



COLORADO
MUNICIPAL
LEAGUE

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 51, No. 6, March 21, 2025

SOMETHING

NICE

COMING YOUR WAY

The NICE Project is an effort to enhance engagement, deliver tailored support, and reinforce the value of your CML membership

By Denise White, CML engagement & communications manager

We're excited to announce we're piloting the NICE Project in 2025! NICE, which stands for Network, Inform, Connect, Educate, is designed to strengthen our connections with member municipalities and deliver even more value to your CML membership.

WHAT IS THE NICE PROJECT?

The NICE Project builds on our commitment to provide additional opportunities to connect with members in the CML community including our popular district meetings (coming to you this May) and expanding our on-the-road trainings. We value face-to-face connections with our members.

Through the NICE Project, CML staff will continue to visit you in your community. Our goal is to visit 55 members this year, and we have already enjoyed connecting with members in Aspen, Georgetown, Snowmass Village, Raymer, and Norwood.



WHY NICE MATTERS

The NICE Project is more than just visits — it's about building stronger relationships and delivering tangible benefits to your community. Here's what you can expect:

- **Stronger Connections:** Regular face-to-face interactions foster trust, collaboration, and a stronger sense of community.

- **Tailored Support:** In-person engagement allows us to better understand and address your specific challenges and opportunities.
- **Enhanced Membership Value:** By delivering resources and celebrating milestones together, we demonstrate the importance of your partnership with CML.
- **Visible Commitment:** These visits underscore CML's dedication to serving our members and supporting your success.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

While we enjoy helping our members over phone or email, we can't wait to connect with you in person. Let us know when it is a good time for CML staff to visit your community. Have a milestone event or success story you'd like to highlight? Let us know — we'd love to celebrate with you. Together, we'll make the NICE Project an additional way to serve you and strengthen our CML community.

Empowered cities & towns, united for a strong Colorado

EMPOWERED CITIES AND TOWNS, UNITED FOR A STRONG COLORADO



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CML Newsletter (ISSN 7439903) is published biweekly by the Colorado Municipal League, 1144 Sherman St., Denver, CO 80203-2207, for Colorado's municipal officials. (USPS 075-590) Periodical postage paid in Denver, Colorado.

Editor: Denise White
Designer: Alex Miller
Circulation/mailling lists: Mark Vanderbrook

POSTMASTER: Send address change form 3579 to Colorado Municipal League, 1144 Sherman St., Denver, CO 80203-2207; (p) 303-831-6411 / 866-578-0936; (f) 303-860-8175.

Subscription to CML Newsletter is offered as a portion of member dues.

Get this newsletter by email. The CML Newsletter is available by email three days before it arrives in the mail! Sign up at bit.ly/CMLNewsletter.

CML STAFF UPDATE

MAEVE McHUGH JOINS CML AS MUNICIPAL RESEARCH ANALYST

The Colorado Municipal League is excited to welcome Maeve McHugh to the Engagement and Communications team as our new municipal research analyst. Maeve brings a strong background in research, policy analysis, and stakeholder engagement, along with a deep passion for local government and fostering thriving communities.

Maeve recently earned dual master's degrees in community and regional planning and public affairs from the University of Texas at Austin, where she honed her expertise in data analysis, policy assessment, and community engagement. Her research has tackled critical issues such as housing affordability, suburban poverty, and sustainable urban planning.

Prior to joining CML, Maeve worked with the City of Austin's Smart Mobility Office. She has also served as the development



communications associate with the Colorado Children's Campaign where she demonstrated her ability to distill complex policy issues into accessi-

ble insights for diverse audiences.

At CML, Maeve will play a key role in leveraging research and data to support Colorado's municipalities, helping shape policies that drive sustainable growth.

Outside of work, you'll likely find Maeve out enjoying the Colorado sunshine with her dog Roger, testing out an ambitious new recipe in the kitchen, or passionately cheering on her favorite Colorado sports teams — sometimes with great joy, sometimes with heartbreak.

CML WEBINARS

EPR PREPARATION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WEBINAR SERIES

Part 3: End-Markets - The Whole Point of Recycling

Thursday, March 27, 2 p.m.

Where do recycled materials go? The EPR law requires the materials collected go to a responsible end-market to make new products. In this session, you will learn how that works and the opportunities for communities in end-markets.

Register at tinyurl.com/37w2je32.

CML LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Wednesday, April 2, 12-1 p.m.

