

May 2015

IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS

Please consult the League [Web Calendar](#)

- May 5- [A Review of the Tax Assessment Pilot Programs-Conference Center at Mercer, West Windsor](#)
- May 7- William G. Dressel, Jr, Retirement and NJLM 100th Anniversary, East Brunswick Hilton, East Brunswick-**SOLD OUT**
- May 13- [Leaves of Absence in NJ: A Look at the FMLA, NJFLA, and ADA Compliance- Doubletree Hotel, Tinton Falls](#)
- May 15- Peace Officers Memorial Day
- May 25- Memorial Day
- May 29- [Preparing for Your Next Steps on Affordable Housing- Your Computer](#)
- June 12- [NJLM Mini Conference, Conference Center at Mercer, West Windsor](#)

- ✓ Bureau Of Municipal Information
- ✓ Peace Officers Memorial Day
- ✓ NJLM Mini Conference
- ✓ 100th Annual Conference Housing Forms
- ✓ Planting the Right Tree in a Post Superstorm Sandy World
- ✓ NJ 211
- ✓ Atlantic City's Financial Problems

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By, Mayor Brian Wahler, President

As you know, for the past five months the League has been conducting a recruitment and selection process to fill the role of our retiring executive director Bill Dressel. The New Jersey State League of Municipalities Executive Board met today and voted to appoint Michael J. Darcy, CAE as the new League executive director. At the same time, they voted to appoint Mike Cerra as the new assistant executive director. The change is effective July 1, 2015 upon the retirement of our long-time current executive director Bill Dressel.

Michael Darcy is currently assistant executive director and has been with the League of Municipalities for 25 years. As our new executive director he will help guide us as we work through such issues as the state government pension and benefit reforms, transportation funding, state diversion of local energy revenues, and the centennial celebration of the founding of the League. As part of the position, Michael Darcy will also assume the duties of executive director for the NJLM Educational Foundation, and the 222 West State Corporation which owns the League headquarters building.

The League Executive Board has great confidence in Michael Darcy and his ability to guide our organization through this challenging time. His long tenure and depth of knowledge about the League and local government point to the League's strength and mean our organizational focus will not waiver from the needs of New Jersey local officials.

Continued Under Presidents Message

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Executive Staff

WILLIAM G. DRESSEL, JR., Executive Director
MICHAEL J. DARCY, CAE, Asst. Executive Director

Presidents Message Continued

He has been a key component of our successful team and will assure we continue that success without interruption. Similarly, the Executive Board has great confidence in Mike Cerra as assistant executive director. Mike Cerra has been with the League 18 years and, as our director of government affairs, assures all branches of government are informed on our municipal perspective. He will now continue that vital work as assistant executive director.

By way of background; Michael Darcy earned a M.A. in Political Science from Rutgers University. He joined the League in 1990, working in every program and service area over the years. He has held the position of assistant executive director since 1995. In 1999 he achieved the designation Certified Association Executive, conferred by the American Society of Association Executives. He has served as president of the New Jersey Society of Association Executives and is a 2010 Fellow of Leadership New Jersey. The strength and success the League currently enjoys is testament to the diligent work of our team, and depth of skill and experience we have to draw from. We are indeed fortunate to have such a foundation during this transition.

Biographies for Darcy and Cerra, and many of the League staff are available at the League web site www.njslom.org <<http://www.njslom.org>> under "Contact Us".

A CENTURY OF KNOWLEDGE – THE BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL INFORMATION

Given high priority on the League's list of organizational objectives in 1915 was the creation of a research and information service. This service would provide authoritative and factual answers to members' questions on all aspects of municipal affairs. The result was the creation of the Bureau of Municipal Information, a service that was soon functioning out of the League's first office - a small room in a wing of the ivy-covered Princeton University Library.

The years have proved the Bureau to be one of the most valuable and popular services that the League provides. From the beginning, municipal officials have relied on the Bureau's reference facilities to give them critically needed information and guidance. The Bureau's files are recognized as the most comprehensive single source of municipal information in the State. Officials of member municipalities know that contacting the League will bring a prompt response, and more than 2,000 inquiries are answered each year.

