



Community Development Team partners Clerks and Treasurers to offer **INAUGURAL**

Situation:

The Wyoming Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers (WAMCAT) seeks to promote the professional improvement and efficiency of clerks, treasurers, or finance officers in the cities and towns of Wyoming. Certification for clerks is offered through the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC). IIMC requires clerks to participate in 120 hours of education. Treasurers go through a similar process for certification through the Association of Public Treasurers of the United States and Canada (APT-USC). Until 2012, Wyoming's clerks and treasurers had to attend out-of-state institutes to receive this education and certification. These out-of-state institutes provided quality training, but their emphasis is on the laws and regulations that pertain to their states and do not cover statutes and rules specific to Wyoming municipalities.

In 2010, members of the WAMCAT leadership team approached members of University of Wyoming Extension's Community Development Education (CDE) team about hosting an IIMC institute for Wyoming's municipal clerks and treasurers. It was decided that the only successful approach to take in Wyoming would be a partnership between WAMCAT and UW Extension.

The first Wyoming Municipal Institute (WMI) was September 10-13, 2012, in Casper. Seventy-six clerks and treasurers attended 24 hours of training over four days. Workshop sessions covered a variety of topics relevant to the work of clerks and treasurers, including Operating

Under Emergency Conditions, Mastering Conflict Management, Administrative Duties of the Municipal Clerk, and Developing an Investment Policy.

Impacts:

To earn credit for the institute from the international organizations, participants were required to compose a 300-word essay for each session attended. These essays addressed the "big ideas" that participants took away from the session, how they would implement the new ideas into their work, and how they would overcome barriers or challenges to implementing the new information into their work.

The assessments provided good examples of how the clerks and treasurers would implement and share what they learned with others from their municipalities. According to one attendee, "I am anxious to share this understanding (of how local, state, and federal governments are structured) with my Mayor and Council as well as other Department Heads in my organization. When we understand how we got to this point with our government we can see our role going forward." In reference to the Operating Under Emergency Conditions workshop, a participant wrote "This class scared the daylights out of me. The most important idea that was drilled home was 'Failure to Plan, is a Plan for Failure.... I have already downloaded several self-study courses on Emergency Management, and will be completing these courses. I will also be looking at taking other classes as they become available in the area."

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with Wyoming Association of Municipal WYOMING MUNICIPAL INSTITUTE

The assessments also highlighted how networking with colleagues during the sessions was a major benefit to the participants. Another attendee said that, "Council Orientation is a very good idea. This class was really good as I believe each town does their own style of council orientation and we were able to get good ideas from each other. I came away with several good ideas that may help my new council function better as a group."

Results from the overall institute evaluation show that the majority of participants believe the Wyoming Municipal Institute was a very valuable learning opportunity. One attendee even praised the "amazing" coordination between WAMCAT, UW Extension, and IIMC/APT-USC to put on the institute. Attendees reported the following in end-of-program evaluations:

94 percent agreed the institute curriculum was either very good or excellent.

97 percent agreed there were a very good or excellent variety of sessions.

100 percent believed the opportunities to network with colleagues and experts were very good or excellent.

89 percent of attendees believe that, overall, the WMI was very good or excellent.

The WMI was designed to help clerks and treasurers from the 99 incorporated cities and towns in Wyoming to feel competent in their positions so they can make good decisions and act with decisiveness and fairness. A well-trained and capable municipal employee means a better run city or town. Well-run cities and towns mean a better place for Wyomingites to live, learn, work, and play.



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