Get an update on what is happening regarding legislation in front of the Colorado General Assembly in this webinar with the CML advocacy team. Ask questions about how you can get involved and potential impacts on your city or town.

Register at tinyurl.com/435zeap8.

CIVILITY STARTS HERE

Wednesday, April 30, 12-1:30 p.m.

Civility in public discourse is declining, yet, according to the 2023 American Bar Association's Survey of Civic Literacy, 79% of Americans want leaders to work together for better solutions. This class explores the role of municipal leaders in fostering respectful dialogue and restoring trust in governance. Participants will define civility, learn key guiding principles — such as active listening, focusing on issues over individuals, and seeking common ground — and practice actionable techniques for productive discourse. Join us to lead by example and create a more engaged, respectful, and solution-oriented community. Registrants will receive a Zoom link two days before the webinar. To allow for active participation, we're limiting this session to 30 attendees. Register at tinyurl.com/ybyzxek9.

Register now for 2025 CML Annual Conference!

By Karen Rosen, CML meetings & events planner

Register now for the CML Annual Conference, happening June 24-27 in beautiful Breckenridge, Colorado. Register online at www.cml.org/conference.

This is CML's signature training event of the year, where municipal officials from across the state come together to learn, share ideas, and build connections. The conference features informative sessions designed to tackle the important



issues municipal leaders face every day. But what really sets it apart is the chance to connect with peers from other communities who are navigating similar challenges. You'll leave with fresh ideas, new contacts, and practical takeaways to bring back to your community.

More information is available on the CML website, cml.org/conference. Don't miss this amazing opportunity to grow professionally, make valuable connections, and bring back new ideas to strengthen your community!

DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

The CML Newsletter is going fully digital. Starting this year, new CML members and associate members will receive the newsletter exclusively by email, with an option to temporarily opt-out and request a printed copy. Later this year, as part of a planned transition, everyone will begin to receive the CML Newsletter by email only, and the League will cease printing it altogether. The decision to go fully digital reflects a commitment to using member resources more effectively. Questions or requests to start receiving CML Newsletter via email right away should be sent to cml@cml.org.

CELEBRATE WITH CML

CML wants to hear about your community's success. Tell us about a grant you've won, a new water tank, or anything else you're excited about. Email CML Publication & Design Specialist Alex Miller, amiller@cml.org, to have your community's news featured in the CML Newsletter.

A banner for "Spring District Meetings" with a background of white flowers and a grey CML logo in the top right corner. The text "Spring District Meetings" is written in a large, elegant script font. Below it, a line of text says "Registration opens soon. Learn more at cml.org." At the bottom, there are two columns of text listing districts and their meeting dates.

CML

Spring District Meetings

Registration opens soon. Learn more at cml.org.

District 1: Wray, 5/15	District 8: San Luis, 5/20
District 2: Berthoud, 5/22	District 9: Mancos, 5/19
District 3: Brighton, 5/14	District 10: Delta, 5/29
District 4: Woodland Park, 5/21	District 11: Fruita, 5/28
District 5: Flagler, 5/14	District 12: Steamboat Springs, 5/28
District 6: Ordway, 5/22	District 13: Salida, 5/14
District 7/14: Pueblo, 5/13	District 15: Keystone, 5/29

Remembering former New Castle Mayor Bob Gordon

The Colorado municipal community joins the Town of New Castle in remembering former Mayor Bob Gordon, who passed away Feb. 10. A dedicated public servant, Gordon served on the town council from 1998-2010 and again from 2012-2014 before his term as mayor from 2014-2016.

Born in Rapid City, South Dakota, in 1945, Gordon spent most of his life in New Castle, where he and his wife of 62 years, Judy, attended the New Castle School. A master carpenter, he left a lasting mark on the community — many residents are proud to own a “Bobby Gordon home,” and his craftsmanship is showcased in the



gazebo at Burning Mountain Park on Main Street.

Beyond his contributions to the built environment, Gordon was passionate about New Castle’s natural spaces.

An avid fisher, he led efforts to improve fishing conditions on Elk Creek. He was deeply involved in New Castle’s First Baptist Church, serving as trustee and later as head trustee.

In recognition of his impact, the New Castle Town Council honored their former mayor with a proclamation and will place a memorial in Rollie Gordon Park, developed on land donated to the town by his father.

Gordon’s family remembers him as a man cherished by all who knew him, leaving behind a legacy of love, laughter, and integrity. They share that he leaves behind “a world made better by his presence and a family forever grateful for the time they shared.”

