

## Outstanding Manager of the Year Award



*Craig T. Malin*

*ICMA's Outstanding Manager of the Year Award recognizes a local government administrator who has initiated and implemented creative, innovative projects and programs in the management of his or her community, regardless of his or her cumulative tenure.*

*Craig T. Malin, city administrator, Davenport, Iowa, is the 2004 recipient of this award.*

As the nation's economic expansion wound down in 2001, Davenport, Iowa (pop. 98,359) struggled against 20 years of population decline and economic stagnation. At that time, Craig Malin was hired as the new city administrator, and the state had just approved the city's Vision Iowa application for the \$113 million downtown "River Renaissance" redevelopment plan. With city government perceived as closed to public input, many considered the required 60 percent public vote a lost cause. Mr. Malin led a balanced public information campaign that moved government beyond responsiveness to inclusion. The referendum won with 73 percent, and Davenport became Iowa's only city to hold a successful Vision Iowa vote.

This open approach to government held sway in other crucial city projects as well. In a land planning controversy he inherited upon his arrival, Mr. Malin first listened—both to the development community and to those who opposed implementation of the sprawl-oriented plan—and then helped launch a detail-rich and transparent planning process. Through several community meetings, residents viewed concepts of the many development outcomes, voted for their preferences, and even drew up their own plans for the 630-acre area. A citywide survey was also conducted to include those who could not attend the meetings.

This ability to find consensus among formerly contentious voices

has served Davenport well. With residents working through issues collaboratively, the city is updating its comprehensive plan for the first time in 27 years. Davenport also joined with Rock Island, Illinois, its sister city across the Mississippi River, to launch the "RiverVision," a riverfront redevelopment planning process unmatched in bi-state waterfront scope anywhere in the nation. And the downtown that had languished for decades is now enjoying a renaissance. Davenport is leveraging nearly \$400 million in new investment with construction of the first downtown office tower in 20 years; renovation of America's fourth-oldest active professional ballpark; the opening of the American Roots Music Museum and a world-class art museum; development of a "New Ventures" business incubator; and conversion of vacant industrial space into loft residences.

Mr. Malin's leadership philosophy is rooted in making city government "open, agile, and purposeful." To promote an open government, he led a training session for city staff, exposing them to different public engagement techniques. He then entrusted his managers to select the technique most suitable for each situation and make soliciting citizen input the foundation for city policy.

Mr. Malin also conducted a training series on "agility theory," a military concept designed to facilitate a swift response to changing conditions at every level. This approach resulted

in improved service levels despite a nearly 10 percent reduction in workforce, and a 12 percent increase in citizen satisfaction with city services.

His third strategic goal for city governance—to be "purposeful"—meant aligning actions, both symbolic and substantive, with visions and goals. Through a performance management restructuring, membership in ICMA's Center for Performance Measurement, newly crafted 360-degree evaluations, and partnerships with union leaders and the private sector, Davenport has become the most efficiently managed large city in Iowa. The city has the second-lowest tax rate of any comparable city, even with capital improvements continuing at twice the historic rate due to long-deferred infrastructure maintenance.

These days, each new success in Davenport brings higher expectations. While state actions and market conditions in 2003 cost the city budget several million dollars, necessitating position reductions and belt tightening, Mr. Malin remained a steady and guiding force. He forsook time off to ensure that the momentum Davenport achieved would not be lost amid the financial turmoil and gave his unused vacation days to department heads as compensation for deferred management bonuses. He then made sure that every employee received a wage increase before he did. When another city offered to hire him at a substantial pay raise, he declined, reaffirming his commitment to Davenport.

Craig Malin's leadership, energy, professional skill, and unselfish commitment have enabled him to lead the transformation of a previously stagnant city into one of the most resurgent communities in the Midwest. ■

# Community Sustainability Award

POPULATIONS OF 50,000 AND GREATER

## DAVENPORT, IOWA

ICMA's Community Sustainability Award in the 50,000-and-greater population category goes to the city of Davenport, Iowa, City Administrator Craig Malin, and Assistant City Administrator Dee F. Bruemmer for the Green City initiative.



CRAIG MALIN



DEE F. BRUEMMER

Recycled paper? Check. Hybrid cars in fleet? Yes. LED traffic signals? Years ago. Waterless urinals? Sure, and an internationally recognized sewage treatment plant! Paperless office? Ah, we're trying....

The largest Farm Belt city on the Mississippi, Davenport, Iowa, had a long, proud manufacturing history.

