

APPENDIX 8

THE MISSISSIPPI MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSE

The mission of the Mississippi Municipal League (MML) is to provide the leadership necessary to enable Mississippi's municipal officials to build consensus among themselves, as well as the capacity to influence public policy decisions at the local, state and federal levels of government. In addition, the MML works to strengthen the ability of city and town governments to better serve their citizens.

The MML, a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan League of the over 2,100 municipal leaders, represents the 297 city, town, and village governments in Mississippi. The MML was established in 1931 to improve and assist local governments through legislative advocacy, research, education, and other service. The MML represents municipal interests at the state and national levels of government. The MML serves its members by providing training and technical assistance, conducting research on municipal issues, and communicating with the public through the media.

The MML remains dedicated to the principles of its founding – to offer services and programs that give municipal officials the knowledge, experience, and tools for making the best possible public decisions in the complex world of municipal government.

The MML provides a full array of services, including the following:

- ▶ Advocacy of municipal issues before the Mississippi Legislature and state agencies;
- ▶ Advocacy of important local governments issues before the U.S. Congress and federal agencies;
- ▶ Research, surveys, and technical assistance on questions for local government;
- ▶ Conferences and training including the MML Annual Convention and the MML Mid-Winter Conference, as well as the Certified Municipal Official's Program and other training programs in cooperation with various agencies and organizations;
- ▶ Issue seminars on topics of interest to local elected and appointed officials;
- ▶ Information and news through publication of the bi-monthly *Mississippi Municipalities* magazine, a membership directory, and other technical assistance publications.

The MML is governed by its board of directors which is lead by the president, first vice president and second vice president. Each officer represents a different Mississippi Supreme Court election district. The board of directors establishes the policy positions of the League.

The MML employs a six-member staff headed by the executive director. The staff performs the ongoing functions of the League under the direction of the executive director. The executive director is the chief operating officer and implements the decisions of the board of directors.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

One of the primary missions of the League is legislative advocacy, often called “lobbying.” MML staff represent the interests of municipal governments to a variety of groups: the state Legislature and its committees and subcommittees, the Governor and executive branch agencies, and the Lieutenant Governor and the host of independent boards and commissions. Because municipal government in Mississippi can exercise only those powers specifically granted by the Legislature, they must routinely petition the Legislature for new powers and for the protection of existing ones. Municipal governments are mindful that new legislation is proposed every year to restrict local authority. One of the important assets of the MML is that it speaks for a broad and diverse group of local governments. When these individual political powers take a collective stand under the MML banner, they become a formidable political force. Virtually every local official can make contact with one or more legislator. In addition, the MML constantly monitors issues before the U.S. Congress and federal agencies that are important to local governments.

MML INSURANCE PROGRAMS

The Mississippi Municipal Service Company (MMSC) was formed in 1991 with the idea that providing claims administration and loss control services for the members of the MML sponsored liability and worker’s compensation programs could be done more efficiently and effectively through an “in-house” service company. As the administrator for the Worker’s Compensation Group and the Liability Plan, the MMSC has become a vital source of information and assistance for member municipalities.

The Worker’s Compensation group continues to be the most successful self-insured pool in Mississippi. It offers the security and peace of mind of a sound worker’s compensation plan without the threat of annual cancellation. The Liability Plan assures that cities and elected officials are protected against potentially devastating losses.

Many municipalities have come to regard the MMSC as their one source for risk management problem solving. The MMSC has evolved from claims handling into a full risk management operation providing resource materials and training in a wide range of areas.

To learn more about these insurance programs, contact the Mississippi Municipal Service Company:

Mailing Address	600 East Amite Street Jackson, MS 39201
Telephone	(601) 355-8581
Fax	(601) 355-8584

PUBLICATIONS

The MML distributes timely information and news to its members through publication of the bi-monthly *Mississippi Municipalities* magazine, the *Legislative Update* (weekly during the Legislative Session, monthly otherwise), and all the most current information available on its web site www.mmlonline.com.

The League also provides research and technical assistance in the form of published reports and responses to questions on local, state, and federal government.

Other publications include the following:

- ▶ *Municipal Government in Mississippi, 2nd Edition, Revised and Expanded* (2001), published by the Center for Governmental Training & Technology in the Mississippi State University Extension Service
- ▶ *Mississippi Municipal League Membership Directory*
- ▶ *Annual Report on Finances of Municipal Governments in Mississippi*
- ▶ *Annual Salary Survey*

MISSISSIPPI MUNICIPAL FOUNDATION

The Mississippi Municipal League formed the MML Foundation on December 10, 1993, however has remained dormant until now. The Foundation has a 501(c)(3) non-profit designation, therefore all contributions are tax deductible. Its purpose is to administer funds received for charitable and educational purposes with the following goals:

- ▶ Improving municipal governance by providing training for elected and appointed municipal officials
- ▶ Provide grants to various organizations that provide technical services for municipal officials.
- ▶ Highlight local government for a week for the purpose of Municipal Week program. (The Foundation would be the coordinating entity and would seek assistance through volunteers and media consulting firms to make this a state wide effort.

