

**PA TIMES**

**VOLUNTEERISM/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**Fiscally Constrained Cities Protect Public Services with Volunteers** 3

*Across the country, cities of all sizes are re-defining how government works with its citizens. In this difficult financial climate, many cities are facing intractable budgetary issues and limited public support.—Stephanie Rozsa, Bonnie Mann*

**Civic Engagement the Key to Success in Community Building, Urban Revitalization and Our Future** 4

*Shifts in the traditional family structure, technological advancements and mobility have uprooted social connections in American neighborhoods, isolating community members from one another. We cannot emphasize enough how important it is to revitalize this engagement within communities.—Schnequa N. Diggs, Alexandru V. Roman*

**Veterans' Service to Country, Service to Community** 5

*While voluntarily serving as AmeriCorps members in the Vet Corps, veterans continue their mission to their county through their civilian national service experience as they make a positive difference in communities across Washington State.—Mary Van Verst, Debbie Schuffenhauer*

**How Much Democracy Can You Take?** 7

*A fundamental lesson for meaningful participation is that citizens need actual decision making authority to overcome their costs of participating. That authority will only be meaningful if it includes control over resources. And there's the rub. Participatory democracy is not an efficient decision making process. It can get quite "messy."—David Swindell*

**Insights on HR Management** 9

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**ASPA TIMES**

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# PA TIMES

34 Years • 1977-2011

A Powerful Voice for Public Service . . .



**Admiral Thad Allen**  
to speak at  
**ASPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
see pg. 26 for more information.  
Baltimore, MD • March 11-15, 2011  
[www.aspanet.org/2011conference](http://www.aspanet.org/2011conference)

## Economy, Jobs Top Public's Policy Agenda

### No Consensus about Future of Health Care

*Washington, DC*—The public's policy agenda is again dominated by the economy and jobs with other major issues viewed as less important. Fully 87 percent say that

strengthening the economy should be a top priority for the president and Congress and

See PUBLIC'S AGENDA, pg. 13



Mark Aesch (right) transformed the Rochester, NY, public transit system.

## Rochester Transit System Goes from Deficit to Surplus

### With No Bailouts or Fare Hikes, CEO Turns System Around

*Alan Defame*

When Mark Aesch became CEO of the public transit system in Rochester, NY, in 2004, he faced a daunting challenge. The Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA) was facing a more than \$27.7 million operating deficit, about 40 percent of its annual budget.

Aesch knew there'd be no bailout from higher levels of government. In fact he went out of his way to say he didn't want one.

"The typical playbook in these situations is to raise fares, lay off workers and to trench in the face of economic realities. But we threw out that playbook. We changed

See ROCHESTER TRANSIT, pg. 2

## Condrey Wins ASPA Election!



For more information see page 17.

## CONNECT Unites City and Suburbs

### Pittsburgh Organization Promotes Cooperation and Collaboration

*David Y. Miller, Kristen Michaels*

In the simplest terms, the Congress of Neighboring Communities, CONNECT is an organization that promotes cooperation and collaboration between the City of Pittsburgh and the 35 municipalities that share a common border with the City. Though the concept may sound basic, the very development of CONNECT is an in-

See CONNECET, pg. 12

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# ASPA TIMES

*Advancing excellence in public service. . .*

## National Council Rep. Winners



DISTRICT I

**Ann Hess Braga**  
Staff Director,  
Boston City  
Council



DISTRICT II

**Susan Gooden**  
Professor, Virginia  
Commonwealth  
University



DISTRICT III

**James Ward**  
Professor,  
University of  
Mississippi for  
Women



DISTRICT IV

**Abraham  
Benavides**  
Assoc. Professor,  
University of  
North Texas



DISTRICT V

**William Emerson**  
Town Manager,  
Town of Dewey-  
Humboldt

INTERNATIONAL  
DIRECTOR

**Donnell Scott**  
Executive Director  
of MPA Program,  
NCSU

STUDENT  
REPRESENTATIVE

**José Luis Irizarry**  
Adjunct Instructor,  
John Jay College  
of Criminal Justice

## Condrey Elected ASPA VP

### Steve Condrey to Assume Presidency of the Society in 2013



**ASPA member Steve Condrey, chairman of the Federal Salary Council, will officially accept his elected position during ASPA's Annual Conference in Baltimore, MD, March 11-15, 2011.**

