

★ TEXAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE ★

113th Annual Conference and Exhibition
October 29–31, 2025

• FORT WORTH •



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28

8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Exhibitor Registration
Across from Room 103, Level 1

1:00-5:00 p.m.

Attendee Registration
Across from Room 101, Level 1

2:00 p.m.

TML Board of Directors Meeting
Room 202 A-D

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29

7:30-8:30 a.m.

Coffee Cart – Sponsored by Focused Advocacy
Near Attendee Registration, Level 1

7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Attendee Registration
Across from Room 101, Level 1

8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Exhibitor Registration
Across from Room 103, Level 1

9:45-10:15 a.m.

Refreshment Break – Sponsored by Schaumburg & Polk, Inc.
Outside of Arena, Level 1

10:15 a.m.–Noon

Opening General Session and Presentation of Awards
Arena, Level 1

ON FIRE: Ignite a Radically Inspired Life

John O’Leary, Best-Selling Author and Speaker

In a world where "accidental living"—mindlessly moving through routines, obsessed with screen time, and fixating on what’s wrong—has become the norm, John O’Leary challenges community leaders to live with purpose, passion, and intention. Drawing from his remarkable story of surviving a devastating fire at age nine, John will inspire you to rise above adversity and embrace a radically inspired approach to public service. In this powerful keynote, he will reveal how daily inflection points – moments that shape everything that follows—are powerful opportunities for growth and leadership. Through compelling stories and practical strategies, John will empower you to embrace a victor’s mindset and make a meaningful impact in the community you serve.

Noon–5:00 p.m.

Exhibit Hall Grand Opening

Exhibit Hall

12:30-1:00 p.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by Aqualia - Municipal District Services

Exhibit Hall

1:15-1:45 p.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by Asphalt Zipper, Inc.

Exhibit Hall

1:45–3:00 p.m.

TML Concurrent Sessions

What Should Be in Your Emergency Management Go-Bag?

In this session, executive staff from the Texas Division of Emergency Management will discuss what local emergency managers and city officials need to know and have ready before, during, and after disaster strikes.

W. Nim Kidd, Chief, Texas Division of Emergency Management

Ballroom A, Level 2

2025 Legislative Update

Join TML’s legislative team for an informative talk about the outcomes from the 2025 Texas legislative session, the implementation of key bills, and the impact on our cities.

G - This session meets the TML CMO program core competency requirement for governance.

Bennett Sandlin, Executive Director; **Monty Wynn**, Executive Director Designee; **Bill Longley**,

General Counsel; **JJ Rocha**, Grassroots and Legislative Services Manager; and **Mike Martin**,

Legislative Counsel, Texas Municipal League

Ballroom B, Level 2

Leadership 101

In this engaging session, Dr. Arturo Menefee will share valuable insights and real-world experience to explore the essential skills that define effective leadership. Participants will learn to strengthen their leadership, communication, and interpersonal abilities to enhance personal and professional success. Through clear examples and practical strategies, the session will highlight the qualities of successful leaders, the value of team building and diversity, and the tools needed to foster organizational growth.

Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of leadership fundamentals and a personalized plan for ongoing development.

Arturo Menefee, PhD, University of Alabama
Ballroom C, Level 2

Financial Boot Camp: Core Skills for Small Cities (courtesy of the Small Cities Advisory Council)
Managing municipal finances can be complex, especially in small cities where staff wear many hats. This session offers a practical overview of finance fundamentals to help you build confidence and competence in budgeting, financial reporting, audits, and more. Whether you're newly elected, recently hired, or stepping into new responsibilities, you'll walk away with a clearer understanding of key financial concepts and the tools to support sound decision-making. You'll also learn where to find trusted resources and training opportunities to continue strengthening your financial know-how long after the session ends.

F - This session meets the TML CMO program core competency requirement for finance.

Martie Simpson, Assistant Director of City Financial Services, and **Keith Dagen**, Wrangler, Texas Municipal League
Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 1-4, Level 2

Building a Strong Partnership with Your City Attorney

A good relationship with your city attorney is essential to keeping your city on solid legal ground. But what exactly does that relationship look like? While city attorneys work closely with elected and appointed officials, their client is the city itself—not any one person. Understanding this distinction is key to a smooth and effective working partnership. In this session, you'll hear practical tips for building trust, maintaining clear communication, and fostering a reliable attorney-client relationship that benefits the entire organization.

