

Review

WESTERN CENTRAL CHAPTER

a publication of the Western Central Chapter of the
American Planning Association

APA

President's Message: WCC Member Survey Results

by Ken Markert, AICP



The Chapter concluded its membership survey last week. 107 members, or 35%, participated. Not everyone responded, but everyone had a chance to. This level of response definitely gives the Chapter board a good sense of what the members think about Chapter activities.

What follows is a short summary of the most interesting results. I'll spare you the pie charts for now. Those of you interested in the details can view complete survey results at www.wccapa.org/resources/essays.

Chapter members clearly thought our training webinars are the most valuable service we provide. Also highly rated were the Chapter's support of state conferences and Western Planner. On the other side of the coin, our Young Planners Program and our scholarship offerings are not well known and perhaps underappreciated. These results will be useful to the Chapter board as we set our budget and program priorities.

The survey showed that members support raising our annual dues to make up for a fee APA began charging us the past few years. Before that fee, the Chapter had a balanced budget. Since the fee, we have been in the red most years. Only eight survey respondents were against raising the fee. I feel we need to move ahead on this to restore balance to our budget without reducing the services we now provide.

There was a wide range of answers to an open-ended question about what the Chapter can do to promote AICP to our members who haven't yet achieved certification. At one end of the spectrum were those who felt there is no need to do anything. However, most responses suggested the Chapter should do two things: (1) make it easier to take and pass the AICP exam through exam preparation assistance and even helping with exam costs; and (2) promoting the value of AICP to planners and their employers. These seem like good ideas. I especially liked one planner's idea of a conference session on the value and benefits of AICP.

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Visit us on the web at
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on Twitter:
[@WestCentralChap](https://twitter.com/WestCentralChap).

WCC Executive Board

Address/Email Changes

If your mailing or email address has changed, please contact the American Planning Association at www.planning.org. Log-in on the right- or left-hand column of any APA web page, under the "My APA" heading. Click the "Go to My APA" link, and then click the "Edit" button in the contact information area.

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Newsletter Information

This newsletter is published by the Western Central Chapter of the American Planning Association. Circulation is to the APA members of the Western Central Chapter (WCC). The WCC Executive Committee welcomes submissions of original articles, editorial letters, and any other information of interest to both professional and citizen planners. Submissions should be made to:

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For those members who are AICP, the survey results suggest that most have ample opportunities to receive their necessary continuing education (Certification Maintenance). AICP members said that the free webinars our Chapter sponsors are the most popular training opportunity. We pay a fee to be part of the webinar consortium and that lets us put on a few webinars each year and gives us notice of the consortium's other webinars. The second most popular training venue is the state conferences, which the Chapter also helps support.

To be honest, I did not always see the value in AICP. I have tended to appreciate it through hindsight.

My first job after graduation put me in charge of a one-person planning office. A couple years into it, one of the county commissioners began saying I wasn't qualified for the job. He was a recent transplant from the city and his real issue was that I didn't adopt his anti-growth agenda. In fact, I wouldn't endorse his idea that our county population should be capped at 11,000. I joked with colleagues, "Too bad we didn't set the cap at 10,000—then he wouldn't be here". This motivated me to get my certification and in 1987 I did.

The next two jobs I had, both as the director of a county planning office,

required AICP. In 1987 I didn't realize that this was the case with many higher positions. But it turns out, AICP opened those doors for me. In 2003, when I went out on my own as a consultant, AICP took on even more significance. While no consulting jobs explicitly required AICP as my previous employers had, the certification clearly gave me an edge in a competitive business. Again, I didn't foresee AICP helping my consulting business. Perhaps that is because I didn't foresee becoming a consultant either. But once again, AICP gave me options I wouldn't have had otherwise.

For me, there is more to AICP than these career advantages. For instance, Certification Maintenance has made me a better planner. And when we collectively are better planners, our profession is more credible and effective.

If you are not AICP now, I hope this motivates you to think about going for it. As a certain greenhorn planner in 1987 found out, a little motivation can go a long way. The Chapter is here to help and with the new survey results, we hope to become more helpful to our members seeking AICP.

