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# ASPA BUZZ

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A Publication of the American Society for Public Administration, Utah Chapter

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Vol. XXXII No. 4  
January 2007

## The Annual Legislative Preview

Co-sponsored by the  
American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)  
Utah Nonprofits Association (UNA)

**Friday, January 12, 2007**  
**11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Auditorium of the State Office Building  
(north of the State Capitol Building)

ASPA and UNA members and friends are encouraged to attend an extended lunch at the State Office Building Auditorium on **Friday, January 12, 2007 beginning at 11:30 a.m.** Legislative leaders will discuss the upcoming legislative session and answer questions from the audience. This is a wonderful and rare opportunity to get the scoop on what is in store for us. Participants may also have a chance to wield some influence.

Due to limited space, please make your reservations early. The luncheon will be catered. **Reservations or cancellations must be received no later than Tuesday, January 9th. No shows will be billed.**

**Limited parking is available—please carpool where possible or use public transportation.  
Bus Route #23 is in the free fair zone and goes to the Capitol.**

The cost of the luncheon is \$12.00 for ASPA members, students and *BUZZ* Supporters and members of the Utah Nonprofits Association and \$15.00 for nonmembers.

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

## **DECEMBER LUNCHEON**

By Arlene Zortman  
Salt Lake County  
ASPA Council Member

*NOTE: A few paragraphs in the BUZZ can never capture all of the knowledge and wisdom that is dispensed by our luncheon speakers. Members and colleagues are encouraged to attend these activities to receive the full benefit available to participants.*

### **The State Spending Cap**

In 2004, Representative Gregory H. Hughes introduced HB66 which amended state expenditures and debt limitations. This Bill passed during the session. As a brief history to HB66, Rep Hughes mentioned that he was elected into the Legislature at a time when there was a shortfall in State funding and that virtually every item in the State's budget was experiencing a shortfall. By the time agencies had reached their half-year point, they were being asked to reduce their budgets. This occurred in 2002 and only health and human services and public education were exempt from reductions at the half-year mark. This presented a challenge for all administrators. The shortfall occurred when the expected revenues did not arrive and adjustments had to be made. During this time the State almost completely drained the revenues in the Rainy Day Fund and the Highway Fund.

The State of Colorado's spending cap (Taxpayers' Bill of Rights, TABOR) was looked at with an eye toward fashioning a similar bill for Utah. Based on the problems that Colorado encountered, HB66 was finalized to best serve the needs of Utah's citizens. In Utah the base year is looked at with reference to population and inflation to account for a bad year. HB66 looked at sustainability to ensure that State operating budgets continue with current revenues and that the numbers do not change in mid-year for the agencies and that responsible spending limitations are set in place. It was suggested that as much as possible be put in the Rainy Day Fund and that some of the agencies be exempt from the spending cap limit.

In 2002 there were six special sessions held by the Legislature to deal with these shortfalls for the State agencies. Public education and transportation were looked at for exemptions during this time. In 2005, with a \$10 million budget, only 23% of the total budget was subject to the cap. This Bill has the flexibility in dealing with budgets throughout the year and the necessary agency decisions can be made to ensure that the needs of the citizens are sustainable during good times and bad.

When the State has a surplus, there is the ability to look deeper into the critical needs of the State. Rep Hughes mentioned that HB66 is a responsible bill and at the present time, the amount of the budget that is covered under the spending limit is 43.7% of the budget as the Legislature looks toward this next year.

John Nixon, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, mentioned that the State of Utah has a AAA Bond Rating and we are only one of very few states that carry this rating. It has been largely due to the fact that the State has been very conservative with their money and the money is managed well by all the agencies. It is important to ensure

that we maintain this financial stability into the future and 2007 appears to be another good year with regard to revenues. Even during the time of a surplus, it is important to take a balanced approach to State spending and ensure that funds are spent on critical needs.

HB66 allows flexibility in spending within the parameters of the budget and changes can be made which is important to maintain the AAA Bond Rating. Public education, transportation, debt services and capital projects are exempt under this bill, as well as certain program adjustments.

In the past, revenue has been the binding constraint with reference to funding public agency budgets; this year with HB66 in place, appropriations will be the binding constraint. The Governor has put together a good, balanced budget that looks at the limitations. Each agency was asked to look at their budgets and come up with three top priorities and set realistic expectations. It is important to look at needs/services State-wide and balance these needs overall. A spending limit in place helps to control government.

The Governor's priorities for this next year include: public education, economic development, quality of life (roads) and governance (take care of State employees). At the same time the State is facing cuts in federal funding with regard to Medicaid, Title XIX, other grants and programs. Spending caps allow the agencies to look down the road for needs as well as looking at an efficient government. A Performance Management System will look at State efficiencies, program/agency efficiencies, the operation of an agency, and if the programs are meeting the needs of the citizens.

## **COUNCIL CORNER**

By Robert Forbis, MPA, ABD  
University of Utah, Dept. of Political Science  
ASPA Council Member

### **The Construction of an Environmentalist**

What does it mean to be an “environmentalist?” I pose this question because of a recent classroom experience that I believe might shed some light on what exactly is meant by “being an environmentalist.” Let me explain. At the outset of a lecture to 90 or so undergraduates I inquired of them “when I say the word *environmentalist*, what comes to mind?” As expected, the first term expressed by a student was “hippie.” This was followed by other students offering up terms such as: nature lover, hiker, granola eater, Al Gore, nut-job, protester, dirty hippie, hybrid driver, anti-development, eastern politicians, liberal, democrat, etc. etc. When their engagement began to wane, I then asked “What about ranchers and all-terrain-vehicle enthusiasts, snowmobile riders, industrialists and the type? Can they be considered environmentalists too?” A long, silent, pause ensued and was then broken by a student asking “ranchers are environmentalists?” What followed can best be described as an educator's dream: engagement and debate among an auditorium filled with students.

