

No Standing News

Since we have no standing, we stand with those left standing.

Volume I

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WHO WILL WIN THE “LAZY PUBLIC OFFICIAL” AWARD FOR YEAR 2000?

Contest ends at 9:00 p.m. on
June 28th

Meramec Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) and the Missouri Municipal League (MML) (the City of Rolla pays dues to both organizations) are having their annual workshop for all elected and appointed public officials on **Wednesday, June 28, 2000**, at the MRPC office in St. James from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Registration costs only \$10 and they furnish supper. They give a briefing on the Sunshine Law, the Hancock Amendment, conflict of interest laws, local revenue and other subjects ALL elected and appointed officials in this county need to know but typically don't. Most Rolla officials manage to maintain a state of abject ignorance of all of these laws through multiple terms in office.

If this year runs true to form, no elected or appointed officials in the City of Rolla will attend. Not one of them attended last year. What is it about the subjects covered in the workshop that elected officials in Rolla think they don't need to learn? Were they born with this knowledge? Did they expect to acquire expertise on all these subjects by osmosis when their newly elected rear ends touched their council chairs? Judging from their performance at every council meeting, that method didn't work. Is there a wholly unjustified arrogance in Rolla officials that keeps them from

admitting that they need to learn more to serve their constituents better? Or are they afraid to go and find out that they are wrong and others are right—that they are breaking a number of laws with their retroactive sales tax, closed meetings to open bids and Sunshine Law violations—and they just don't want it confirmed?

It wouldn't be fair to neglect all the other elected officials in Phelps County who are in a dead heat with city council members for the title, “**Lazy Elected Official of the Year**”. The PCRMC Board and Administrator, the Rolla School Board and Administration, the Phelps County Commissioners, all other county elected officials, the Phelps County Water District Board, the Library Board, the “It's-Not-Really-a-Park-Board” Advisory Committee, the Royal Municipal Utilities Board (Oh, Momma, do they ever need it!) and on and on. The list is long and they are all very needy people. They NEED to start following our laws before they ask for our votes, our support and our money. Notice that we didn't include Mayor Morgan in this list. It would be a waste of time and \$10 of city tax money for Morgan to attend. It's all information he wouldn't like and would never accept... unless, of course, Morgan thinks they could show him some slick way to gull the voters of Rolla into passing another multi-million dollar bond issue to build a road into his subdivision.

In the meantime, why don't we all go to the workshop instead and see what they're missing. It costs only \$10 and they feed you supper. Better yet, contact someone you think would make a better elected official than the ones we have now and take them with you. The

announcement said: “**The workshop is designed to inform elected officials and key local government employees of the mandated duties and responsibilities of their various positions; it will also help employees improve efficiency and better understand issues that affect local governments.**” Wouldn't it just be mind-blowing to have someone run for public office who could honestly say, “Before I filed for this office I took the time and effort to become informed of the duties and responsibilities of the position I am seeking”? Could it ever replace the popularity of that worn-out but very Rolla cliché, “I want to give something back to the community” (the “something” being their total ignorance of what they're supposed to do). Or the one they don't say but you know is true, “I don't know much about local government (because I've never even been to a public meeting), but after I'm elected someone will tell me how to vote.”

You don't have to be an elected official to go to this workshop. The sponsoring organizations, MRPC and MML are doing this with money they get as dues, which comes from your taxes. That makes it a meeting open to the public. The only thing you need to do is call (573) 265-2993 and let them know you're coming so they will know how many to expect for supper.

We will let you know after June 28th, who shows up and who doesn't—by name and by board position. We will also check to see if those who are running for state and county offices will attend this workshop, or if they, too, think that they can wait until after they sit in those

“magic learning chairs” to find out what the job is about.

Views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of No Standing News, nor of its Editor-in-Chief.

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