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# ASPA BUZZ

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Vol. XXXIV No. 6  
April 2009

### APRIL LUNCHEON

**Thursday, April 2, 2009**

12:00 noon

**Auditorium of the State Office Building**

### Health System Reform in Utah

**JOHN T. NIELSEN, Executive Director  
Utah Health Insurance Exchange (GOED)**

The United States spends more per capita on health care than any other country, and costs are rising rapidly. Consequently, the number of uninsured people continues to rise as well. The issues are daunting:

- Uneven coverage; unequal access
- No evidence base to address variations in practice patterns and spending levels
- Paperwork at the expense of patient care
- Medical errors and a tort system in need of reform
- Payment systems that don't make sense; misaligned incentives

Health care providers face a regulatory morass and private payers subsidize the cost of care for the publicly insured. There is a looming tipping-point as need begins to surpass the capacity to provide care.

The system is broken, but Utah is developing a strategy for a way forward. Please plan to join ASPA on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, for this important luncheon.

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Please make your reservations early. The luncheon will be catered. Reservations or cancellations must be received no later than Monday, March 30th. No shows will be billed. Limited parking is available—please carpool or ride public transportation where possible.

The cost of the luncheon is \$13.00 for ASPA members, \$15.00 for nonmembers, and \$8.00 for students. Cash or checks are accepted.

Please call the Center for Public Policy & Administration, University of Utah, at 581-6493 or e-mail [jrandall@cpga.utah.edu](mailto:jrandall@cpga.utah.edu) for reservations.

## ASPA MARCH LUNCHEON

### Working 4 Utah – Is it Working?

by Soulee Stroud & Mike Hansen

The four-day workweek pilot program that was implemented by the State of Utah reached its halfway point in February. ASPA convened a panel to discuss alternative work schedules as well as the early findings and lessons learned from Utah's experiment.

Alternative work schedules are a growing trend in the workplace. Professor Lori Wadsworth (BYU's Romney Institute of Public Management) provided an overview of historical trends relating to work schedules, and presented her research in this area. Her findings show that roughly 53% of cities have implemented some type of alternative work schedule. Interestingly, the highest concentration of these is found in the Western states.



Professor Lori Wadsworth

Professor Wadsworth's conclusion is that there are five elements to consider when creating an alternative work schedule:

- **People.** While there are many reasons behind the attempt to adjust a work schedule, the most significant impact in most cases will be on the employees.
- **Purpose.** The purpose behind adjusting the work schedule must be made clearly and frequently. The most common reason cited by survey responders was to improve morale and to improve work-life balance.
- **Process.** Strong consideration should be made as to the level of employee participation, incorporating the experience of others, developing a pilot program, being flexible and fair, technology implications, how to adjust leave and holiday policies, and other legal issues.
- **Performance.** On average performance improves, but the impact of a new schedule can't be quantified unless the entity can measure its productivity before and after the change. (Professor Wadsworth noted that Utah is one of the few states that effectively measures productivity.)
- **Perceptions.** The most common perception of how an adjustment is received is that there are no drawbacks. Other common perceptions include an improved work-life balance, increased scheduling conflicts (if not consistent), and adjusting to the fatigue of a longer workday.

Utah's initiative was implemented to address issues in four different, yet interrelated areas (energy, employees, environment, and extended service). The panel consisted of representatives that spoke to each of those areas.

**Energy Impact.** (*John Harrington, Department of Administrative Services*)

- Early energy usage data indicates that ½ of the buildings in the study are achieving 10%-20%+ energy usage reductions
- \$203,177 reduction in custodial service contracts this year
- Energy savings will improve with an employee-awareness campaign

**Employee Impact.** (*Jamie Nagle and Casey Parry, Dept of Human Resource Management*)

- 70% of affected employees prefer the 4/10 schedule (up from 56%)
- Employee turnover rates have decreased slightly
- Employee absenteeism has decreased

**Environmental Impact.** (*Mike Hansen, Governor's Office of Planning & Budget*)

- Estimated reduction of 12,652 metric tons of greenhouse emissions produced annually (this is equivalent to taking 2,300 cars off the road for one year)
- Estimated reduction of 744,000 gallons of gasoline consumed annually



L-R Clayton Fulton, John Harrington, Mike Hansen, Jamie Nagle, and Casey Parry

**Extended Service Impact.** (*Mike Hansen, et al.*)

- Agencies report no decrease in their productivity measurements
- Agency customer service survey results are similar to periods prior to the initiative
- Utilization of Utah.gov web services continues to increase
- Number of calls to the Working 4 Utah hotline have decreased substantially
- DMV and driver's license wait times have improved

For more information on alternative work schedules and Utah's initiative, please refer to the reports at:

[http://www.utah.gov/governor/news\\_media/article.html?article=1724](http://www.utah.gov/governor/news_media/article.html?article=1724)

Professors Rex L.Facer, II and Lori Wadsworth's Research:  
<http://rop.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/28/2/166>

Check out the new Utah Chapter website: [www.cppa.utah.edu/aspa](http://www.cppa.utah.edu/aspa).  
 Bookmark this page so you can keep up-to-date on chapter activities!

