Local Nevada officials gather at Leaders’ Institute

The first workshop of the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Local Leaders’ Institute was held Feb. 23 and 24 at Cooperative Extension’s Washoe County office in Reno.

Twenty-five elected and appointed officials from western Nevada participated. Also participating in the workshop were city council members, county commissioners and top government executives, including county managers and department managers.

The Local Leaders’ Institute introduced the participants to Nevada’s Open Meeting Law, various types of public financing and budgeting processes, and concepts pertaining to the structure of local and state government in Nevada.

The workshop was led by Frederick Steinmann ’02 (economics) ’04M.S. (economics), Extension educator and assistant professor at Cooperative Extension. The special guest presenter for the workshop was Chester Newland, a leading expert on public administration who served as the former advisor to President Lyndon B. Johnson.

According to Steinmann, one of the workshop’s objectives was to reduce conflict between staff and elected/appointed officials over procedural matters pertaining to government management and administration.

“A tension was identified between elected/appointed officials and staff—a tension that ultimately has hurt government efficiency and effectiveness in Nevada,” Steinmann said.

The idea for the workshop grew out of a 2011 survey of the Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association’s membership, conducted by Steinmann and Mike Harper ’73 (history), ’77MPA, a member of the association and former advanced planning program planning manager of the Washoe County Department of Community Development.

The survey, which was funded by the association, asked a series of questions of practicing planners in the state about what skill sets they felt were important as practicing professional planners. Steinmann found that many of the new or current elected and appointed officials did not have all the necessary skills they needed to work efficiently upon taking office.

After reviewing their findings, Steinmann and Harper decided to develop the Local Leaders’ Institute for Nevada, based largely on the efforts of other similar programs in other states, such as those offered by the American Planning Association and the International Economic Development Council.

Tray Abney, director of government relations at The Chamber in Reno-Sparks, attended the workshop and found it to be beneficial.

“I thought it would be a good opportunity to be more immersed in projects and planning on issues that I was always curious about,” Abney said. “I was able to learn the different types of planning and development terms and also how budgets work. I am very engaged in the community and felt that the workshop could help me do my job better, and it did.”

Abney said the workshop proved to be valuable for all in attendance.

“It introduced everyone to each other in the region.” Abney said. “I also think it helped make sure that everyone was on the same page because we were all learning the same concepts, and now we are all able to approach different issues with the same mindset.”

Dagny Stapleton ’11M.A. (land use planning), City of Reno planning commissioner, was impressed by the informational workshop and plans to attend more in the future.

“The workshop provided really insightful information and fantastic guest speakers,” Stapleton said. “Chester Newland was an outstanding guest speaker and to hear first-hand his experience on federal policy was really interesting and a great opportunity to be a part of.”

Cooperative Extension will offer additional Local Leaders’ Institute workshops in Eureka, Nev., and Elko, Nev., in late spring or early summer and in Las Vegas in late summer or early fall.

For more information about the Local Leaders’ Institute, contact Steinmann at steinmannnf@unce.unr.edu.
Cooperative Extension’s Master Gardener Program

Cooperative Extension’s Master Gardener volunteers provide free, research-based horticulture information to Nevadans. They learn advanced plant science skills during at least 50 hours of classroom instruction by University of Nevada Cooperative Extension professionals. After training, Master Gardeners volunteer at least 50 hours a year to pass along their newly acquired knowledge through the media, talks and workshops. They answer phone calls, send out informational materials, develop community gardens and much more. In 2012, nearly 600 Nevada Master Gardeners:

- Provided face-to-face assistance to more than 75,000 contacts.
- Answered more than 12,000 calls and emails.
- Provided more than 54,000 volunteer hours valued at more than $1,176,600.

Nevada Master Gardeners assist with a variety of educational programs, including:

- Grow Your Own, Nevada: Designed to help people discover secrets to gardening in our high-desert climate.
- Community gardens: Teaching, demonstrating and assisting gardeners.
- Junior Master Gardeners: A nationwide program designed to teach youth about gardening.
- Farmers markets
- Community events

For more information on the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program or any other University of Nevada Cooperative Extension program, please visit www.unce.unr.edu.

By Chad Waters, ’99, ’05MBA

Hoppe’s gifts fuel a legacy at KUNR radio

When you see the white 2011 Ford Escape around town adorned with the red, blue and black logos for KUNR 88.7 Reno Public Radio, it’s not just KUNR’s news vehicle, it’s a symbol of how the generosity and passion of one person can fuel a legacy.

The late master pastry chef Wilhelm Hermann Hoppe emigrated from Germany to the United States in 1959 and eventually moved to Carson City, where he became an avid listener to KUNR. When he passed away in January 2007 at age 77, one of the designated beneficiaries of his Wilhelm Hoppe Family Trust was KUNR, which has broadcast from the University of Nevada, Reno since 1963.

Wilhelm Hoppe “believed in investing in education, public information and the arts,” says John Martz, trustee of the Hoppe Family Trust and Wilhelm’s longtime friend. “And Willie loved KUNR. He’d be proud of all you’re doing with the station, and to know he’s part of that.”

The impact on KUNR has been significant. “When we got word in 2008 about a $100,000 gift in the memory of Mr. Hoppe, whom we’d never met, we were quite surprised and so grateful,” says KUNR General Manager David Stipech.

As Martz learned more about KUNR—its needs, plans and importance in the community—the one-time gift evolved into funding several key projects over six years, soon to total a quarter-million dollars as the trust closes this year. The Hoppe Trust funded a $30,000 Audiovault broadcast automation system in January to replace decade-old equipment with advanced, fully digital technology.

Since it hit the streets in 2011, the station’s new fuel-efficient car has helped KUNR’s news team cover city council meetings, the Nevada Legislature, Elko, Lake Tahoe, local events, even fires and other breaking news stories.

— KUNR staff