- ▶ Host a series of forums that focuses on relationships between businesses and local government.
- ▶ Provide standardized information for use by primary and secondary government and civic studies teachers as well as create a publication aimed at elementary and secondary students explaining the functions and role of local government in their community.
- ▶ Foundation will cooperate with state universities in the promotion of public service careers for upcoming graduates with an interest in the public sector.
- ▶ Contract for research projects on topics related to daily operations of local government including information regarding the latest in technology.
- ▶ Grant 2 scholarships per year
 - One for children of municipal officials and employees who will be attending a Mississippi community college, college or university of their choice.
 - One for any other high school senior who will be attending a Mississippi community college, college or university of their choice.

The property and affairs of the Foundation are managed by its Board of Directors:

Chairman	Mayor Rosemary Aultman	Clinton
Secretary/Treasurer	To be appointed by Executive Director	
1 st Vice-President	Mayor Robert Coggins	Baldwyn
2 nd Vice-President	Mayor Eddie Favre	Bay St. Louis
Immediate Past President	Mayor A.J. Holloway	Biloxi
Chairman R&D	To be appointed by Executive Director	
Executive Director	Jeanie E. Smith	

CONFERENCES

The League sponsors an annual convention that includes general sessions featuring nationally-known speakers, an array of workshops on topics of current interest, the adoption of the League's legislative program for the upcoming year and the election of League officers. *The Clarion Ledger*/MML Municipal Excellence Awards program recognizes outstanding accomplishments by local governments which are presented at the Annual Awards Banquet on the last day of the convention. The Annual Convention is held in June (July, in an election year) on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. It typically draws about 2,400 participants.

The League also sponsors a Mid-Winter Conference held in January in Jackson, the State capitol. This conference deals mainly with legislative matters and the training of municipal officials. The League sponsors a “Day at the Capitol” during the conference to give time for local officials to speak with their legislators about hometown issues. The day’s program includes updates on the state budget and bills of interest to local government and a reception in honor of the members of the legislature.

The Small Town Conference, held in the fall, addresses certain issues only pertinent to those serving smaller municipalities. Everything such as technical assistance from state agencies to addresses from key political figures to workshops on how to better manage under fiscal constraints is covered in the conference.

Finally, other conferences and workshops on current topics such as Municipal Environmental Courts, Geospatial Data Uses, and Emergency Preparedness and Planning, are held according to interest.

THE CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS COURSE

The Certified Municipal Officials (CMO) course is a voluntary 60 hour continuing hour course based around four mandatory core courses: Municipal Organization; Municipal Law; Municipal Finance and Municipal Land Use. The remaining hours come from numerous training opportunities throughout the year. The CMO course was designed to provide in-depth training for municipal elected officials, mayors and boards, and to recognize municipal elected officials for their efforts after certification.

PARTNERSHIP WITH AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

The MML is currently involved in working with a number of affiliate organizations who directly or indirectly represent municipal government interests. The MML does not provide policy development or legislative advocacy for any of its affiliate groups. The organizations are listed below:

- ▶ International City-County Management Association (Mississippi Chapter)
- ▶ Mississippi Building Officials Association
- ▶ Mississippi Chiefs of Police Association
- ▶ Mississippi City Attorney’s Association
- ▶ Mississippi Fire Chief’s Association
- ▶ Mississippi Municipal Clerks/Collectors Association
- ▶ Mississippi Planners Association
- ▶ Mississippi Public Works Association

The MML is committed to strong partnerships with organizations serving municipal governments. Forming partnerships with other affiliate organizations has enabled the MML to improve its advocacy in many policy areas.

The abilities of the local government workforce in Mississippi are changing as the environment

becomes more complex. The challenges to local governments at the end of this century are unparalleled: environmental regulations, devolution of programs from the federal to the state and local level, and increased service demands. All such factors have contributed to these changes.

New public policies are necessary to enhance public facilities and services at the local level. The MML is a strong advocate that the federal and state governments must remain partners in the development of local infrastructure, particularly infrastructure necessary for the creation of jobs. This partnership must include planning and coordination of these investments, as well as financial support. However, it is impossible for either the state or federal government to successfully micro manage this process; this calls for a rethinking of the roles played in this process by the federal, state, and local governments. The next step in the development of these relationships is to move toward performance-based expectations from the federal and state governments (much as is intended in the ISTEA legislation), but it must be coupled with maximum flexibility at the local level. Simply put, municipal governments in Mississippi need sufficient home rule authority to have control over their future.

MML STAFF

Jeanie E. Smith	Executive Director
Samantha Atkinson	Deputy Director, Special/Technical Projects
June Dunlap	Executive Secretary
Donna Hughes	Business Manager
Jackie Swan	Technical Representative
George Lewis	Deputy Director for Training and Education
Clair Seward	Meetings Coordinator

HOW TO CONTACT THE MML

The MML headquarters building is located in downtown Jackson at 600 East Amite Street. Business hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Friday.

Mailing Address	600 East Amite Street Jackson, MS 39201
Telephone	(601) 353-5854 (800) 325-7641 (in-state only)
Fax	(601) 353-0435

E-mail†	sam1@mmlonline.com
Web Site	www.MMLonline.com
†All other staff addresses follow this format: <i>firstname1@mmlonline.com</i>	