*Christine McCrehin*

Steve Condrey, recently appointed as chairman of the Federal Salary Council by President Obama, has been elected ASPA vice president and will become president of the Society in 2013. Condrey will officially assume the office of vice president at ASPA's Annual Conference in Baltimore, MD, March 11-15, 2011.

At that time, Erik Bergrud, senior director, community and government relations for Park University, will become president replacing Meredith Newman, professor and director of the School of Public Administration at Florida International University, who will become immediate past president. Kuotsai "Tom" Liou, a professor at the

University of Central Florida, will become president-elect. Newly elected National Council members will also assume their seats at the conference (see list at left).

Condrey has served the society on local, national and international levels and has extensive experience in both a university setting and public administration practice.

After receiving the news of his election, Condrey agreed to take a few moments to tell *PA TIMES* readers a bit about the goals he has for his tenure as an ASPA officer.

**How does it feel to be elected vice president of ASPA?** I'm absolutely thrilled to be elected as ASPA VP. ASPA is an organiza-

See ASPA VP, pg. 19

## Mergel Wins PA TIMES Best Article Award

### Article on Social Media and Gov 2.0 Chosen as Best of 2010

Washington, DC—The *PA TIMES* is pleased to announce that the Summer Issue 2010 article "Gov 2.0 Revisited: Social Media Strategies in the Public Sector" by Ines Mergel, has been selected as the winner of its 2010 H. George Frederickson Best Article Award. Mergel is an assistant professor of public administration in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, School of Information Studies at Syracuse University.

Comments from members of the selection committee included their judgment that the article was relevant to both academic and practitioner audiences, with directly actionable advice for public managers; clearly written; and provided cutting-edge information.

When informed of her win, Mergel had this to say, "I am very honored to accept the *PA TIMES* Best Article Award for 2010, and would like to thank the award committee for their hard work in reviewing what were undoubtedly a large group of high quality submissions.

Government 2.0 is not only a hot topic at the moment, it is an important one. I believe that the use of social media applications is

at a tipping point, moving from early innovators toward broader acceptance among government professionals. These technologies often challenge the way that public employees conduct their work, but as the use of Government 2.0 grows we will observe more changes in the way information is organized and distributed, as well as in the way information is co-created by citizens and absorbed by government.

In this early stage of Government 2.0, the use of social media in the public sector is often labeled as the "Wild West of e-Government." However, we are beginning to move into a convergence phase—where the reality of government operations merges with the new reality of social networking services: both will have to adapt to these new challenges. What is missing is clear guidance on best practices and acceptable strategies for effectively using social media applications to support the missions and practices of government organizations. The interviews I conducted with current social media directors for this *PA TIMES* article highlight not only challenges and hurdles, but also the positive impacts so-

cial media can have in the public sector. Government is already part of the public conversations that are happening on social networking sites; therefore, public managers need to understand where and how these conversations evolve—and become a part of them. I believe that both researchers and government practitioners have a lot of interesting ground to cover in the next few years. And, I for one, am excited to be a part of that. Thank you again for recognizing the importance of this fascinating and growing area of public administration practice and research."

Created in 2002, the *PA TIMES* Best Article Award is presented annually. In 2009, the award was renamed the H. George Frederickson *PA TIMES* Best Article Award, to honor former ASPA president and *PA TIMES* founding father H. George Frederickson.

The award will be presented during the Awards Ceremony at ASPA's Annual Conference, March 11-15, in Baltimore, MD.

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