Managing Expectations -
It’s Not Rocket Surgery!

Donald J. Theisen, P.E.
Public Works Director
525 sq.mi.
45 square miles of water
Population:
245,000
650 lane miles
Public Works Department Annual Training
September 5, 2012

135 great staff!
PERSONAL INJURY...SERIOUS INJURY
WE HAVE AN OUTSTANDING LAW FIRM THAT CAN COME TO YOU.

Ted B. Lyon
AND ASSOCIATES

Former Senator Ted Lyon served 14 years in the Texas Legislature, protecting the rights of consumers. Senator Lyon was honored 27 times during his tenure, cited as a top legislator by various groups. He remained a practicing attorney while holding office, successfully trying a number of important cases to issue verdict.
Immediately Stop Debt Enforcement

- Emergency Filing (within 24 hrs.)
- Chapter 7 & 13 Filing
- Free Booklet Explaining Bankruptcy
- 24-hour Taped Information 344-6969
- Free Initial Consultation

Stan Cram 696

Rick Harder
“A NAME YOU CAN TRUST”

Ben Dover
Real Estate/State Certified Appraiser/Auctioneer #2441
Norwegian Ice Breaker
Expectation?
Top Public Works Challenges

From American City and County magazine:

- Budget/funding        87%
- Infrastructure Quality 55%
- Public Expectations   45%
- Employee Morale       43%
- Public perception     27%
Really???

Follow
ThePioneer
Press

SEE CLICK FIX »

1755 Selby Ave, on Wheeler St, side 1 person wants this fixed
1755 selby, St Paul, MN

Not enough right turn space to go east on Hwy 55 1 person wants this fixed
Hwy 55 exit off of Hwy 100 North, Hennepin, MN

Speeding cars on Juliet Ave 2 people want this fixed
396 S Macalester St, St Paul, MN

Pedestrian Crosswalk Button Non-Functioning 2 people want this fixed
22nd Ave S, Minneapolis, MN

Pothole damaging 2 people want this fixed
Carleton St, St Paul, MN
Managing Expectations
Principles

1) Understand the Environment
2) Know the Audience
3) Design the Strategy
4) Plan the Tactics
Understand the Environment

#1 Demonizing of Public Service

#2 The “New Normal”
Tough times for the public sector, unions, and employees

- Budget cuts
- Anti–government rhetoric
- Fear of shutdown
- Demonizing of public employees as lazy, overpaid, and inefficient
- Demands to cut salaries and pensions’
- Fear of layoffs
- A demoralized workforce
Why do they hate us?
Historical Causes of the Anti-Government Attack

• A nation born hating government
  – The flight from Europe to America
  – The Boston Tea Party
Ronald Reagan and the Rise of Anti-Government Rhetoric

• “In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.” 1981 First Inaugural Speech.

• “The ten most dangerous words in the English language are: ‘Hi, I'm from the government, and I'm here to help.’” 1988 Speech to the Future Farmers of America.
The Fiscal Crisis of the State: 2008

- Economic collapse and recession led to significant loss of jobs, wealth, and home equity
- Governments lost tax revenues
Bush, Obama, and Rescuing the Economy

- TARP (Troubled Assets Relief Program of 2008)
  - $700 billion
- ARRA (American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009)
  - $787 billion
- GM, Chrysler, AIG
- Bailing out the “too big to fails”
Who is to Blame?
Responding to the Collapse

• It’s the fault of the government
  – Too much spending
  – Too much taxation
  – Too much regulation
Understand the Environment

# 2 The “New Normal”

– Still seen as a “cliché”
– People still EXPECT we will return to old normal with past growth patterns
– Changing demographics driving this
Commission Report to the Legislature
January 12, 2009
Understand the Environment

From Budget Trends Study Commission:

- “Minnesota is currently experiencing a major, long-range demographic shift.”
Understand the Environment

From Budget Trends Study Commission:

• “Demographic and economic factors will lead to lower growth of state tax revenues over the next 25 years.”
Understand the Environment

From Budget Trends Study Commission:

• “Minnesota has a long term structural budget problem, with long term expenditure growth likely to outpace revenue growth.”
Understand the Environment

Tom Gillaspy
MN State Demographer

“The years 2008-2011 mark the entryway into the age of entitlement with Social Security and Medicare. Baby boomers are aging and retiring. We have been making promises to people for 50 years that are now starting to come due.”
Return to Normal?

Figure 3
Continued Growth of 8.3% Per Year Would Not Restore Losses from Recession Until Fiscal Year 2019

$1.2 trillion

Average growth rate 1980-2008

Actual collections

Continued growth of 8.3%

FY = Fiscal Year

Source: CBPP calculations using NASBO revenue data.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities | cbpp.org
Know the Audience

#1 What do customers want?

