

Small Cities Benefit from TML Services!

The Texas Municipal League has a proud history of serving Texas cities. With a membership of more than 1,090 cities, the League is dedicated to representing the interests of all its members in a number of ways. Beyond providing the traditional services, TML continually seeks better and more efficient ways to meet the needs of all our members.

The League has always realized that while all Texas cities share many common interests and concerns, small cities have special needs. Nearly 20 years ago, TML began to focus special attention on small cities and their unique needs and problems. A Small Cities Advisory Council (SCAC) was formed and charged with advising the TML Board of Directors and staff on ways the League's services to small cities can be expanded or modified, consistent with TML's resources and the needs of the organization as a whole.

The SCAC, which meets at least three times each year, is a dedicated and diverse group of appointed and elected officials from all corners of the state who represent Texas cities with populations of less than 15,000. There can be no more than one representative from any city, and the intent is for the council to have an elected and appointed official from each of the fifteen TML regions. Presently, the group is led by Chairman Brett Shannon, city manager of Decatur, and Vice Chairman Leonard Reed, mayor of Willis.

With the SCAC's thoughtful input, TML strives to assist small cities manage the big challenges they face on a regular basis. Several TML services are available to assist small cities.

- TML provides legislative representation at the state level to member cities. Several legislative initiatives directly and significantly impacting small cities have been included in TML's legislative program over the years, many of which have become law.
- TML and the SCAC are providing small cities with federal representation in coordination with the National Association of Towns and Townships and the National League of Cities.
- The League employs five full-time attorneys who are available to provide member cities with advice and information on municipal legal matters.



- The League, under the direction of the SCAC, conducts a series of Small Cities' Problem-Solving Clinics across the state each year. These one-day sessions are designed to provide answers to and discussion on the questions most frequently asked by elected and appointed officials. Topics covered during the clinics include legal question-and-answer sessions, discussion on the Open Meetings and Public Information Acts, economic development tools for small cities, state legislative and agency actions impacting small cities, and much more. Registration fees for the workshop are kept at a minimum—\$30 per person, with lunch provided—to allow for multiple registrations from a single city. Three clinics are currently scheduled for the summer and fall (see sidebar).
- The Small Cities' Corner in the *Texas Town & City* magazine provides a convenient exchange of information primarily focused on issues pertaining to small cities.
- "Small cities" sessions are offered at the TML annual conference and various workshops throughout the year.
- The TML Web site has a page dedicated to small cities, www.tml.org/smallcities.html. On this small cities page, you will find information about grant opportunities, past issues of the Small Cities' Corner articles, information about the SCAC, and other resources.
- Last year, the SCAC completed an update of the Newly Elected Officials Training Video. The video

covers the basics of municipal government and the role of elected officials in the effective and efficient operation of a city. It is an excellent companion to the *Handbook for Mayors and Councilmembers*.

- This year, the SCAC oversaw the development of the TML Resource Fair, a one-day event that gets small cities in touch with state programs and associations that provide services to small cities.

- Also in 2008, the SCAC hosted a networking dinner at the February TML Elected Officials' Conference.

If you have an idea of a service that would be beneficial to smaller cities, please communicate with the members of the SCAC in your area. It may be that the service you want is already available and you just need help accessing the service, or you may have an idea for a service unique to the needs of our 934 member cities with a population of less than 15,000. Or maybe you would like to be considered for a position on the SCAC in the future. Currently, vacancies exist in TML regions 12 and 16.

For additional information on all TML services to small cities, contact Rachael Pitts in the League office at 512-231-7472.

If your city has a facility that could accommodate a Small Cities' Problem-Solving Clinic, contact Rachael Pitts at 512-231-7472. ★

2008 Small Cities Advisory Council

Name	Title	City	Region
Wanda Herd	Mayor	Wheeler	2
David Landis	City Manager	Perryton	2
Francene Allen-Noah	Mayor	Snyder	3
Gary Brown	City Manager	Floydada	3
Avinash K. Rangra	Mayor Pro Tem	Alpine	4
Rebecca Brewster	City Administrator	Van Horn	4
Wayne Christian	Mayor	Graham	5
Janice Newman	City Secretary	Iowa Park	5
Jerry Marshall	Mayor	Rotan	6
Greg Wortham	Mayor	Sweetwater	6
Ken Thomas	City Manager	Early	6
Jack Leonhardt	Mayor	Windcrest	7
Larry Pippen	City Administrator	Karnes City	7
Walter Bowen	Mayor	Lake Worth	8
Brett Shannon (Chair)	City Manager	Decatur	8
Judy Edwards	Mayor	Wortham	9
Richard Fletcher	City Manager	Robinson	9
Frank Estrada	Councilmember	Lockhart	10
Toni Vanderburg	Administration Manager	Horseshoe Bay	10
Joe Hermes	Mayor	Edna	11
Tom Blazek	City Manager	Rockport	11
Rudy Villarreal	Mayor	Alamo	12
Vacant			12
Joe Cordina	Mayor	Parker	13
Kim Dobbs	Assistant City Manager	Heath	13
Brad Stafford	City Manager	Navasota	14
Leonard Reed (Vice Chair)	Mayor	Willis	14
Mary Anne Holcomb	Councilmember	Kemah	14
Andres Garza, Jr.	City Manager	Wharton	14
Brad Stafford	City Manager	Navasota	14
Randy Daniel	Mayor	Athens	15
Brenda Samford	City Manager	Carthage	15
Roy McDonald	Mayor	West Orange	16
Vacant			16

Dates and Locations of Upcoming Small Cities' Problem-Solving Clinics

August 1 – Dimmitt

September 5 – Austin

September 26 – Decatur

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