Amanda Campos, City Secretary, Burleson; **Frank Garza**, Partner, Davidson Troilo Ream & Garza; **Kuruvilla Oommen**, City Attorney, Irving; **Kenneth Williams**, City Manager, Beaumont; **Alan Bojorquez**, Managing Partner, Bojorquez Law Firm (*facilitating*)
Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 5-8, Level 2

2:00-2:30 p.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by Aqualia - Municipal District Services
Exhibit Hall

2:45-3:15 p.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by HdL Companies
Exhibit Hall

3:00-3:30 p.m.

Refreshment Break – Sponsored by Hilltop Securities Inc.
Outside Ballrooms A-C, Level 2
Omni – Outside Fort Worth Ballrooms, Level 2

3:30-4:00 p.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by Power Temp Systems
Exhibit Hall

3:30–4:45 p.m.

TML Concurrent Sessions

Creating a Leadership Team for Success: Building Stronger, More Effective Leadership (courtesy of the Texas Municipal Clerks Association, Inc.)

The strength of an organization's leadership team is crucial to its overall success. In this session, we will explore how to build, develop, and lead a high-performing leadership team that drives results and inspires others. Learn strategies for fostering trust, setting clear objectives, and encouraging open communication among leaders. We'll discuss how to align diverse leadership styles and strengths, resolve conflicts, and cultivate a culture of collaboration and accountability. Whether you're forming a new leadership team or enhancing an existing one, join us to discover the tools and best practices that will help your leadership team succeed and lead with impact.

Kim Sutter, City Secretary/Chief Compliance Officer, City of Euless; **Junior Ezeonu**, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem, City of Grand Prairie; and **Joey Dunn**, Deputy City Manager, City of Bryan, **Gretchen Mercer**, City Secretary/Director of Administrative Services, City of Canyon (*facilitating*)

Ballroom A, Level 2

Legal Q&A

Meet the TML legal staff and hear the answers to questions you've always wanted to have answered in this fun, insightful, and engaging session.

Amber McKeon-Mueller, Director of Legal Services; **Mike Martin**, Legislative Counsel; **Tad Cleaves**, Assistant General Counsel; **Sarah Tompkins**, Legal Counsel; and **Stephanie Huser**, Legal Counsel, Texas Municipal League

Ballroom B, Level 2

Creative Collaborations That Build a Service Community (courtesy of the Texas Municipal Library Directors Association)

How can cities maximize their resources and create a dynamic service culture? Discover how partnerships between libraries, police, firefighters, public works, parks and recreation, and community partners are changing traditional services. Unique programs are being developed across Texas to meet the demand for creative programming, scarcity relief, workforce development, senior and youth connections, and more. Join us for a lively discussion of how communities are coming together to build a stronger Texas.

Becky McClain, Library Director, City of Santa Fe; **A'ndrea McAdams**, Library Director, City of Sundown; **Lisa Youngblood**, Library Director, City of Harker Heights; and **David Mitchell**, City Manager, City of Harker Heights

Ballroom C, Level 2

The Texas Legislature and Laws Affecting Planning (courtesy of the American Planning Association Texas Chapter)

Join a dynamic, solutions-driven panel as they unpack key legislative changes impacting cities across the state. This session is designed to translate complex legal changes from the most recent legislative session into practical guidance. You will gain critical insights into how these changes impact local governance, budgeting, planning, infrastructure, and public safety. Whether you're an elected or appointed official, city staff member, or other local leader, this session will equip you with the knowledge and tools to navigate an evolving regulatory landscape and advocate more effectively for your community.

Craig Farmer FAICP, President, Municipal Planning Services, LLC; **Carissa Cox AICP**, Urban Planning Practice Builder, Kimley-Horn, and **Kimberley Mickelson Esq. FAICP**, Senior Assistant City Attorney III, City of Houston.

Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 1-4, Level 2

A Secure Water Future for Your City

The 89th Texas Legislative Session has been called the “Water Session,” with Governor Abbott championing a historic, Texas-sized investment in the state’s water infrastructure. But what does that mean for cities on the front lines of growth, development, and aging systems? This panel brings together top voices from the public and private sectors to unpack the new legislative landscape and its implications for municipal water planning and financing. Learn how your city can navigate new funding mechanisms, address infrastructure demands, and build a resilient water future for your community.

Darrell Nichols, General Manager/CEO, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority; **Jenna Covington**, Executive Director and General Manager, North Texas Municipal Water District; **Thomas Liu**, Managing Director, BofA Securities; and **Matt Lee**, Partner, Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP
Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 5-8, Level 2

4:15-4:45 p.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by Freese and Nichols
Exhibit Hall

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30

7:30–8:45 a.m.

TML Risk Pool Breakfast (separate ticketed event, no charge)
Arena, Level 1

7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Attendee Registration
Across from Room 101, Level 1

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Exhibitor Registration
Across from Room 103, Level 1

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Exhibit Hall Open
Exhibit Hall

8:30-9:30 a.m.

Continental Breakfast – Sponsored by TXU Energy
Exhibit Hall

9:15-9:45 a.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by Asphalt Zipper, Inc.
Exhibit Hall

9:15-10:30 a.m.

TML Concurrent Sessions

AI Governance in Texas Cities: Balancing Innovation, Ethics, and Public Trust (courtesy of the Texas Association of Governmental Information Technology Managers)

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly integrated into municipal operations – from predictive analytics and smart infrastructure to citizen engagement and internal efficiencies – cities are faced with a critical question: how do we embrace innovation responsibly without compromising our ethical obligations to the communities we serve? Panelists will discuss the challenges and operational implications of AI adoption, including data privacy, bias mitigation, regulatory alignment, and the importance of guiding principles. The conversation will also highlight the necessary steps for the development of AI governance and the role of leadership in fostering public trust. Whether your city is just beginning to explore AI or already implementing advanced tools, you'll gain practical insights and forward-looking strategies to help shape responsible, resilient, and citizen-centered AI initiatives.

Chris Lee, Chief Information Officer, City of Lewisville; **Melissa Kraft**, Chief Information Officer, City of Frisco; **Keshnel Penny**, Chief Information Officer, City of Grand Prairie, **Scott Joyce**, Director of IT, City of Euless (*facilitating*); **Omar Rodriguez**, Chief Information Officer, City of McKinney
Ballroom A, Level 2

Rebuilding the Public Trust: Strategies for Restoring Confidence in Government (courtesy of the Texas Municipal Clerks Association, Inc.)

Public trust in government has eroded in recent years, but it's not too late to restore confidence and accountability. In this session, we will explore effective strategies for rebuilding the public's trust, focusing on openness, communication, and community engagement. Learn how to strengthen relationships with citizens by embracing honesty, actively listening to their concerns, and ensuring that public resources are used responsibly. We will discuss how other cities are providing communication and education to foster transparency and rebuild trust. Join us to gain valuable tools for regaining and maintaining public trust in today's complex political landscape.

Alicia Richardson, City Secretary/Chief Compliance Officer, City of North Richland Hills; **Mattie Parker**, Mayor, City of Fort Worth; **Vanessa Shrauner**, City Manager, City of Rockport; **Sean Doerre**, Public Information Officer, City of Fredericksburg; **Mattie Parker**, Mayor of Fort Worth; and **Crystal Roan**, City Secretary, City of Missouri City (*facilitating*)
Ballroom B, Level 2

Effectively Engaging Your Community About the Texas Legislature

Thousands of bills are filed every session of the Texas Legislature that have a dramatic impact on Texas cities. Tracking all these bills and sharing the impacts with local state legislators is important but misses a critical part of advocacy. The reality is legislators often will listen more to 20 resident phone calls than to the mayor or councilmember from their district. Effectively engaging your community about high impact bills is essential in today's environment. This session focuses on how the City of Georgetown has engaged their community to develop their legislative agenda, create resident advocates during the legislative session, and alert their community about important legislation.