MUNICIPAL UPDATES

COLORADO SPRINGS

March is National Women’s History Month, and the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum is proud to join organizations across the country in commemorations that examine the vital role of women in American history. Learn more at tinyurl.com/yc2yy2nf.

GYPSUM

Gypsum’s Spring Eggstravaganza will take place 5-7 p.m. April 16 at the Gypsum Library, Rec Center, and Town Hall/Library offering egg hunts, crafts, the Spring Bonnet or Hat Contest, and pictures with your favorite bunny.

LAKEWOOD

Learn about the candidates running to fill the vacant city council seats in Ward

3 and Ward 4. The City of Lakewood has posted candidate questionnaires online, tinyurl.com/3tnbywdu, to inform voters about how the candidates would approach serving on city council. Ballots have been mailed, and drop-off boxes are open for the March 25 special election.

Lakewood Parks is hosting an open house for people interested in volunteering. The free event will take place from 5-7 p.m. March 19 at the Bear Creek Lake Park Visitor Center. The city seeks volunteers for garden projects, educational programs, park patrols, trail maintenance, wildlife monitoring, habitat restoration, and campground hosting.

SALIDA

The City of Salida Public Art Commission is seeking unique and distinctive art to beautify the many trash and utility boxes

placed within the city through the selection of original designs from area artists. Artists are encouraged to steer away from common iconography that is already heavily used within Salida and explore original avenues. The use of bright and vibrant colors is highly encouraged, and the design should add to the vibrancy of our cityscape and create a sense of community and connection. Learn more at tinyurl.com/4bnre3pw.

The City of Salida Arts & Culture Department will welcome artist Ed Haddaway for a reception for the newly installed public art sculpture “Early Morning Walk.” The public is invited to meet at the sculpture at 3 p.m. April 4 where the artist will talk about his process.





PHOTOS BY KEVIN BOMMER

Rep. Gabe Evans, left, and Sen. Michael Bennet meet with local officials from Colorado during the NLC Congressional City Conference this month in Washington, D.C.

Colorado well represented in Washington, D.C.

By Kevin Bommer, CML executive director

Nearly 100 municipal officials descended on Washington, D.C., from March 9-12 for the National League of Cities (NLC) Congressional City Conference. The conference is focused on federal issues and advocating for municipal interests at the federal level. About 3,000 people from around the country participated in the conference.

The conference featured several notable speakers including Vice President JD Vance; Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser; NLC President and Athens, Ohio, Mayor Steve Patterson; International

Municipal Lawyers Association (IMLA) Executive Director Amanda Karras; EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin; and Maryland Governor Wes Moore. After three days of conference work, more than 1,000 attendees headed to Capitol Hill to advocate directly with senators and representatives on municipal issues.

Colorado attendees had the option to participate in special separate events. On March 11, more than 80 Colorado members met over lunch with Reps. Diana DeGette, Joe Neguse, Lauren Boebert, Jason Crow, and Gabe Evans. The next morning, a group of around 80

met with Sens. Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper.

With all the critical issues impacting municipalities, the opportunity to advocate directly for everyone back home is vital. While ensuring Colorado's voice remains heard in Washington, attendees were also able to network with each other and their counterparts from other states and bring new ideas and perspectives back home.

This fall, NLC's City Summit will be held from Nov. 19-22 in Salt Lake City, Utah. For more information on NLC and upcoming conferences, please go to www.nlc.org.

Apply now for a scholarship from CMCA

Scholarships for clerk education are available from the Colorado Municipal Clerks Association (CMCA). These funding opportunities defray the costs for clerk education.

To be eligible, applicants must be a member of CMCA by March 31 of the current year. Municipal clerks and those deputy clerks fulfilling the functions and bearing the responsibility of the municipal clerk receive first priority in consideration of scholarship awards. The scholarship funding program attempts to assist financially as many applicants as possible, therefore no full scholarships will be awarded. Scholarship awards

will be for actual education/conference expenses only.

DEADLINES

- Scholarship applications for the International Institute of Municipal Clerks Annual Conference are due April 3
- Scholarship applications for CML Annual Conference are due May 30
- Scholarship applications for the CMCA Institute are due May 30
- Scholarship applications for the CMCA Annual Conference are due Sept. 6

More information is available on the CMCA website, tinyurl.com/mtxutk5w.

Upcoming tax data reporting deadline

House Bill 24-1050 requires all local taxing jurisdictions to report specified information about their local lodging tax and sales/use tax on building or construction materials to the Colorado Department of Revenue (DOR) by June 15. DOR is required to publish that data, as updated by local governments, twice per year. DOR plans to distribute a survey to local governments to facilitate the initial collection of this data, so please keep an eye out for and complete that survey in addition to sending DOR the required documentation.