Can it be that as a society our collective knowledge of the term “environmentalist” is informed through the construction of politically left-leaning myths, symbols, beliefs, and

expressions? If this is indeed the case, then I suggest that administrators must ask themselves what affect this type of knowledge construction might have on their environmental decision-making. Is it possible that the administrative treatment of environmental legislation can be effected by the socially constructed knowledge and understanding of what it means to be an environmentalist? I believe it can and that it does. Not only does the phenomenon of socially constructed knowledge effect how administrators view their role as environmental decision-makers and stewards, but I would cautiously contend that this type of knowledge also affects how administrators might interact with environmental stakeholders.

For example, those of us who grew up in the West, or have come to call the West home, have an abiding respect for the land and the wealth of natural resources it supports. Simply stated, our appetite for outdoor adventure or to be “one with nature” is satiated by the landscape in which we live. However, the manner in which we involve ourselves in nature is remarkably varied and, with each type or form of activity, there is a corresponding belief or, shall we say understanding, of what *kind* of environmentalist we might be to others. In turn, how we come to define who is and who is not an environmentalist is informed by a collective presumption premised on the type and/or form of outdoor activity or engagement with nature we participate in.

These definitions, then, are socially accepted as truths to such a degree that environmental policies are designed in ways that seek to create an ideal type of “environmental citizen.” These kinds of environmental policies create what Schneider and Ingram (1997) have described as mechanisms for reinforcing societal perceptions, definitions, myths, and symbols of who is “deserving” and “undeserving” of social benefits and programs<sup>1</sup>. That is to say, for example, that through the design of policy, mechanisms are in place for administrators to interact and/or treat differently those who ride all-terrain vehicles, comparatively speaking, to those who hike with backpacks. The result, according to Schneider and Ingram (1997) and confirmed by Joe Soss (2000), is that the disparity in treatment marginalizes one group’s ability to effectively engage in the decision-making process, democracy, and defeats the intended result of creating ideal type “citizens<sup>2</sup>.” For the purpose of this discussion, my suspicion is that their findings are rather generalizable and would, I believe, operate similarly in defeating the intended purpose of any policy designed to paternally create the ideal type “environmental citizen<sup>3</sup>.”

All of which leads me back to the classroom. Should we be concerned that students of political science enter the classroom with a similarly constructed understanding of environmentalism and what it means to be an environmentalist? Should we be concerned that as educated and trained administrators we might engage the public with a similar construction of knowledge on what is meant by acting or being “environmental?” I believe that for students and administrators alike it is imperative that there be an acknowledgment of, and an accounting for, our own socially constructed knowledge no matter the segment of society targeted by public policy for the purposes of “creating” ideal types of citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> Schneider, Anne Larason and Helen Ingram. 1997. Policy Design for Democracy. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.

<sup>2</sup> Soss, Joe, 2000. Unwanted Claims: The Politics of Participation in the U.S. Welfare System. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

<sup>3</sup> Schneider and Ingram and Soss’s research deals primarily with the creation of “degenerative policy systems” and resulting “paternalist” policy settings and their effects within U.S. welfare systems.

In this regard, I urge caution in the manner in which administrators react to the design of policy in our decision-making and interaction involving environmental stakeholders. I provide this cautionary note because, as my students discovered, the answer to the question of what it means to be an environmentalist, is that regardless of how one engages nature, one engages nature from a perspective of intrinsic enjoyment and, therefore, the answer is that we are all, in our own way, environmentalists.

## **BEE A BUZZ SUPPORTER**

For just a mere \$10.00 per year, you can become a BUZZ Supporter. This helps ASPA cover some of their costs as well as allowing you to attend ASPA events at the member rate (\$12.00 versus \$15.00). Checks should be sent to:

Utah Chapter ASPA  
c/o University of Utah  
Center for Public Policy & Administration  
260 S Central Campus Dr Rm 214  
Salt Lake City, UT 84112-9154

If you are not currently receiving the ASPA BUZZ directly, send your e-mail address to [jrandall@cpga.utah.edu](mailto:jrandall@cpga.utah.edu) and you will be added to our mailing list.

To join the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), go to: [www.aspanet.org](http://www.aspanet.org)

## **ANNOUNCING THE ANNUAL ASPA SERVICE AWARDS**

Each year the Utah Chapter of ASPA requests nominations for several service awards. These awards are presented at the final luncheon of the program year (June). The ASPA Council would appreciate it if you would take a few moments and consider who you might nominate for the following awards. The nomination form is included below.

- **The Senator Arthur V. Watkins Distinguished Service Award** is given to an elected official who, through exceptional commitment, skill and integrity, served the public with special distinction.
- **The Dr. G. Homer Durham Distinguished Service Award** is presented to an appointed official who has served the public with honor and integrity.
- **The Dr. F. Ted Hebert Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding Contributions to Public Administration**, honors individuals that have made significant contributions to public administration through academia or as a public citizen.
- **The Boards and Commissions Award of Excellence** is given to a board or commission, who has exhibited community service, works to support the common good, is proactive in decision-making, and facilitates public participation in governmental processes.

# ANNOUNCING THE ASPA ANNUAL SERVICE AWARDS

## ASPA SERVICE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

I would like to nominate the following individual, board, or commission for an ASPA service award.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip Code

Name of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

The award I think the individual, board, or commission would be eligible for is the:

- 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.

### Reason for nominating this person or organization:

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### Nominations should be sent to:

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

Fax: 801-585-5489