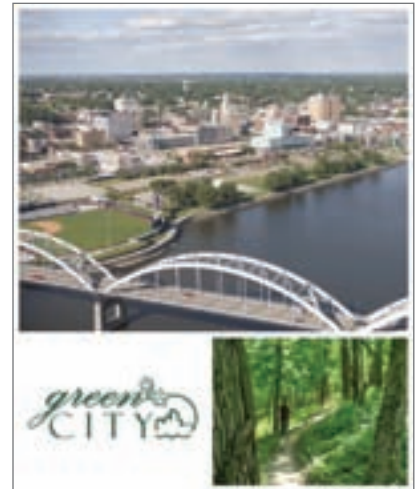
But like many old manufacturing cities, it lost jobs by the thousands and, as globalization hit, suffered double-digit population losses. Some thought it would be another cast-off America city that was once great but no longer.

But Davenport lacks neither resilience nor pluck. Not surprisingly, then, Davenport set out to overcome 50 years of urban disinvestment and its attendant population and job loss—and to do so while ensuring the city's environmental, fiscal, and social sustainability. And it is succeeding! Through its Green City initiative, the city is on the leading edge of nationally significant, comprehensive, and fully integrated revitalization and sustainability strategies. Examples of its recent accomplishments, grouped under four basic headers, are as follows:

- **Reduce global warming pollution and improve air quality:** Built the first LEED city building

in Iowa; added hybrid vehicles as pool cars and replaced all non-emergency V8 vehicles with fuel-efficient models; used recovered methane in its wastewater plant to generate 90 percent of the electricity needed and reduced energy consumption by 33 percent.

- **Create a healthy, livable urban center:** Completed adaptive reuse of vacant warehouses to reduce sprawl and encourage transit-friendly development; invested \$66 million in rehab housing projects; strengthened the curbside recycling program; invested \$3.7 million to transform a former brownfield into a regional park; committed more than \$75 million in downtown public and nonprofit arts and culture capital investments.
- **Enhance the urban forest/increase open space:** Created 12 community gardens in underserved areas, restored 4.5 acres of native prairie, and planted over 800 trees annually on major streets and in neighborhoods; acquired and converted to green space nearly 100 flood-prone homes; significantly reduced pesticide use in parks and on city-maintained properties.
- **Protect the river and streams:** Developed compost product for erosion control; instituted community and neighborhood clean-up activities, including EarthWeek Coalition Programs; identified and implemented opportunities to improve water quality and aquatic habitat;



Green City initiative cultivates extraordinary revitalization and sustainability efforts

installed pet waste stations and signs at 35 locations.

And while compelling stories abound, three merit more than a bullet point:

**Regional Model for Community Revitalization.** Davenport's "River Renaissance" program, approved by 73 percent of voters in 2001, launched a revitalization of the historic downtown. The countywide vote permitted Davenport's partners in Scott County to contribute \$5 million to match a state grant of \$20 million and the city to contribute \$25 million in order to leverage an initial \$113 million of private-public redevelopment. Revitalization began with two new parking ramps, a move of the city's art museum downtown, an adaptive reuse of long vacant department stores into a mixed-use project including the River Music Experience, expansion of the city-owned art deco theater, and the unique "Skybridge." With the only successful "Vision Iowa" bond referendum in the state, River Renaissance has kick-started a downtown rebirth that now exceeds \$300 million in reinvestment.

(Continued on page 27)

substance abuse professionals, and students—have attended educational sessions designed to ensure appropriate referrals and treatment options and to help participants work with the target populations.

A new model for a reengineered crisis response system, involving 22 organizations, was implemented in February 2005. This model includes a 24/7 crisis assessment center in the emergency department of Poudre Valley Hospital, 24/7 transport to detox services when needed, immediate follow-up with the client or family the next day, and training for key personnel. Since its inception, the Crisis Assessment Center has served more than 12,200 people.