#2 Response to change
Know the Audience

#1 What do customers want?

Highway Departments can count on two “wants”

- Smooth roads
- Bare roads after a snow
Know the Audience

#2 Response to change

Need to understand how people go thru change – especially if it will affect them personally
Know the Audience

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PHASES</th>
<th>I IMPACT</th>
<th>II RECOIL-TURMOIL</th>
<th>III ADJUSTMENT</th>
<th>IV RECONSTRUCTION</th>
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<td>Time Perspective</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Past</td>
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<td>Future</td>
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<td>Rage-Anxiety</td>
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<td>More Focused Exploration</td>
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Energy Level

Washington County
Design the Strategy

#1 Need a foundation with Board/Council

#2 What level of involvement will you embrace?
Design the Strategy

1# Foundation with Board/Council (and public)

• Need to build this with “little” things – take care of small issues
  – If you can’t handle small; why would they trust you on big?
Design the Strategy
• Establish a good relationship with your Board
• Always be available to each Board member
• Never embarrass the Board or a member in public
• Never show animosity to a Board or member
• Always give thanks and praise to the Board
• Not ask the Board what to do on an engineering issue
• Treat any Board referred complaint to you as top priority
• Provide a professional recommendation
Learn not every comment needs a response
• Not allow a bad vote to be taken
Design the Strategy

#2 What level of involvement will you embrace?

- Not give lip service, but embrace
- CTS Report 11-24 “Suggested Design and Management Techniques for Enhancing Public Engagement in Transportation Policymaking” excellent resource
## IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Participation Goal</th>
<th>Promise to the Public</th>
<th>Example Techniques</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>We will keep you well informed and acknowledge your concerns, answers, and resources.</td>
<td>Focus groups, surveys, discussions, public meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult</td>
<td>We’ll consult with you to understand your concerns and develop realistic options.</td>
<td>Workshops, focus groups, surveys, consultations, interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involve</td>
<td>We’ll work closely with you to incorporate your concerns into our plans and policies.</td>
<td>Public meetings, stakeholder engagement, participatory planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>We’ll work with you to develop and implement solutions that best meet the needs of all stakeholders.</td>
<td>Citizen advocacy, community meetings, decision-making processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empower</td>
<td>We’ll empower you to have a strong voice in decision-making that affects you and create opportunities for you to contribute to the development of policies and decisions.</td>
<td>Public forums, community dialogues, participatory decision-making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Increasing Level of Public Impact

1. Inform
2. Consult
3. Involve
4. Collaborate
5. Empower
Plan the Tactics

#1 Social Media

#2 Using Technical Analysis
Plan the Tactics

#1 Social Media

• Need to go where people are, don’t expect them to come to you
How we use social media
How we use social media
How we use social media
Plan the Tactics

Generations Online 2010: Summary of Findings

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<th></th>
<th>90-100%</th>
<th>80-89%</th>
<th>70-79%</th>
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Key: % of internet users in each generation who engage in this online activity

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Millennials Ages 18-33</th>
<th>Gen X Ages 34-45</th>
<th>Younger Boomers Ages 46-55</th>
<th>Older Boomers Ages 56-64</th>
<th>Silent Generation Ages 65-73</th>
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Washington County
Plan the Tactics

#2 Using technical analysis

The great myth:
Thorough, rigorous, technical analysis on public sector problems leads to agreement
Plan the Tactics

The hard truth:

Thorough, rigorous, technical analysis done in the open on problems affecting a diverse public leads to disagreement, lobbying, demands, posturing, polarization – not Agreement.
Plan the Tactics

Use tactics that present technical analysis:

• So it tells a story
• Gets people to see this affects their quality of life
• Doing nothing is not an option
Transportation

Average Pavement Condition Index (PCI)

2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007

73 71 74 75 70 78

Why is this measure important?

Maintaining pavement in a good condition is recognized as important from a standpoint of both user satisfaction (no one likes to drive on a rough road) and long-term performance (properly maintained roads last longer.)

What will it take to maintain?

Our Goals are:
• Maintain an overall system at a PCI of 72
• Maintain roads with a minimum PCI of 40
• Use PCI to create a cost effective pavement preservation program

Tracking the PCI and identifying roads that fall below the minimum threshold can be used to determine the effectiveness of the pavement preservation program and the adequacy of funding resources.

Washington County
Managing Expectations

Maybe it is Rocket Surgery…

• Understand the Environment
• Know the Audience
• Design the Strategy
• Plan the Tactics