Josh Schroeder, Mayor; **David Morgan**, City Manager, and **Leah Clark**, Intergovernmental Relations Manager, City of Georgetown
Ballroom C, Level 2

Beyond the Aesthetics: Why Downtown Revitalization Is Economic Development

Downtowns are more than charming landmarks—they're vital economic engines that reflect a community's identity and potential and retain its talent. This session examines how strategic beautification and place-making serve as catalysts for revitalizing Texas downtowns through high-impact improvements that attract investment, support small businesses, and promote tourism. Attendees will learn from success stories across the state and discover how local governments of any size can activate underused spaces, foster community buy-in, and drive economic growth. The session also

introduces the Texas Historical Commission's new *First Street Initiative* and updates to the Texas Main Street Program, offering practical tools for communities of all sizes to launch or strengthen downtown revitalization efforts.

Tania Moody, Executive Director, Texas Downtown; **Shelly Ashcroft**, Marketing and Membership Coordinator, Texas Downtown; **Letecia McNatt**, Assistant to the City Manager, City of Garland; and **Meredith Johnson**, Community Liaison, Texas Main Street Program
Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 1-4, Level 2

Up in Smoke: Vape, Hemp, and Delta 8/9 in Texas Cities

It seems there's hardly a strip shopping center in Texas that doesn't have one or more vape stores selling all kinds of quasi-legal hemp and related products. Where did this all get started? What's legal and what might not be? Did the legislature make any regulatory changes this year? What authority do cities have over products or store locations? Attendees will hear from experts who will clear the air about this growing trend.

Steve Dye, Chief of Police, Allen Police Department steve.dye@allentx.gov
Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 5-8, Level 2

Small City Talks: Making City Hall More Efficient (courtesy of the Small Cities Advisory Council)

This issue-based roundtable discussion offers small city leaders (under 15,000 population) the opportunity to share best practices and participate in a dialogue on making city hall more efficient. You'll exchange ideas, ask questions, and connect with other local leaders. There will be no speaker or formal presentation; our moderator will keep the conversation on course. Come ready to talk about your challenges and successes, learn from other city leaders, and take good notes.

Room 202 A-D, Level 2

10:00-10:30 a.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by HdL Companies
Exhibit Hall

10:15-10:45 a.m.

Refreshment Break – Sponsored by Hilltop Securities Inc.
Exhibit Hall; Outside Ballrooms A-C, Level 2; and Omni – Outside Fort Worth Ballrooms, Level 2

10:45-11:15 a.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by Power Temp Systems
Exhibit Hall

10:45–11:55 a.m.

TML Concurrent Sessions

Implicit Bias and Workplace Equity (courtesy of the Association of Hispanic Municipal Officials)

How do unconscious attitudes shape the workplace—and what can be done to foster a more equitable environment? In this timely and thought-provoking session, attorney Clarissa M. Rodriguez will explore the subtle yet powerful ways implicit bias can influence decision-making, team dynamics, and leadership in municipal organizations. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how to identify bias, build cultural awareness, and take practical steps toward creating more inclusive and equitable workplaces.

Clarissa M. Rodriguez, Shareholder, Denton Navarro, Rodriguez, Bernal, Santee & Zech, P.C.

Ballroom A, Level 2

Building Community and Raising Families: The Foundation of a Thriving City (courtesy of the Texas City Management Association)

Portland City Council, named the 2025 TCMA City Council of the Year, invites you to a dynamic discussion on the guiding philosophy behind the City's tagline: Building Community and Raising Families. This session will explore how understanding and promoting strong families and a connected community create the foundation for a thriving city. Portland leaders will share insights on their approach to policymaking, community engagement, and the innovative programs that have made the City a model for fostering family-friendly environments. Attendees will gain practical strategies for strengthening their communities, including prioritizing people-centered policies, encouraging civic pride, and creating sustainable growth that benefits all generations.