## COUNCIL CORNER

Matt Dumont  
Salt Lake County Metro Jail  
ASPA Council President-Elect

### Prisoner Programs—What is the Benefit?

Crime is expensive! Just how expensive is a hard number to quantify. When you consider the resources used to fight crime (law enforcement), prosecute and defend criminal cases, and punish criminals (jails, prisons, probation and parole), the numbers are staggering. Now add other related costs to the equation: civil court cases, insurance, medical, substance abuse treatment, and lack of resources elsewhere (education, for example) and the numbers go straight to mind blowing.

The administrators at the Salt Lake County Metro Jail decided to take a more active role in doing something about it. In January 2007, evidence-based programs targeting specific problems were implemented at Metro. In August 2008, the Metro Jail Programs Division assessed the effect these programs had on the recidivism rate (the rate at which released prisoners returned to jail at various time intervals). While the outcomes are relatively new and further tracking will be necessary, the results are promising. This article will look at the two largest of the new programs: Adult High School Education and Life Skills.

First, a control group of prisoners who had not participated in programming was identified. Within one year of release from jail, 69.1% of the control group was re-arrested at least once—seven out of ten prisoners! That means a lot of the same people are using resources over and over again. As a side note, Salt Lake County is right on par with the rest of the country.

The jail offers both General Educational Development (GED) completion and high school diploma programs through the Granite Peaks arm of the Granite School District. In 2007, a total of 185 GEDs and high school diplomas were earned in the Metro Jail. The recidivism rate of the high school completers was more than cut in half. GED earners returned at a 32% rate and prisoners who earned their high school diplomas returned at a 36% rate.

The Life Skills Program is a month-long program which focuses on re-integrating prisoners back into the community. Topics covered in the program include: parenting, personal health, personal finance, social impact, decision making, employment, stress management, anger management, and CPR/First Aid certification. In 2007, 138 prisoners completed the program. Life Skills is taught in partnership between the Sheriff's Office and a number of other community organizations including: Department of Workforce Services, Granite School District, Salt Lake Valley Health Department, Salt Lake County Library, and a number of very dedicated volunteers. One year after being released, only 43% of the Life Skills graduates returned to jail.

Jail programs not only serve the prisoners who participate, but also the community as a whole. Prisoners who address problems by participating in programs during their incarceration have a much better chance of succeeding in society after they get out. They often go from being

burdens on society to tax-paying, productive members. In a time when resources are strained, budgets are shrinking, and jail beds are ever-scarce, we must do something to take people out of the system. Investing in jail programs is a proactive way to do just that.

### **Attention Students and New Professionals! Join ASPA at a Discounted Rate until March 31, 2009**

The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) supports students and future public service professionals by providing networking and career advancement opportunities, offering reduced membership dues and conference registration fees, exposing you to cutting-edge research that cannot be found anywhere else, and giving you useful advice on advancing your career.

Students and New Professionals (graduated less than two years ago) can join ASPA at a discounted rate of \$50.00 until March 31, 2009, for a maximum of two years. This includes chapter membership, *PAR* and *PA Times* (mailed and online), and discounts on publications and events. To join, go to <http://www.aspanet.org/scriptcontent/student.cfm>.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK, MAY 4-10, 2009**

Public Service Recognition Week is a time set aside to better inform Americans about the broad variety of services provided by government. The week is also an opportunity to show appreciation to public employees at the federal, state, county, and local levels who ensure that our government is the best in the world.

Each year the Utah Chapter of ASPA requests nominations for several service awards. These awards will be presented at the luncheon on May 7th. The ASPA Council would appreciate your taking a few moments and considering whom you might nominate. Please go to [www.cppa.utah.edu/aspa](http://www.cppa.utah.edu/aspa) and click on AWARDS for a nomination form.

- Senator Arthur V. Watkins Distinguished Service Award for an Elected Official, which honors elected officials who, through exceptional commitment, skill and integrity, served the public with special distinction.
- Dr. G. Homer Durham Distinguished Service Award for an Appointed Official, which honors appointed officials who have served the public with honor and integrity.

- Dr. F. Ted Hebert Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding Contributions to Public Administration, which honors individuals that have made significant contributions to public administration through academia or as a public citizen.
- Boards and Commissions Award of Excellence, for a board or commission whose members have exhibited community service, work to support the common good, are proactive in decision-making, and facilitate public participation in governmental processes.

**Nominations should be sent to:**

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University of Utah  
260 S Central Campus Dr Rm 214  
Salt Lake City, UT 84112-9154

Fax: 801-585-5489

E-mail: [jrandall@cpga.utah.edu](mailto:jrandall@cpga.utah.edu)

### ***PAR* Seeks Articles for Special Issue**

Editors of the special issue of *Public Administration Review (PAR)*, **The Future of Public Administration in 2020**, invite article submissions. Individuals are encouraged to submit articles in two specific areas: Future Search and How Do We Get There.

In the area of Future Search, ten authors, a mix of academics and practitioners with different areas of expertise, will be chosen to write original essays envisioning public administration in 2020. Authors will come from the public, nonprofit, and academic worlds.

In the area of How Do We Get There, ten additional articles will be selected for a second independent section which will feature original research with serious well reasoned analysis on the utility and further potential of strategic planning/management approaches in government around the world. Articles will move beyond visions for the future and talk about the strengths, limitations, and future potential of strategic planning/management systems in strengthening and improving governance. The deadline for abstracts is March 30, 2009. Click [here](#) for more detailed information.

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