Local Governments Addressing Employee and Retiree Health Costs

National Survey Shows Local Officials Working to Control Health Care Costs and Liabilities

Lansing, MI—About 49 percent of the nation’s cities, counties and townships expect less revenue in 2010, and 21 percent expect fewer employees, according to a new survey. About 26 percent expected increased consolidation of local services.

With shrinking budgets and fewer staff, local officials are taking several approaches to contain long-term costs associated with employee and retiree health care.

The Health and OPEB Funding Strategies:

2009 National Survey of Local Governments report is based on responses from more than 1,500 city, county, township and special district governments across the county randomly polled this year. “There are significant changes from last year’s study,” said William SaintAmour, executive director of Cobalt Community Research. “We’re seeing belt tightening and growing awareness of benefit costs.”

The report examines local governments’ awareness of and responses to growing health costs and liabilities. It also helps inform public employers about national OPEB accounting requirements and current practices used by local governments to control health care costs.

The study was conducted by Cobalt Community Research (www.cobaltcommunityresearch.org), a leading nonprofit research firm.

ASPAs Mid-Year Business Meeting in Washington, DC

The ASPA National Council met to discuss Society business during the recent Mid-Year Meetings. Seated at the head of the table are ASPA President Paul Posner and President-Elect Meredith Newman. The ASPA National Office in Washington, DC, hosted several committee and steering group meetings, as well as Public Administration Review Board, PA TIMES Board and National Council meetings.

In Down Economy, Libraries Connect Americans with Online Government, Job Resources

Funding, Broadband Improvements Needed to Meet Demand

Chicago—With national unemployment topping 9 percent and many Americans seeking online information and new technology skills that can help keep them and their families afloat in hard times, U.S. public libraries are first responders in a time of economic uncertainty. “Libraries Connect Communities: Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study 2008-2009,” a new report released today by the American Library Association (ALA), says libraries are serving as crucial technology hubs for people in need of free Web access, computer training, and assistance finding and using E-Government and job resources. The study finds that more than 71 percent of all libraries (and 79 percent of rural libraries) report they are the only

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Effective and Ethical Governance

Does effective and ethical governance go hand-in-hand? Or is this wishful thinking? Listen to Amsterdam Mayor Marius Job Cohen:

“On first sight putting efficiency and achieving of goals first and integrity, with all its questions and hardships, second, seems rewarding. Achieving your goals, your promises, makes for good headlines of course. But in the long run every city government is judged also and maybe above other things, on its moral qualities. And I even dare to state here that in order to really get sustainable results and effects in society, the moral quality of decision making and implementing them is an essential condition. Simply said: doing the right things the right way. Without the moral quality you won’t earn respect, but even so you won’t achieve your goals.”

Source: Speech in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on May 28, 2009, at the first “Global Dialogue on Ethical and Effective Governance.” Among the more than 100 scholars in attendance were ASPA members Guy Adams, Ray Cox, Charles Garofalo, Leo Huberts, Patria Juhnes, Emile Kolthoff, Alan Lawton, Don Menzel, Dorothy Oldshueki, Jeremy Plant, and Robert W. Smith.

ASPA member Donald C. Menzel is president of Ethics Management International and a former ASPA president. Email: don.menzel@verizon.net

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