Cathy Skurow, Mayor, **John Green**, Mayor Pro Tem, **Brian Wilson II**, Councilmember, and **John Sutton**, Councilmember, City of Portland

Ballroom B, Level 2

Building Trust and Community Engagement, Offline (courtesy of Texas Association of Municipal Information Officers)

In a world dominated by digital communication, meaningful face-to-face engagement remains one of the most effective ways to build trust between local governments and the communities we serve. This session will explore creative, proven approaches to offline civic engagement that foster transparency, connection, and long-term community partnerships. Participants will learn how cities like Bedford built a successful Citizens Academy to educate and empower residents, how Georgetown uses outreach fairs to bring city departments directly to the public at community events, and how Richardson established a Resident Council that gives HOA and neighborhood association leaders a voice in local decision-making. Whether you're launching a new program or refreshing your outreach approach, this session will offer practical insights and replicable models to help you connect with your community—no Wi-Fi required.

Greg Sowell, Director of Communications, City of Richardson; **Don Magner**, City Manager, City of Richardson; **Aly Van Dyke**, Director of Communications and Public Engagement, City of Georgetown; and **Molly Fox**, Director of Communications, City of Bedford

Ballroom C, Level 2

People, Purpose, Presence: The Unsung Strength of Public Works in Texas Communities (courtesy of the Texas Chapter of American Public Works Association)

Public works professionals are often the quiet force behind a city's success – serving with dedication and rarely in the spotlight. This session, inspired by the 2025 National Public Works Week theme “People, Purpose, Presence,” explores how Texas cities are meeting community needs through resilient infrastructure, innovative service delivery, and a skilled and committed workforce. Join public works leaders from across the state for a candid panel discussion on maximizing impact amidst financial constraints, investing in people, and strengthening community presence. Panelists will share real-world strategies in workforce development, emergency preparedness, GIS and asset management, and cross-department collaboration. Learn how public works is maintaining the backbone of your city and helping shape its future.

Ronnie Bates, Director of Public Works, Denison; **Jody Byerly**, Director of Public Works, Carrollton; and **Elvira Alonzo**, CPM, Director of Public Works, McAllen

Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 1-4, Level 2

Value-Driven Collaboration with Your Police Chief (courtesy of the Texas Police Chiefs)

Association)

Police departments that fail to evolve get left behind. "Silo" leadership is often disconnected from trends, struggles to navigate challenges, and wastes precious time trying to reinvent the wheel. Practical tips to "slip the silo" will be explored. Networking, succession planning, professional development, best practices, and training opportunities can all lead to an engaged and modern approach to leadership inside your police department. The Texas Police Chiefs Association will provide actionable steps to assist in making your police department the best it can be in service to your community.

Johnny Siemens, Chief, Universal City Police Department; **Eddie Wilson**, Chief, Copperas Cove Police Department; and **Gene Ellis** (ret), Executive Director. Texas Police Chiefs Association
Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 5-8, Level 2

Small City Talks: Navigating Grants (courtesy of the Small Cities Advisory Council)

This issue-based roundtable discussion offers small city leaders (under 15,000 population) the opportunity to share best practices and participate in a dialogue on effectively navigating grants and resources. You'll exchange ideas, ask questions, and connect with other local leaders. There will be no speaker or formal presentation; our moderator will keep the conversation on course. Come ready to talk about your challenges and successes, learn from other city leaders, and take good notes.

Room 202 A-D, Level 2

Noon–1:30 p.m. (separate ticketed event)

Luncheon and Keynote Speaker

Arena, Level 1

From Leadership to Leadering: The Shift We Need for the Future We Want

Nancy Giordano, Futurist and Strategist

Join Nancy Giordano, renowned strategic futurist and leadership provocateur, for an inspiring presentation designed to reshape how city leaders champion progress in a rapidly evolving world. In this thought-provoking talk, Nancy will explore the core principles of *leadering*—an approach that transitions away from traditional leadership to cultivate resilience, creativity, and collaborative innovation in times of disruption.

Nancy will invite you as a community leader to rethink your role, emphasize adaptive leadership, and create environments where visionary, inclusive stewardship can flourish. This session will offer actionable insights on building agile, forward-thinking teams, and strategies for leading with purpose in an interconnected world.