And finally, here are a few favorite survey comments from the members—comments that harmo-

nize with what the Chapter is trying to be for you:

- "Please promote regional, state, and rural planning to the APA Nationals. We don't all live in Denver or Chicago."
- "The webinars that are provided by Utah APA are fantastic and a valuable resource. With the tight budget in my office the webinars keep me connected with the planning world."
- "I seem well represented by various state Chapters and other organizations, but the WCC adds another regional perspective which I am glad to get."
- "I find the webinars invaluable and a good way to remind everyone of the benefit of the WCC membership."
- "Continue the good working relationship with the state chapters/organizations. WCC really provides the glue for a lot of the great things that are happening."

Thanks for being members of the Western Central Chapter. And if you were able, thanks for participating in the survey. And lastly, thanks for the numerous positive, thoughtful and encouraging comments many of you made.

JOB CORNER

Looking for a job?

Several online planning job listings are free to search. Here are just a few:

American Planning Association: <http://www.planning.org/jobs/search/>

Planetizen: <http://www.planetizen.com/jobs>

USA.gov: [http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Work for the Government.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Work%20for%20the%20Government.shtml)

Montana Association of Planners: <http://www.montanaplanners.org/jobs.htm>

If interested in posting a job listing on the WCC website, please contact the website editor, Allyson Brekke at abrekke@bozeman.net. The job must be located within one of the WCC states.



UPCOMING CONFERENCES

APA National Planning Conference

Chicago, Illinois
April 13 – 17, 2013

For more information go to:
www.planning.org/conferences

National Main Streets Conference

New Orleans, Louisiana
April 14 – 16, 2013

WYOPASS 2013 Spring Conference

Thermopolis, WY
May 23-24, 2013
Contact Megan Nelms for more information.
(307) 685-8061
mlbo8@ccgov.net

2013 MAPA Conference

Helena, MT
September 9-11, 2013
This year's conference theme is
"Planning for Prosperity."



UPCOMING WEBCAST

Please join us for our upcoming planner training webcast sponsored by the APA Western Central Chapter:

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES SPECIFIC TO OIL AND NATURAL GAS EXTRACTION

High oil and natural gas prices over the last decade, combined with new technology, have ignited a fossil fuel boom across the West. Drilling for oil and natural gas is a high-impact economic activity. Today's unconventional oil development and its effects differ in important ways from oil booms of the past. This webinar charts the new "unconventional" fossil fuel boom, tracking production, employment, and fiscal trends in an effort to better understand the pressures boomtowns face and to identify best practices for benefiting from these new unconventional fossil fuel plays. The presenter will be Mark Haggerty of Headwater Economics, an independent non-profit research group whose mission is to improve community development and land management decision in the West.

DATE: Friday, March 15th, 2013.

TIME: 11:00 am - 12:30 pm Mountain Time

REGISTER for the webcast at the Utah APA Chapter website. Pending CM approval, the session will provide 1.5 CM credits.

Questions or comments? Please email Ken Markert, markert@mmmiplanning.com

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State Updates

Montana State Update

by Jeff Bollman, AICP

2013 MAP Conference: The 2013 MAP Annual Conference will be held on September 9-11, 2013 in Helena. The conference theme is "Planning for Prosperity" and if you are interested in presenting, the deadline for submission of ideas and proposed presentations is March 1, 2013. All submissions should be sent directly to Kelly Lynch (formerly Kelly Casillas) at klynch@mt.gov.

MAP Legislative Committee: The legislative session has started and the MAP Legislative Committee has been active in responding to land use bills that have been introduced. MAP members can stay current on legislative happenings at the MAP web site www.montanaplanners.org in the Forum section.

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Call for Speaker Proposals

Call for Speaker Proposals 2013 Western Planner Conference--Planning for Forever

Interested professionals are invited to submit proposals for the Western Planner Conference to be hosted by the Nevada Chapter of the APA and held in Stateline, Lake Tahoe, NV, October 13-16, 2013. Western Planner and the Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association hold conferences on a yearly basis to provide attendees with information from planning experts on a wide range of topics. For more information about prior conferences please visit www.westernplanner.org and www.nvapa.org.