Join us for the 2025

CML ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Sharpen your skills

alongside Colorado's most talented

local government leaders



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CML LEGAL CORNER



Responding to challenges to municipal penalties

By Robert Sheesley, CML general counsel

Can municipalities assign penalties for violating municipal ordinances that could potentially be more severe than the penalty for a similar state crime? The Colorado Supreme Court is considering that question in three separate cases involving common municipal offenses like theft and trespass. At the same time, the General Assembly is considering a bill (House Bill 25-1147) that seeks to significantly reduce potential municipal penalties.

Municipal courts alleviate pressure on state courts and provide localized, efficient adjudication of minor offenses, which is more convenient for defendants, victims, and witnesses. Sensationalized and inaccurate stories of municipal court penalties, however, have permeated recent conversations, such as a 90-day sentence for theft of a sandwich (the theft was more substantial, and sentencing involved other considerations). The reality in many of these examples is more nuanced and involves detailed criminal case histories, judicial discretion, and legitimate expectations for community safety.

EQUAL PROTECTION

Both the federal and state constitutions guarantee the right of equal protection — laws can't distinguish between similarly situated people on an arbitrary basis. Federally and in 45 of 50 states, this theory doesn't prohibit charging someone with a crime that has a more severe penalty than a crime with a lesser penalty when the same conduct is involved. Colorado's courts, however, have taken the view that different state-level criminal offenses with different penalties can't rely on the same actions without some distinction.

The effort to restrict municipal authority is asking the courts and General Assembly to require that penalties for municipal offenses mirror penalties for similar state-level

offenses. These advocates view the choice between the state offense and municipal offense as unjust, asking, "Why should a person's potential criminal sentence be different based on which side of Sheridan Boulevard they're arrested on?"

In our view, there is no equal protection problem. Colorado's view of equal protection has only ever been applied between two state crimes, never between a municipal ordinance and a similar state law. Moreover, the municipal crime has an additional element — commission in the municipality — that distinguishes it from the state crime.

Most importantly, no one is treated unequally by a municipality's decision to provide for a potentially more severe penalty for the violation of a municipal ordinance. The equal protection clause requires only a rational basis for such distinctions. A municipality experiencing significant criminal activity that has negative impacts on community safety and local businesses provides that rational basis.

HOME RULE

Art. XX, Sec. 6 of the Constitution grants home rule municipalities the power to control local matters, including "[t]he imposition, enforcement and collection of fines and penalties for the violation ... of any ordinance adopted in pursuance of the charter." HB25-1147 represents the state's attempt to declare how this power is a matter of statewide concern.

HB25-1147 claims it is justified by "sentencing disparities" and a need "to avoid irrational, unjust, and excessive punishments." This legislative statement to ensure "equal treatment" in municipal and state courts is intended to justify aggressive overreach into a matter of local concern. Fortunately, the state Supreme Court isn't bound by that declaration when it comes to home rule municipalities.

There is ample reason for the Court to affirm that municipal penalties remain a matter of strictly local concern. Foremost, when it comes to constitutional treatment of the issue, Art. XX, § 6 is very clear about penalties for municipal ordinance violations. And even though the General Assembly claims to be ensuring "equal treatment," as explained above, this situation involves no unequal treatment.

Historically, Colorado laws have consistently allowed great discretion for municipalities to determine their own penalties. There are limited exceptions like intruding on state authority over felonies or certain subjects (e.g., DUIs or red-light cameras). But municipal courts are governed by different statutes and rules of procedure, and courts have refused to force municipalities to align with state sentencing requirements.

The state Supreme Court also will consider the need for statewide uniformity and the impacts of local laws outside of the municipalities. Municipal ordinance violations only occur in one location — the municipality — and are committed by people who come into the municipality and intentionally commit a crime. There simply is no impact elsewhere in the state. Uniformity, which isn't a virtue by itself, likely wouldn't be achieved because the outcomes of criminal cases depend on many factors, the least impactful of which is the maximum potential penalty.

It will be some time before we know whether HB25-1147 becomes law or whether the state Supreme Court sides with cities in the pending cases. Until then, municipal courts will continue to fairly administer justice within the boundaries of the constitution and the local laws that define their jurisdictions.

This column is not intended and should not be taken as legal advice. Municipal officials are always encouraged to consult with their own attorneys.



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