Whether you're navigating complex municipal challenges, fostering community-driven growth, or driving sustainable change, this keynote will provide valuable tools and a fresh perspective to elevate and expand your approach in shaping the future of your city.

1:30-2:00 p.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by Freese and Nichols

Exhibit Hall

1:45-3:00 p.m.

TML Concurrent Sessions

Understanding Generational Talent (courtesy of the Texas Municipal Utilities Association)

As the workforce evolves, hiring qualified staff remains critical to achieving organizational objectives.

Older workers, 55 and over, continue to play a significant role, while attracting younger generations is essential for workforce succession. This session will explore strategies for recruiting and integrating employees across generations, highlighting their strengths and addressing misconceptions. Learn how an inclusive, age-diverse workplace can drive organizational success and provide a competitive edge.

Hector Mendoza, Director of Human Resources, and **Chris Enriquez**, Director of Public Works, City of Canyon

Ballroom A, Level 2

Battleground to Common Ground: Transforming Municipal Conflicts into Collaborative Solutions

Our world is filled with conflict and disputes that damage relationships and increase costs. In this session, we will explore practical steps we can use to navigate relationships in a political climate and discuss specific examples of when and how to deploy negotiation and conflict management techniques. Join this session with a former elected official who has more than 20 years of experience in litigation, arbitration, and mediation and cares deeply about serving others through resolving conflict.

Adam McGough, Mediator and Arbitrator, JAMS - Dallas

Ballroom B, Level 2

Navigating Texas' New Food Regulation Laws: What Cities Need to Know

The 2025 legislative session brought sweeping changes to local authority over food regulation with the passage of S.B. 1008 and H.B. 2844. From permitting and fee limits to noise ordinance application and mobile food vendors, these laws reshape how cities interact with restaurants, food businesses, and public health. Join a panel featuring the Texas Department of State Health Services, the Texas Restaurant Association, and city officials as they unpack the new requirements and share practical guidance for implementation.

Kelsey Erickson Streufert, Chief Public Affairs Officer, Texas Restaurant Association; **Geoff Heinicke**, Environmental Health Manager, City of Allen

Ballroom C, Level 2

Understanding Your Property Tax Rate Calculation (courtesy of the Government Finance Officers Association of Texas)

The tax property tax rate calculation presents several challenges for local governments that are not obvious or intuitive. Learn about the pitfalls, shortcomings, and opportunities the calculation presents so you can assist your city in understanding the tax rate process.

F - This session meets the TML CMO program core competency requirement for finance.

Susan Morgan, Former Chief Financial Officer, City of Round Rock, and **Larry Gaddes**, Williamson County Tax Assessor/Collector

Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 1-4, Level 2

Partnering for Protection: TML Risk Pool Helps Police Stay Ahead of Risk

Policing has many inherent risks, and not all of them are front-page news. While departments must train on professional tactics for use of force and similar events, everyday risks like driving and mundane injuries need attention as well. The TML Risk Pool's "Promoting Excellence in Law Enforcement" program now employs two dedicated law enforcement outreach consultants to provide no-cost visits and analysis for your police department. Their primary goal is to support law enforcement leaders in their efforts to reduce employee injuries, deaths, litigation risk, and property loss by better understanding claims data – this promotes informed decision-making that reduces risk and improves outcomes. They can also pair these services with training aimed at raising awareness and reducing self-induced risk in some of the most common areas of loss. Attendees will learn just how important this information is for

their police department and their community.

Chase Stapp (Retired San Marcos Police Chief) and **Joseph Florance** (Retired Rockwall Police Captain), Law Enforcement Outreach Consultants, TML Risk Pool
Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 5-8, Level 2

Small City Talks: Community Engagement (courtesy of the Small Cities Advisory Council)

This issue-based roundtable discussion offers small city leaders (under 15,000 population) the opportunity to share best practices and participate in a dialogue on community engagement. You'll exchange ideas, ask questions, and connect with other local leaders. There will be no speaker or formal presentation; our moderator will keep the conversation on course. Come ready to talk about your challenges and successes, learn from other city leaders, and take good notes.

