Section Achievement Awards will be accepted through June 30, 2009. Please send nominations to:

TERRI FRANKS-SMITH
c/o Idaho
House of Representatives
PO Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0038
tfranks@house.idaho.gov
208.332.1112 office
208.334.2491 fax



*Dear Fellow Leadership Staffers
and Friends:*

The Nominations Committee of the Leadership Staff Section is currently seeking candidates for the Executive Committee. Many of you have benefited from our professional development seminars held each year in different locations across the country. You have enjoyed the connections with your counterparts and have participated in activities planned for you by our Program Development Committee and our Executive Committee and are looking forward to our next meeting! Will you consider offering your time and talents to our great staff section and help us to continue to offer professional development services to leadership staff?

Elections will be held at our Annual Staff Meeting in Austin, Texas, September 9-12, 2009. Executive Committee members are responsible for selecting a site for the annual training seminar, preparing the agenda for the annual training seminar, calling special meetings of the full membership, executing contracts subject to approval of the NCSL Executive Committee, appointing subcommittees and special committees, and managing training programs. The Committee is composed of the Immediate Past Chair, Chair, First Vice-Chair, Second Vice-Chair, and nine Directors. There will be three vacancies in the Director positions. Tom Wright, our current Chair from the "Great State of Alaska," (thumbs up) will move into the Immediate Past Chair position. We are seeking candidates for Chair, First Vice-Chair, and Second Vice-Chair and the three Director vacancies.

To be considered, please send your letter of intent to run for one of the open positions to one of the members of the Nominations Committee. If you have any questions, please contact me at 717-787-4992.

We look forward to seeing you in July at the NCSL Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA, and in September in Austin, Texas!

Sincerely,

DAWN

Dawn Reese Leer

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