To read this article in full, pick up a copy of the May issue of *New Jersey Municipalities* magazine (subscription required). [New Jersey Municipalities](#) is the League's official monthly magazine publication (available in print or [digital format](#) by subscription), and will be highlighting the League's centennial each month throughout the year 2015.

PEACE OFFICERS MEMORIAL DAY MAY 15

Since 1962, Peace Officers Memorial Day is held annually in the United States on May 15 in honor of federal, state and local officers killed or disabled in the line of duty. It is observed in conjunction with Police Week. While it is not a public holiday, many communities hold memorial services and fly the flag at half-staff. A national memorial service is held in Washington, DC on May 15.

NJLM MINI CONFERENCE OFFERS LICENSED OFFICIALS A CHANCE TO EARN UP TO 8 CEU CREDITS IN ONE DAY!

-Contact Danielle Holland-Htut at 118 or dholland@njslom.com

On June 12, 2015 at the Conference Center at Mercer in West Windsor, the League will offer the Mini One Day Conference.

This event will feature about 12 educational sessions on a wide range of topics including; Chapter 78 and the Affordable Care Act, Credit Ratings and How they Affect Financially Distressed Municipalities, Elections, Licensing, 1099's, Social Media, Shared Services, OPRA, and Ethics to name a few. Many attendees will be able to earn up to 8 CEU credits in one day. The Mini Conference will run from 8:30a.m.-5:00pm with registration beginning at 7:30a.m.

Pre-registration costs (before June 4) are \$95.00 for members and \$115.00 for non-members and include a continental breakfast and buffet lunch. After June 4, 2015 costs rise to \$ 115.00 for members and \$135.00 for non-members and must be paid at the door.

To learn more about this program and the credits that are offered please visit the following link:
www.njslom.org/seminars

100th ANNUAL CONFERENCE HOUSING FORMS COMING

-Contact Dee Kotch ext. 115 or dkotch@njslom.com

Municipal housing forms for the 100th Annual Conference will be mailed to all Municipal Clerks in early June. Non-municipal forms will be available in the June issue of *New Jersey Municipalities* magazine. Be sure to get your housing requests in early to help ensure your requirements get first consideration.

PLANTING THE RIGHT TREE IN THE RIGHT PLACE IN A POST-SUPERSTORM SANDY WORLD

-For more information contact Lisa Simms at njtf1@juno.com

The New Jersey Tree Foundation and Public Service Electric & Gas Company are offering a **FREE seminar on *Planting the Right Tree in the Right Place in a post-Superstorm Sandy world***. The program will take place on May 8, 2015 from 9:00am -11:45a.m at the Bridgewater Municipal Building on 100 Commons Way in Bridgewater. This seminar is worth 2 Continuing Education Units for towns with a 5-year Community Forestry Management Plan.

Topics of discussion include:

- Planting the right tree, in the right place, the right way
- The importance of mark-outs prior to planting
- Emerald Ash Borer in New Jersey
- Vegetation management policies to ensure the safe and reliable delivery of electric service
- The importance of species diversity & proper maintenance

Light refreshments will be served at this event. **Please RSVP by Friday, May 1 by emailing Lisa Simms at njtf1@juno.com**. If you would like to send a representative(s), please include their name and email address.

NJ 2-1-1 Partnership – YOUR GATEWAY FOR HELP

- Visit www.nj211.org for more information

Simply call 2-1-1 for all your help or referral needs. Established in 2005, NJ2-1-1 Partnership has been instrumental in providing that critical connection between individuals and families seeking health or human services and the community referrals best able to meet their needs. In need of emergency financial service, food or housing? Call 2-1-1 to speak with a caring call agent to guide you in the right direction. In need of mental health or counseling information, transportation, health, medical or legal services? Call 2-1-1 to meet your needs.

NJ2-1-1 Partnership of New Jersey is a non-profit organization with a team of caring professionals committed to helping those in need during their most vulnerable time. NJ211 handles 8 phone lines of service consisting of the following: NJ2-1-1, SEPA 2-1-1, Addictions Hotline, LIHEAP Energy Assistance Information Line, Suspicious Activity Reporting Line, Disaster Services, Supportive Services for Veteran's Families and the Homeless Hotline. Each line when called will have a call agent ready to provide the caller with the critical referral information they need.