Room 202 A-D, Level 2

2:15-2:45 p.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by James Hardie Building Products, Inc.
Exhibit Hall

3:00-3:30 p.m.

Refreshment Break – Sponsored by Oncor
Exhibit Hall; Outside Ballrooms A-C, Level 2; Omni – Outside Fort Worth Ballrooms, Level 2

3:00-3:30 p.m.

Greenhouse Session

Presented by James Hardie Building Products, Inc.
Exhibit Hall

3:30 p.m.-Conclusion

TML Business Meeting

Room 201 A-C, Level 2

3:30-4:45 p.m.

TML Concurrent Sessions

Whose Role Is It Anyway?

In this game-show-inspired session, City Attorney Thomas Gwosdz will discuss the laws, rules, and best practices for dividing up the work between the mayor, city council, the city manager, and city employees. Whose job is it to create the budget? To hire employees? What about finding a contractor to repair park equipment? Does your answer change in a state of disaster? Come prepared to participate or to cheer for your favorite contestant as we all learn "Whose role is it, anyway?"

G - This session meets the TML CMO program core competency requirement for governance.

Thomas Gwosdz, Managing Attorney, The Gwosdz Law Firm, PLLC
Ballroom A, Level 2

Public Stewardship: Leading Change for Public Value

Calls to "run government like a business" often miss the mark – government exists not to generate profit, but to deliver public value. Yet, alignment, accountability, and strategic clarity remain essential. This session explores how cities, large and small, are redesigning their strategy, structure, and budgeting to become more adaptive and responsive to evolving community needs. Through real-world examples from Kansas City, Golden Valley, and Lincoln, participants will gain a practical framework for leading

change, shifting organizational mindsets from scarcity to abundance, and steering local government toward greater public impact.

Micah Intermill, Founder and Managing Partner, GovStrategist, LLC
Ballroom B, Level 2

Driving Municipal Excellence with the Baldrige Framework

Serving growing communities on tight budgets is a constant challenge for cities. The Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework—developed by the U.S. Commerce Department—provides a proven approach to align leadership, strategy, and processes for measurable results. By focusing on strategic planning, customer satisfaction, and workforce engagement, municipalities can improve efficiency, strengthen fiscal stewardship, and enhance public trust. This session will outline practical next steps for city officials at any stage of the performance excellence journey, with the goal of delivering lasting value to their communities.

Melanie Cano, Director of Strategic Excellence, City of Pharr; and **Cindy Milrany**, Chief Strategy Officer, Freese and Nichols
Ballroom C, Level 2

Texas Natives: The Programs, Policies, and Politics That Will Inspire Your Community to Embrace its Texas Roots (courtesy of the Texas Recreation and Park Society)

Participants will leave with an understanding of how to embrace Texas Natives in public spaces, gain allies, overcome resistance, advocate for resilient communities and empower residents to do the same. This program will guide you through one community's journey to investing in critical infrastructure such as parks and green space to build resiliency and address water scarcity while representing the native beauty of Texas.

TJ Gilmore, Mayor, and **Stacie Anaya**, Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Lewisville
Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 1-4, Level 2

Ethics and Code of Conduct Policies for Small Cities (courtesy of the Small Cities Advisory Council)

This session will dive into the importance of adopting ethics and code of conduct policies for your city. Learn from the panel how their policies were adopted and have worked to improve government transparency and council-staff relations.

E- This session meets the TML CMO program core competency requirement for ethics.

Bert Miller, CMO, Mayor; **Robert Hemminger**, City Manager; and **Cary Bovey**, Legal Counsel, City of Navasota
Omni, Fort Worth Ballroom 5-8, Level 2

Small City Talks: Rural Water Issues (courtesy of the Small Cities Advisory Council)

This issue-based roundtable discussion offers small city leaders (under 15,000 population) the opportunity to share best practices and participate in a dialogue on rural water issues. You'll exchange ideas, ask questions, and connect with other local leaders. There will be no speaker or formal presentation; our moderator will keep the conversation on course. Come ready to talk about your challenges and successes, learn from other city leaders, and take good notes.

Room 202 A-D, Level 2

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31

7:30-10:30 a.m.

