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TO: Mayor, Council, City Manager, and City Attorney

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to attend the National League of Cities' 14th Annual Leadership Summit, September 21-23, 2006. This year's Summit was held at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort, Colorado Springs, CO.

The 3-day session was facilitated by author Peter Block, leadership scholar Allan Wallis, national civic leader Christopher Gates, and Center for Creative Leadership trainers Pam Shipp and Michael Gardner.

Thursday Morning, September 21

Meeting of the Leadership Training Council:

1. National League of Cities (NLC) staff person Janice Pauline provided an update on some of the changes taking place at our trade association. NLC is undergoing a cultural change from one that is process driven to one that is issue driven. Emergency preparedness, affordable housing, and public finance will be the new staff issue work groups. These changes will affect the future types of Leadership Training Institute (LTI) seminars that are offered.
2. LTI will adopt a Diamond level award which is an ongoing award that needs to be maintained by meeting a new mentoring requirement and by taking 4 LTI credits every year.
3. Chicago Alderman Gene Schulter reported on the 2007 Annual Leadership Summit that will be held in Chicago at the Union League Club, September 27-29.

Thursday Afternoon, September 21

Topic: Building our Learning Community
Facilitator: Pam Shipp

Topic: Creating a New Culture: Changing Our Ideas of Leadership
Facilitator: Peter Block

Shipp is a Senior Program Associate at the Center for Creative Leadership at the Colorado Springs campus. She is also a faculty member of the Leadership at the Peak and the Foundations of Coaching.

Block is an author, consultant and citizen of Cincinnati, Ohio. His work is about empowerment, stewardship, chosen accountability, and the reconciliation of community.

Here are the most interesting/relevant statements made by the facilitators at the afternoon session:

1. How can we deal with the “fragmented” nature of our communities? Better leaders and more funding are not always the answer.
2. We need to change the nature of the conversation and the way we engage citizens. We should not merely treat citizens as customers.
3. Give citizens the opportunity to meet in small groups and speak about a problem without looking for answers or solutions.
4. Create a culture of accountability.
5. You don't always need consensus.

Friday Morning, September 22

Topic: Leading in Challenging Times: The Role of Adaptive Leadership

Facilitator: Allan Wallis

Wallis is an Associate Professor of Public Policy at the Graduate School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado at Denver, where he directs the Ph.D. program as well as the concentration in local government. He currently teaches courses in leadership and ethics, urban policy, growth management policy, and innovation in public management.

Wallis made an excellent presentation on the leadership lessons exhibited by Sir Ernest Shackleton during his expedition to the South Pole. This explorer's 1914-1916 *Endurance* expedition is one of the greatest survival stories of all time.

How did Ernest Shackleton use “adaptive” leadership to bring his men home alive and what can we learn from his experience?

According to Wallis, here are the leadership lessons to be learned from Shackleton:

1. Know when you're stuck in the ice. Don't confuse an adaptive challenge with a technical challenge.
2. Develop a group or team identity to meet the challenge...make every individual responsible for the solution.
3. Frame a Winning Attitude... Bring a realistic sense of optimism to your task and

share that optimism with others you work with. Optimism is a learned behavior.

4. Develop a Vision... Reframe the situation to provide a "clear and elevating vision" of a positive outcome to your efforts.
5. Deal with Conflict Constructively... Address challenges to your authority in a manner that maintains all of the resources that you need.
6. Form a Bold Strategy: a strategy whose risks are in proportion to the challenge that you face.
7. Practice Going to the Balcony... Keep clear the distinction between self and role.
8. Form an Inner Council in Whom You Can Confide... Use your council as a sounding board and include your critics.
9. Build a Personal Sanctuary... Develop and maintain stress reduction practices.

Friday Afternoon, September 22

Topic: Shackleton's Crossing: An Experience of Leadership and Commitment
Facilitator: Michael Gardner

Michael Gardner has been an adjunct faculty member at the Center for Creative Leadership for the past seven years. He works with senior-level executives in industry and government from around the world in the Center's flagship program, Leadership at The Peak (LAP).

This was an "experiential" learning activity. We broke up into groups and conducted team-building exercises. While interesting, I found it to be more relevant for a business or other group that works together on a regular basis.

Saturday Morning, September 23

Topic: The Restoration of Community: Sharing the Public Agenda
Facilitator: Christopher T. Gates

Gates is the immediate past president of the National Civic League, the nation's oldest organization advocating for the issues of community democracy that was founded in 1894 by civic reformers including Teddy Roosevelt and Louis Brandeis.

Gates addressed the importance of citizen participation. According to Gates, "Citizen participation in political, community, and neighborhood affairs is critical to the creation and maintenance of a strong, vibrant community. Citizen participation is at once the most and least controversial issue of democratic theory today."

Here are some of the interesting observations by Gates:

1. We can't blame low voter turnout on apathy. Instead, people don't vote because they don't think that their vote makes a difference.
2. We also have a victim culture. People don't think that they can control their future.
3. Those individuals who can be counted on to vote are part of the WW II generation.
4. Voting participation is a coming crisis in the US.
5. The other crisis is the declining involvement in clubs and organizations.

Gates also discussed Robert Putnam's book "Bowling Alone." Here are Gates' observations:

1. As a nation, we see a decline in trust, reciprocity, and "Social Capital."
2. Social capital exists, can be measured, and can be created.
3. In northern Italy, communities with high social capital, have higher levels of health, higher quality of life, and democracy functions at a higher level.
4. There are two kinds of social capital. "Bridging Capital" is creating relationships with people who are not similar and/or who do not share similar beliefs. This is declining. "Bonding Capital" is creating relationships with people who are like you or who share similar beliefs. This is the norm in our nation today.
5. The biggest causes for the decline of social capital are television and long work commutes.

Conclusion

The highlights of the Summit were the presentations by Wallis and Gates. I thought they were most relevant to my role as a City elected official.

I would like to thank the taxpayers of the City of Troy for providing the revenue that allows their elected officials to attend these types of educational sessions.