The website, www.NJ211.org, provides the same helpful information as well as additional resources and links for those needing assistance or information pertaining to the aforementioned topics. NJ211 work closely with the NJ State Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) as well as with our County and Local OEM's in disaster preparedness, planning, response and recovery initiatives. Key stakeholders and partners include the NJ Department of Human Services, Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, NJ Department of Community Affairs, NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, NJ Division of Children and Families, NJ Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NJVOAD), FEMA, Long Term Recovery Groups, 211 US and numerous other social service agencies.

Last year, NJ2-1-1 Partnership handled over 200,000 calls and the website had over 200,000 visits. The organization was recently accredited by AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Systems) due to our high standards and professionalism. Community and organization leaders should be aware of NJ2-1-1 Partnership's ability to provide data and reports. During times of disaster, these reports can reflect trends in impacted areas in real time and allow the appropriate agency to assist where needed. Citizens across the state should take advantage of the simplicity of calling 2-1-1 to meet all of their help or referral needs. Mayors and community leaders should share the number and website, www.nj211.org, with their constituents and print out the numerous resources provided to share with their respective communities.

Call 2-1-1 to get connected. Visit www.nj211.org to review or download important information. The NJ2-1-1 staff stands ready to assist and provide you the necessary guidance and connections needed to be your gateway for help.

Why We All Have a Stake in Atlantic City

By Edward J. McManimon, III, NJLM Bond Counsel; Of Counsel, McManimon Scotland & Baumann and Marc Pfeiffer, Assistant Director, Bloustein Local Government Research Center, Rutgers University

Early this year, Moody's downgraded the credit rating of Atlantic City to a junk level rating of Caa1, a rating that was previously unheard of in New Jersey. This was a reaction to the appointment by the state of an "Emergency Manager" and "Special Counsel" for the City, who have both had extensive experience in bankruptcy to help to solve the financial problems facing the city. Concern that this may indicate a move towards the first municipal bankruptcy in New Jersey didn't sit well with the financial and credit markets.

A couple months later, Moody's put Newark, Paterson, Asbury Park, Trenton, Kearny, Union City and Weehawken under credit review and possible credit downgrade. Moody's action was not a surprise; these municipalities participate in the Qualified Bond program and participant debt ratings historically follow the State's rating (which was recently downgraded). In explanation, Moody's cited an overreliance on State Aid and New Jersey's current financial trouble and credit downgrade over its pension payment obligations. For the first time, however, Moody's also cited concern over the State's commitment to provide support to local governments.

So what does this mean to other New Jersey local governments who are less reliant on State aid? Should a possible bankruptcy by Atlantic City be a concern throughout the State?

The simple answer is “yes.” Now even highly rated New Jersey school districts are being questioned by the bond market because the State’s commitment to providing annual debt service aid is in doubt. Moody’s has also placed the New Jersey School Bond Reserve Guarantee Program (Chapter 72) on review for possible credit downgrade. There is an obvious crack in the state’s financial armor. Where it will lead is a huge unknown.

How will the credit market view New Jersey municipalities that experience an unanticipated financial crisis if the State is no longer viewed as a reliable backstop to local governments? The long standing regulatory controls and oversight by the state over the finances of local governments can continue to provide value in the credit markets; but ultimately the value of the State’s commitment will be judged more by what it does when it is needed most. If an actual bankruptcy occurs in Atlantic City, it will undermine the value of decades of state regulatory oversight and financial commitment; a system that has helped make credit values for our local governments some of the strongest in the nation for over 50 years.

Local leaders though out the state would be wise to urge policy makers to solve Atlantic City’s financial distress with measures other than bankruptcy. The city’s efforts to diversifying beyond casinos and to reduce the government workforce to match city revenue are strong indications that the financial path to a renewed City is through action, not bankruptcy.

One thing is certain, despite the superficial views to the contrary, the most expensive and devastating way to resolve a financial crisis is through bankruptcy.