The scope of potential topics for the conference include:

- Planning and the impacts on economic development
- Planning for active living and healthy communities
- Multimodal transportation planning
- Public Involvement in the planning process
- The link between planning, environment and the local economy
- Fiscal challenges and innovative financing solutions
- Planning for an aging population
- Best practices in Sustainable Community Planning
- Planning for Eco-Tourism

Deadline for proposals is March 29, 2013. Please send an e-mail with session proposals attached as a Microsoft Word document named with the proposed session title

only. Please use the following guidelines in preparing your session proposal:

- Submittals are limited to one, single-sided 8.5" x 11" page. Marketing brochures and other similar types of materials will not be accepted with proposals and may cause the submittal to be rejected.
- Session name (brief, 4 to 5 words, catchy, yet fully descriptive of topic preferred).
- Paragraph describing the topic and message describing the proposed session. Proposals should contain a clear but concise explanation of what participants will learn from the session and how the presentation relates to the conference theme. Provide enough detail in the description so that the committee can make a great selection (500-word maximum. No exceptions.).
- Contact information (names, e-mail addresses, mailing addresses and phone numbers) of the speakers/moderator along with short speaker bios, limited to 100 words each.

Please email the proposals to Christina Leach at cleach@rtcwashoe.com, and cc: Adrian Freund at freundassociates@gmail.com. Also include your contact information (name, address, phone and email).





photo from: <http://www.travelsd.com/>

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North Dakota Planning News

By Larry Weil

Board: The North Dakota Planning Association (NDPA) recently held elections. The newly elected president is Larry Weil.

Conference: The annual conference will be held on April 24-25 jointly with Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI) in Fargo. On April 22-23 BREI will have economic developer training which will involve economic development professionals from a large region. The joint conference will have sessions of mutual interest including The Impact of Tourism on Main Street Business, Tax Increment Financing Districts, Creative Economy, Housing Development Issues and Opportunities in North Dakota, Population Brain Gain, Dynamic Community Impact Planning. Keynote addresses will feature Kari Warberg Block, EarthKind on the topic "The Balancing Act" and Ryan Taylor, McHenry County Commission on the topic "Dynamic Changing Environment."

Potential Planning Initiative: The NDPA has been working with the Department of Commerce on developing a planning initiative program for the state. Many communities have approached the state with numerous planning issues which they do not have the capacity to address. As a result the Department of Commerce has put together a coalition of stakeholders who have been involved in developing the program. The Department of Commerce submitted a \$5 million request to the Governor which was decreased to \$1 million for inclusion in the Governor's budget. It appears that much of the funding will be to match small community and county/township funding efforts for the development of comprehensive plans and land use regulations. The NDPA is a professional organizational resource and will likely be involved in training officials.

Legislature: The North Dakota Legislature is in session, so the NDPA is monitoring legislation. Much of the legislative focus this session is on funding requests given North Dakota's financial condition, taxes (property, income, sales), tax incentives and special assessments. Bills have been introduced regarding building codes and political signs.

South Dakota State Update

by Dave Mingo, AICP

Sign ordinance rewrites and housing studies seem to be two of the hottest topics in South Dakota communities this year. Recent court decisions related to signs, new sign technologies and plain old outdated language have been a catalyst for local officials to roll up their sleeves and get the public involved in sign regulation. Sign regulations are often overlooked but they have one of the biggest impacts of how our communities appear to the traveling public.

A number of South Dakota communities are at various stages of completing housing studies in an effort to identify housing challenges and opportunities. Like much of the Midwest / West, South Dakota communities are struggling with housing related issues that began with the economic downturn a few years ago. Even with the regional economy improving, developers remain cautious about starting new projects. The success of the housing studies completed to date has been two-fold. The first and most obvious result is the information provided to community leaders that assists with the day-to-day decision making process on issues related to housing. The second, and probably most important result could best be described as a fortuitous side effect based on good (maybe lucky) timing with the economic upswing. The studies are giving developers new ideas and the confidence to start projects that have been on the back burner for a few years.

There are fewer planning related issues under consideration by the South Dakota Legislature this year than there have been in the last few years. Two Tax Increment Financing (TIF) related bills under consideration would have dramatically reduced the effectiveness of TIF as a local development tool. Neither bill was approved.