The partnership has succeeded largely because of the ongoing commitment of its members—providers, consumers, advocates, and others—to system change. With each system change, additional areas of need are revealed. The partnership continues to address the logistical challenges of combining and coordinating the efforts of so many different agencies and service providers; other priorities have included creating a different approach for those with different levels of need; increasing early identification and intervention to prevent or lessen serious illness; creating a local combined acute treatment unit and detox center; supporting improvements in the criminal justice system to yield better identification and treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders; and continuing to identify and advocate for policy changes. Despite the challenges, consumers, families, and partner organizations are overwhelmingly supportive of the Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Partnership and of its efforts to improve delivery for those citizens in need of mental health and substance abuse services. ■

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*Centralia, Illinois, from page 15*  
times since its inception—for façade improvements to accommodate new businesses, for building renovations, for loans to facilitate business

expansion or renovation, and in all cases for the concomitant creation of new jobs. One loan was for \$56,000, another was for \$25,000, and in four cases staff proposed using \$5,000 for projects located outside the boundaries of the TIF district.

These funds are attractive because they are more flexible to use and can be applied up-front for a given project. The rules and provisions governing their use ensure that they will be used judiciously and in conjunction with other programs.

In the past, the city was unable to meet the needs of many of its existing or potential businesses because those businesses did not meet certain criteria of existing incentive programs. The Centralia Opportunity Fund has eliminated this problem, successfully retaining, attracting, and revitalizing business in Centralia. Now, instead of being considered hostile to business, Centralia is receiving praise from the local business community for its proactive approach to economic development. The program will be used successfully for many years to come, and is sure to be replicated by other communities that are engaged in economic development. ■

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*Davenport, Iowa, from page 16*

**International Model for Sewage Treatment and Composting:** The Davenport Compost Facility annually processes more than 135,000 cubic yards of mixed yard waste and biosolids from the city’s sewage treatment facility. These materials are converted into environmentally beneficial soil amendments using a high-tech, aerated static pile composting system, and finished products are sold to offset the cost of operation. In use since 1995, the composting facility is the nation’s oldest and most successful facility of its kind, attracting visitors from around the globe to understand how composting translates into waste management. The facility was selected Composter of the Year by the U.S. Composting Council, and is accredited and listed as a “Model Program” by the American Public Works Association.

### **The Promise of Davenport’s**

**Future:** Tackling workforce development, a key issue in social and fiscal sustainability, the Davenport Promise Task Force is currently researching and refining a breakthrough community revitalization and growth strategy in which post-high school tuition (college, trade apprenticeship, or vocational training) for each Davenport student would be paid for through a community partnership. By year’s end, Davenport may be guaranteeing the American dream for all its children.

The overall impact of the city’s revitalization and sustainability efforts is extraordinary. Over the past five years, crime is down by more than a third, the tax base has increased by more than a billion dollars, and the population is on the rise. A riverfront that was once an industrial workplace is becoming a public showplace. New office buildings are being built downtown, and long-vacant industrial warehouses are being reborn as loft apartments. Hundred-year-old neighborhoods are attracting new investment while citizens have planned a new, traditional neighborhood that offers the area its first smart-growth, greenfield choice.

No question about it: Davenport is back, and is here to stay! ■

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*Lewiston, Maine, from page 17*

depression and stress after the death of a family member.

Health awareness and preventive care are becoming the norm among Lewiston municipal employees and spouses; from January 2007 to January 2008, the percentage of participants who met their goals in programs targeting blood pressure control, weight reduction/diet, cholesterol reduction, tobacco use, stress, and depression rose between 6 percent and 20 percent.

Which is not to say there were no obstacles to overcome! Although some participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss health education and goal setting, others resisted even blood pressure checks, and for many spouses, the premium-reducing components of the plan were seen

# Craig Malin Lives Here

By: Janet Ward

American City & County – July, 2001

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No one would have blamed Craig Malin for backing out of the deal. Fresh from the nice, quiet Chicago suburb of Vernon Hills, where he had served as assistant village manager for almost 11 years, Malin had taken on the position of county administrator of Douglas County, Wis., a sprawling area at the tip of Lake Superior.

The two localities could not have been more different: Vernon Hills is a polite, largely Republican, enclave of about 20,000 people, whose median household income is \$50,000 and whose per capita income is \$20,625. Douglas County is a 1,340-square-mile county of 45,000, largely Democratic, residents with a median household income of \$23,000.

Vernon Hills was politically stable, with a village president who has held elective office since 1987. In Douglas County, chaos reigned. In Superior, the county seat, local leaders were resigning and being recalled. Malin's predecessor in Douglas County, a seasoned public administrator who was the county's first appointed administrator, called it quits after 100 days on the job.

The county also has the oldest housing stock of all similarly sized cities, with 85 percent of its rental housing considered substandard. Its per capita income consistently lags behind state averages, and its unemployment rate is generally double national figures.