Attendee Registration

Across from Room 101, Level 1

8:00-9:00 a.m.

Coffee Cart – Sponsored by Focused Advocacy

Near Attendee Registration, Level 1

8:00-10:00 a.m.

Exhibitor Registration

Across from Room 103, Level 1

8:00-10:00 a.m.

Exhibit Hall Open

Exhibit Hall

9:00–10:15 a.m.

TML Concurrent Sessions

The Cost of Place: Fostering Fiscal Stewardship to Manage Community Assets

This session will highlight how communities across Texas are aligning land use planning with financial stewardship to ensure long-term resilience and affordability. Through real-world examples and data-driven strategies, panelists will demonstrate how cities – from small towns to major metros – are making development decisions that reflect the true costs of infrastructure, maintenance, and public investments. Attendees will gain actionable insights into balancing quality of life with fiscal sustainability, using innovative tools like public-private partnerships and value-driven budgeting. The session will equip municipal leaders and planners with practical approaches to create people-centered, economically sound communities that thrive for generations.

Brennan Kane, Lead Planner, Olsson; **Felix Landry**, Project Manager IV, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension; and **Justin Weiss**, Professor, East Texas A&M University
Ballroom A, Level 2

Engaging with Civility: A Conversation Model

City leaders often face challenging conversations in an era of shifting expectations around civility. This session explores how conflict affects the brain—and why it can make dialogue feel frustrating or unproductive. Drawing on current civility research, an expert from the University of Kansas Public Management Center will introduce a practical conversation model designed to help you pause, understand underlying needs, and find shared values—even in tough situations. You'll walk away with tools to reduce reactive responses, maintain your credibility, and foster respectful, productive engagement with your colleagues and residents.

G - This session meets the TML CMO program core competency requirement for governance.

Jenny Mehmedovic, Assistant Director of Consulting and Coaching Services, University of Kansas Public Management Center
Ballroom B, Level 2

Improving Resident Satisfaction with Government

Recent research by UKG and Polco reveals a groundbreaking link between effective human resource practices and increased resident satisfaction with local government services and overall quality of life.

Drawing from data across municipalities – including case studies from two Texas cities—this session explores how strong HR functions in areas like employee performance management, well-being, compensation, recruiting, and HR capability directly contribute to more responsive, trusted city services. Attendees will learn about the specific HR practices that correlate with higher resident satisfaction, gain insight into best practices from top-performing departments, and discover actionable strategies for driving meaningful improvements in local government through enhanced HR effectiveness.

Bob Lavigna, Senior Fellow, Public Sector, Ultimate Kronos Group
Ballroom C, Level 2

Polish, Presence, and Professionalism: Etiquette Skills for City Leaders

Every interaction matters in public service—whether you’re welcoming residents, collaborating with council colleagues, or representing your city at community events. The way you carry yourself sets the tone for trust, credibility, and connection. In this session, international etiquette expert Diane Gottsman will share practical strategies to help city leaders strengthen their professional presence and build lasting relationships. Learn how to make a positive first impression, engage in conversations with confidence, manage technology and social media with courtesy, and avoid common missteps that can undermine your reputation. You’ll leave with actionable tools to lead with polish, approachability, and poise.

Diane Gottsman, National Etiquette Expert, The Protocol School of Texas
Room 201 A-C, Level 2

9:15-10:00 a.m.

TML Board of Directors Meeting
Room 102, Level 1

10:30 a.m.–Noon (separate ticketed event)

Closing Session and Brunch

Arena, Level 1

Leading with Heart, Acting with Honor

Frank B. Ashley III, Ed.D., University Leader, Educator, and Coach

Frank Ashley has spent more than 35 years in the Texas A&M University System, and 25 of those years have been in leadership roles. Looking back on the many different titles he held over three decades, Ashley will share what he has learned and experienced – the good, the bad, and the ugly as it pertains to leadership – and why there is a need today for “ethical” leaders.

This closing keynote will provide insights into “ethical leadership,” the need for ethical leaders, and a toolbox for developing ethical leaders.

E - This session meets the TML CMO program core competency requirement for ethics.