

AMM Education Session #2 – May 4, 2006

George Cuff – The Essential Elements of Local Government: How to Make it Work for your Municipality



“I found George’s presentation to be informative, enlightening and very worthwhile. He had frequent breaks for questions. This provided an opportunity for individuals to approach him with a problem – which he then used as an example to the group and suggested a recommendation or solution. He offered good, practical advice.”

Councillor **Joyce Marsh**, RM of Pipestone

George Cuff has a reputation for speaking and writing plainly, even when discussing very difficult or complicated issues. He did just that on May 4, 2006 during the AMM’s 2nd Education Session of 2006. A total of 73 participants

took part in George’s presentation, *The Essential Elements of Local Government: How to Make It Work for Your Municipality*.

George opened the session by outlining the characteristics of healthy organizations, followed by the “deadly sins of ineffective governance.” He then explained the importance of vision and its key principles. George’s goal for the day was to demystify governance. He did this by explaining the roles of the governing body, what it is and what it isn’t, and used specific examples of governance models. He explained the roles of the CAO, standing committees, and committee of the whole.

George also focused on policy development, building a successful council-administration relationship, problems with confusing leadership, special purpose bodies (what they are and how they work), and the importance of effective communication.

Finally, George wrapped up his session by revisiting the key concepts, and explaining how participants could apply what they learned back home. ☛

This is the second time AMM members have had the opportunity to hear George Cuff (the first was at the AMM Annual Convention in 2005), and his penchant for one-liners has not abated! Here are some examples:

- One can lead with no more than a question in hand.
- If you think you’re indispensable, put your hand in a bucket of water, and when you take it out that’s how much of a void you will leave.
- Don’t dump on a predecessor – you’ll soon be one.
- He who throws mud loses ground.
- Why is your car windshield so big and your rear view mirror so small? Because the future is important and the past is gone.
- When the horse is dead... dismount.

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