None of that mattered, however. "The communities are different," Malin says. "But the quality of life is a real attraction that is lost when you compare median income." Ironically, more bad news in Douglas County convinced Malin that he had made the right decision.

Just a few weeks after he moved his family from Vernon Hills to Superior, Douglas County District Attorney Dan Blank's house was firebombed on the order of a jailed gang leader awaiting trial for murder. The bombing galvanized Malin, who was already feeling protective of his new home.

"I was so angry," he says. "Dan and his wife live down the street from my house. Our children play together." Malin was determined to find a way to show those responsible for the firebombing that the community would not tolerate their actions. He discussed it with his wife, Marcia. "I want to put a sign in the yard that says, 'Dan Blank lives here,'" he told her. She agreed.

The idea took root. Fariba Pendleton, a youth development educator in the county's extension office, and County Board Chair Doug Finn ran with it, extending it community-wide. The plan was that everyone in Douglas County would have a yard sign proclaiming his or her home as the residence of the Dan Blank family. Additionally, billboard companies donated space proclaiming the same thing.

“It was a single act of individual courage writ many times over,” Malin says. Already delighted with the support and friendliness of the county's residents, he was struck by their fortitude. Several weeks later, Douglas County threw a rally for the Blank family on what Malin calls “a wonderful day for Superior.”

The county's reaction to the firebombing convinced Malin that his dedication to his new home was not misplaced. That dedication has served Douglas County well, and it has helped make Craig Malin, a personable workaholic who peppers his speech with phrases like “Bless his heart,” American City & County's 2001 County Leader of the Year.

### **A way to repay**

Malin is a second-generation American whose grandparents arrived in Chicago from Poland unable to speak a word of English. When Malin, the youngest of seven children, was small, the family fell on hard times. His father, a Navy veteran, developed tuberculosis, and Malin was placed in an orphanage. Still, he thrived and grew up determined to pay back the society that he believed had allowed his family to succeed, albeit in small ways.

“I felt obligated to that society,” he says now. “It was the era of John Glenn. I wanted to drink Tang and be an astronaut.” A self-described “do-gooder,” Malin never made it to space, opting instead for a career in public service. “I entered public service at a frightfully tender age and have not yet been dissuaded,” he says.

A few stints as an intern with various national politicians immunized Malin from Potomac Fever. “I decided that the farther away you get from people, the more arcane

your public service becomes,” he says. An internship in tiny Grayslake, Ill., proved to be Malin's answer. “It was more positive than interning for senators and congressmen,” he says. “It was more real.”

Malin was interested in public service — not politics — and it took a while for him to find his niche. “Growing up in Chicago with the Daleys, I didn't know there was such a thing as a city manager,” he says.

Upon discovering the existence of such a position, Malin gravitated toward it. “The city or county management profession is something of a meritocracy within the broader democracy,” he says. “In a democracy, you have situations where people who are doing what they should be doing sometimes don't get elected. When you are a city or county manager, every day you are involved in the public's business rather than running for office every four years”.

In Vernon Hills, Malin handled the public's business so well that, in 1997, he received the International City/County Managers Association's Assistant Excellence in Leadership Award. According to ICMA, the award recognizes “individuals who have made significant contributions toward excellence in leadership while serving as assistant to a chief local government administrator or department head.”

“One thing with Craig, if you give him a job, you know he will bring it to a successful conclusion within the specified time with a minimum of supervision,” says Larry Laschen, the retired Vernon Hills city manager who hired Malin straight out of college. “He's a self-starter, and he doesn't mind putting in as much time and effort as it takes.”

Doug Finn agrees. “He doesn't let the grass grow under his feet,” he says. “He goes to work and makes it happen. A lot of people wait for the right moment. He reacts, and he perseveres.”

### **Learning a lesson**

Malin is nothing if not persistent. Prairie Crossing Charter School in Vernon Hills is proof of that. Developed by a local couple, George and Vicky Ranney, Prairie Crossing is the only public school in Illinois with a curriculum centered on environmental stewardship and responsible citizenship.

“My daughter was one year old, and we were looking at one day sending her to kindergarten at an elementary school campus with thousands of students,” Malin says. “I was 22 before I went to a school that big. My daughter was going to go 10 miles to a school that had nothing to do with our community. The girl who lived next door was going to go 10 miles in the other direction to another enormous school. It was an economies of scale gone wrong approach. Meanwhile, we had in our community the last remaining one-room schoolhouse in the county. It was cute as a bug.”

