

In-Service Training Award in Memory of Clarence E. Ridley

ICMA's In-Service Training Award is presented to the administrator or administrators who have developed and implemented highly effective in-service training programs for local government employees. This award was established in memory of Clarence E. Ridley, a pioneer in the field of local government management. This year, ICMA presents the award to James L. Ley, assistant county manager of Clark County, Nevada.

"... A dynamic, service-driven organization, built on community values and needs, continuously improving the way local government does business" is the community vision set forth by the Clark County Board of Commissioners and Assistant County Manager James Ley. As one step toward achieving that goal, in 1992, Mr. Ley started from within the organization to create the county's Leadership Forum.

The Clark County Leadership Forum is a training program that identifies and develops future leaders from within the ranks of Clark County staff. Each year in October, all county employees other than department heads and assistant department heads complete an application form that could qualify them for the program. Employees are asked to identify their personal and professional goals, to indicate their **understanding of the county's Quality in Service Strategy**, and to explain why they should be considered for the program. **Other criteria** include a demonstration of personal responsibility and a strong commitment to achieving excellence in local government service.

Recognizing the importance of encouraging diversity throughout Clark County government and seeing a chance to foster a sense of



James L. Ley

community among disparate departments and staff, Mr. Ley designed the Leadership Forum to help break down traditional departmental barriers, and enhance interdepartmental communication and resource sharing. His

goal was to assemble a diverse group of employees from as many departments and occupations as possible.

After careful screening, 25 to 30 class members, consisting, for example, of firefighters, building inspectors, zoning specialists, management analysts, and secretaries, are appointed by the Quality In-Service Steering Committee. In January, the new class gathers for a three-day "Advance" retreat during which they get to know one another, study the Clark County mission statement, and form teams within which they will select class projects to be completed by year's end. In addition to working on their individual projects, Leadership Forum participants spend one Friday each month developing specific leadership skills and learning about the responsibilities of each Clark County department. The program concludes annually with a graduation ceremony at which participants share the results of their class projects with the board of county commissioners, the

continued on page 14, column 2

ership and professionalism. His efforts to encourage public participation and establish community education and team-building programs have resulted in a model of council-manager government respected by city employees, officials, and citizens. His commitment to excellence has inspired many and has earned him recognition as this year's Mark E. Keane Award recipient.

Ley from page 4

county manager, and department heads.

The Leadership Forum's success is clear; over 80 percent of participants from the first class have received promotions, a benefit not anticipated when the program was initiated.

Participants indicate that, because they gained a broader understanding of the overall county mission, they are more committed to their work, find it easier to serve customers, and receive greater personal satisfaction from working for the county. Thanks to the recently developed Leadership Forum Alumni Association, the city now has a pool of more than 100 past participants who can be called upon when employees with a broader understanding of the community vision are needed.

These former forum members continue to serve as valuable county resources and have provided such countywide services as inaugurating the Clark County Government Center, operating the Rumor Control Hotline during potential emergency situations, and hosting the National Association of Counties meeting.

The Clark County Leadership Forum has become one of many invaluable tools used by James Ley to create an organizational culture that is com-

mitted to high-quality service.

- By recognizing the value of human resources and the development of the potential that exists at all levels of the organization, he will continue to break down barriers among county departments, increase the sharing of resources, and develop synergy among employees working as a team toward a common vision.
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Creech from page 5

- plumbing and carpentry tools and medical equipment for Jinja.

The Guelph delegation also initiated a number of environmental projects, including development of proper inventory control for the newly created tree nursery, training for staff and community, and designation of a project coordinator. With tree nursery sales increasing 700 percent since 1994, the program is expected to be self-sufficient in five years.

Delegates identified the Walukuba Center, located in the northeastern section of Jinja, for restoration. A committee of Guelph council and staff worked with the community throughout the renovation process to enhance the community's identity and improve its daycare system, welfare counseling, and leisure activities. Completed in 1995, the center is available as a meeting place, a facility for social and recreational activities, and a focal point for politicians' interaction with the community.

Under Mr. Creech's guidance and leadership, the Jinja-Guelph partnership has afforded Guelph a unique opportunity to share its resources and learn about the challenges facing municipalities such as Jinja. By encourag-