Prompted by passage of a state law allowing for the creation of charter schools, Malin and the Ranneys began exploring the possibilities of using that one-room schoolhouse to create a conservation-minded charter school. (George now is chairman and CEO of Prairie Holdings, which developed the Prairie Crossing community, and president of Chicago Metropolitan 2020, a non-profit organization planning Chicago's future.) The state law, however, did not help much.

“The law was carefully crafted to be impossible,” Malin says. “You had to ask

the schools to create a ‘choice zone.’ Not surprisingly, both said no.” Additionally, the would-be founders were bombarded with hate mail from local teachers.

Because Malin was a local government insider, he understood how to get around the opposition. “We were gonna create a school so good that its denial would be demonstrate why the law had to be changed,” he says.

“He has energy and farsightedness,” says Vicky Ranney, who serves as president of Prairie Holdings. “He is indefatigable. We got turned down four times, and he kept coming back fighting.”

The Ranneys loaded the school's advisory committee with local and national education heavyweights, like Pat Graham, former dean of the Harvard University School of Education. Impressed, the state legislature changed the law to require only the approval of the state Board of Education.

Prairie Crossing was the first school to open under the new law. It is now one of the best public schools in the state and the most successful elementary school in the area with an organic farm, wetlands and, as Malin puts it, “3,000 acres of classrooms.” Ironically, Malin's daughter only got one semester's benefit of her father's hard work; a month before she started kindergarten, Craig reported for duty in Douglas County. After six months of commuting 900 miles to be home on weekends, the Malin family moved to Superior during the winter school break.

The Prairie Crossing episode reinforced Malin's commitment to his profession, even as it changed that commitment in subtle ways. “The enduring memory is of being on the outside looking in,” he says. “Long-time government officials sometimes forget what

that's like. I think I now have a real sensitivity to that based on how we were treated.”

### **Re-creating relationships**

The incident also taught Malin that no problem was too severe and no solution too elusive. The fun, he realized, was in rising to the challenge.

Douglas County offered Malin that challenge. “I took the job because it was the most difficult position I was offered,” he says.

Malin immediately ran into problems. Until the county had created the position, it had gone 146 years without feeling the need for a chief administrative officer. Naturally, there was some difference of opinion as to just what the position would entail.

However, according to Finn, county leaders may not have known exactly what a chief administrative officer did, but they knew they needed one. “County government was getting more and more complex,” he says.

So, too, was city government in Superior, the only city in the county and home to the vast majority of its population. Its mayor and one city councilor had been recalled, and several department heads had resigned. It also was badly in need of a new city hall, but, pursuant to Wisconsin law, its voters had presented a “direct legislation” petition that limited the city to no more than \$3 million in funds to build a new one.

Acutely aware of the turf battles that can characterize city/county relationships, Malin knew he had to move carefully. “It's difficult to live in a city and represent the county,” he says. “You lose some of your First Amendment rights. You can't just call up

and say, ‘There's a pothole in front of my house.’ The city / county relationship is frequently challenging. It's helpful to have had a background of 10 years in city management.”

But dealing with a city in turmoil was not Malin's only problem. The county's 67-bed jail was so crowded that state officials were threatening to intercede. Moving prisoners meant that the money Douglas County was getting for housing them became an expense for housing them elsewhere. Additionally, the county's largest department, Human Services, was housed in an outdated facility that had once served as its jail.

To solve those problems, county officials were exploring construction of a new government building. They had already set aside \$20 million in bond proceeds to build it. Ten minutes into his first day on the job, Malin was presented with the plans for the facility. He took one look at the plans and said, “That's a \$35 million building if ever I saw one.”

Malin had an idea, but it would involve a complete reforging of city/county relations. The proposed Metro Government Center would house all local government offices, with the city paying a pro-rata amount based on the space it would need. The county hired DMG-Maximus (now Maximus), a Reston, Va.-based consultant to assess the potential merger. The consultant determined that a merger of the county sheriff's department with the city's police department into a single law enforcement unit could be accomplished relatively easily. However, money — the new facility was estimated to cost \$30 million — still was a stumbling block.

Malin went to work on a revenue and cost analysis, persuading the county that building

a new 219-bed jail would allow it to house prisoners now jailed out of state. Revenue from the housing of those prisoners would, he determined, account for a projected \$32 million in profit over a 15-year bond repayment schedule. The county went for it, becoming the only local government unit in the state able to respond to a Wisconsin Department of Corrections request for proposals to house state prisoners.

Meanwhile, LHB Architects, a Duluth, Minn., firm hired by the city to assess facility alternatives, agreed that sharing the Metro Center was the city's best monetary move. With the go-ahead, Malin drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) setting out the responsibilities of the city and county. "I had to think through it like, 'Is this in the best interests of the county? Is this in the best interests of the city?'" he says. "It couldn't be advantageous to one and disadvantageous to the other. Because I came from 500 miles away, I didn't have any baggage. I didn't have any allegiances."

Upon reviewing the MOU, the city council promptly voted it down. "It was about 11 p.m.," Malin says. "I walked up to the mike and said, 'Do you realize what you just did?' After some discussion, they reconsidered and approved it. I've never seen that happen. It was especially satisfying."

Still, the county wasn't out of the woods. Reconfiguring the Metro Center to accommodate city space meant delaying construction of the jail, which meant \$6,300

a day in lost revenue, as well as redesign costs. To address this problem, Malin persuaded the county board to go with a design / build type of project that would mitigate any increased cost by reducing delays.

If Malin has his way, the building, now well under construction, will serve as the first step in a process that eventually will lead to Wisconsin's first city/county consolidation. "We didn't want it to be a building where the city offices are on one floor and the county offices are on another," he says. "We thought the mayor's office should be right next to the office of the county board chair, the city personnel director's office right next to the county personnel director's office."

The experience has made Malin take stock. "In my two years here, I have mulled over the differences between working for a city and working for a county," he says. "I have a renewed appreciation for the stabilizing influence of counties. They provide justice from soup to nuts. They provide a safety net. Sometimes, they may appear to be more disengaged from the city's daily life, but that's just not true."

What is true is that Malin has found contentment in Douglas County. In spite of everything, sometimes he simply cannot believe his good fortune. "I'm waiting for it to all come crashing down," Malin says. "But what they teach you in civics is true. Public service is a noble thing."



# International City / County Management Association

## Assistant Excellence in Leadership Award

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ICMA's Assistant Excellence in Leadership Award, which commemorates former ICMA President Buford M. Watson, is presented to a local government management professional who has made significant contributions toward excellence in leadership while serving as an assistant to a chief local government administrator or department head. This year, ICMA presents the award to Craig Malin, an Assistant Village Manager in Vernon Hills, Illinois.

In his eight years in progressively responsible positions in Vernon Hills, Illinois, Assistant Manager Craig Malin has gained the respect of citizens and officials throughout the community and beyond. During the past year, Mr. Malin has leveraged that respect and combined it with his clear vision and extraordinary work ethic to secure community amenities and programs that were long thought impossible to achieve.

Mr. Malin has worked hard to ensure that residents have a stake in their future by conceiving and implementing a process that empowered citizens to design their community. First, Mr. Malin produced and distributed a video preference survey that discussed a range of neighborhood planning elements and then broadcast the survey on local access television. He then facilitated a series of highly interactive planning sessions, involving group exercises and field trips, to create a comprehensive community vision and a neighborhood development plan.

Craig Malin's personable nature and leadership talents also helped the village resolve an ongoing lawsuit between a developer who wanted to build a poorly planned strip mall and the city, which wanted to block the development. His creative solution to this problem not only resolved the impasse between the plaintiff and the city, but resulted in the donation of land for a public library. He also led the village negotiations in

securing the first unlitigated competitive cable television franchise in Illinois.

Mr. Malin's economic development successes are balanced by concern for natural resource enhancement. He led an effort to preserve the village's largest oak tree and he led a series of volunteer restoration events to help the local park district better manage a historic oak woodland. The "Natural Heritage Walk" grant he crafted will turn the park into a series of micro-ecosystems that reflect the region's diminishing native beauty. Mr. Malin also worked with the regional planning commission to craft a land-use ordinance to improve air quality and community design.

Craig Malin works hard and views work as its own reward. Employees and residents can walk into his office at any time and be warmly received - if they can find him beneath the piles of papers and files. He hasn't taken a sick day for years and views comp time with derision. His dedication to civic life, however, extends beyond his job: he has led volunteer environmental and park building initiatives, and he currently is hard at work creating what will be the first suburban charter school in the state of Illinois. Craig Malin's success demonstrates the creativity, fortitude, and enthusiastic pursuit of excellence that is possible in municipal governance.